

Human resource factors affecting the performance of Mathematics in secondary schools in Kenya: A case of Mbitini division, Makueni County, Kenya

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Abstract

There has been a perennial problem of poor performance of mathematics in secondary schools, in Mbitini Division, Makueni County, despite efforts by the Government and local leaders to reverse the situation. The indicators of this poor performance have been poor grades and low mean scores that schools in the Division have continued to get over the years. This study sought to address this problem by investigating the impact of the two human resource factors; Staffing and Motivation on the performance of mathematics by students in the secondary schools in the Division. A descriptive survey design was used to collect data. The study was carried out in Mbitini Division of Makueni County in an area covering three geographical areas; highland, midland and lowland regions. The targeted population included 24 secondary schools with an enrolment of 5505 students out of whom 552 students, 9 head teachers and 9 mathematics teachers were sampled for the study. Stratified sampling was used to divide the 24 schools into heterogeneous categories namely; highland, midland and lowland schools. Random sampling was then applied to each category of schools to identify three schools for purposes of the study. The study administered two types of research instruments namely; Questionnaires and Interview Schedules. There was one questionnaire each for students, teachers and head teachers. In addition, two interview schedules were administered to head teachers and mathematics teachers to help clarify and enrich responses from the questionnaires. A pilot study was conducted in one of the schools to determine the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The researcher, assisted by mathematics teachers of the sampled schools administered the instruments to students, teachers and head teachers and collected data on the staffing situation of the schools and the types of motivation given to both teachers and students. Data collected were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In qualitative analysis data were analyzed by identifying the major themes relevant to the research questions and objectives and developing a summary of these themes and the associations between them. Interpretations and conclusions based on the major themes were identified and their associations made. Quantitative data was subjected to the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to analyze responses from the questionnaires administered. The major findings of the study were that ISSN: 2201-6333 (Print) ISSN: 2201-6740 (Online) www.ijern.com 90 most schools in the Division were adequately staffed with teachers with teaching experiences of between 10-15 years and had also the necessary academic and professional qualifications in mathematics. It was also found that on-the-job professional development of teachers was lacking. Teachers were found to have hardly enhanced their profession through post-graduation trainings, workshops and seminars related to their areas of specialization. Results from this study were expected to contribute greatly in enhancing

performance management and may be used by policy makers and educational managers to develop policies and programs to improve the performance of mathematics in the Country. The study contributes significantly to the discipline of HRM by laying emphasis on two key areas in performance management namely; continuous capacity building and guidance and counselling of the human resource.

Key Words: Human resource, Mathematics, Performance, Motivation, Staffing

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