

Mathematics Teacher's Preparedness and Their Effect on Learner Acquisition of Basic Operational Skills in Kakamega Central Primary Schools, Kenya

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Abstract

Mathematics is a subject that is taught right from pre-primary school to higher level of learning. It is a compulsory subject both in primary and secondary school curriculum. Mutunga and Breakell refer to mathematics as "The queen of all sciences". Yet students' performance in Mathematics in both primary and secondary school is dismal. Empirical studies by UWEZO Kenya on literacy and numeracy show that quite a number of pupils in primary schools have difficulties in solving problems involving basic operational skills. Efforts have been made by the Kenyan government to improve performance but there is still poor performance in both primary and secondary schools especially in Mathematics. The purpose of this study was to investigate Mathematics teacher's preparedness and their effect on learners' acquisition of basic operational skills in primary schools. The objective of the study was to establish the teacher preparedness in instructional practices in mathematics when teaching basic operational skills and to assess the relationship between teacher preparedness and the learner acquisition of basic operational skills. Descriptive survey design was used. Teacher's questionnaires, classroom observation schedules and Mathematics pupil's performance test were used to collect data. The study population comprised of all lower primary school mathematics teachers and pupils drawn from Kakamega central sub-county, stratified random sampling was used to select 16 public and 4 private schools and simple random sampling was used to select 10 pupils and 1 teacher from each school. Validity of the research instruments was determined with the help of experts from the department of Mathematics and Science Education of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. Reliability of the research instrument was established through pilot study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. It was found that there is a strong relationship between Mathematics teacher preparedness and the learner acquisition of basic operational skills. It is perceived that the findings of the study will unveil the teacher's unpreparedness which may be contributing to poor acquisition of basic operational skills and hence poor performance in Mathematics.

Keywords: Teacher preparedness, Basic operational skills, Primary schools, Kenya

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