

Teacher Improvement through Peer Teacher Evaluation in Kenyan Schools

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Abstract

Purpose – This article aims to assess the awareness among educators of strategies put in place for peer teacher evaluation (PTE), and training opportunities availed to them in relation to PTE.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was conducted in secondary schools in three selected districts of Western Province of Kenya using a descriptive survey design. Data were collected from school principals, senior teachers, heads of departments and teachers using questionnaires, interview schedules and a document analysis guide.

Findings – The findings generally revealed that though all schools where PTE was practiced had made some attempts to organize some awareness programmes, they were not focused as evidenced in the varied reasons that were provided to show why they were organized. The study also established that less than half of the teachers had been exposed to in-service training opportunities.

Research limitations/implications – There is scarce literature based on empirical studies focusing on school-based teacher evaluation (SBTE). Most of the studies the author was able to access were descriptive and on teacher evaluation in general. Consequently, most recent studies in Kenya, for example, tend to focus on topical issues like HIV/AIDS, gender, free primary education and how they impact on curriculum implementation while what goes on in the classrooms is ignored.

Practical implications – Identifying and analyzing awareness strategies and in-service teacher training related factors that hinder and/or promote PTE may help in strengthening the practice if the recommendations of this study are implemented. Findings of this study if accessed may provide information to policy makers both at national, local and school levels in Kenya on the practice of PTE. National and local policy gives legality to PTE while school policy directs the process and procedures for the practice at school level. This study also provides a theoretical knowledge that precedes the practice of PTE. **Social implications** – Peer Teacher Evaluation embraces characteristics such as collaboration, collegiality and dialogue and so can enhance positive working relationships among teachers. Teachers in the classroom are known to maintain cultural norms of privacy and individualism. Peer Teacher Evaluation being teachers evaluating each other; therefore, removes the culture of privacy and individualism. If well practiced, it may promote rapport and trust among teachers. **Originality/value** – The study analyzed the level of awareness and in-service training of teacher on PTE which is one of the modes of SBTE in secondary schools with the purpose of coming up with suggestions that may help bring about improvement in the practice in order to strengthen it in schools.

Keywords: Teachers, Teachers' awareness, Peer evaluation strategies, In-service training, Schools, School-based-teacher-evaluation, Kenya

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