FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TIGANIA EAST DISTRICT, MERU COUNTY, KENYA

By

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ABSTRACT

Primary and secondary school teachers are under tremendous pressure from all stakeholders in the education sector to deliver quality education to all children. It is important to know whether teachers meet this challenge (pressure), given their current levels of pay and their working conditions. In Tigania East District performance in Mathematics in K.C.S.E in the past few years has been low, and reasons for the poor academic performance have not been fully established. This study sought to establish factors affecting learners' performance in mathematics in public secondary schools in Tigania East District, Meru County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the effect of teachers' remuneration, working conditions, head teachers' supervision and availability of teaching/learning resources on learners' performance in mathematics in secondary schools in Tigania East District. This study used a survey research design and both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The study target population was 45 secondary schools with 94 mathematics teachers and 45 head teachers within the Tigania East District. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample size. A sample of 28 teachers (30% of the target population), and 14 head teachers (30% of the target population) was selected. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire. Secondary data was obtained from district education office and individual school records, showing all teachers employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and students' K.C.S.E results for the last five years. Data was collected through delivering the research instruments and then collecting them later at a date agreed upon with each respondent. After collecting the questionnaires, collected data was edited, coded, classified and summarized into categories. The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 for Windows to help in analyzing the data. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and mode) was widely used in analysis. Results were presented in form of frequency tables, bar graphs, pie charts and percentages from which inferences and conclusions were drawn. This study established that there was a significant relationship between teachers' remuneration, institutional working conditions, head teachers supervision, available learning/teaching resources in the schools $(p=0.000<0.05)$ and students' academic performance in mathematics in public secondary schools in Tigania East District. In conclusion, the study established that unreasonable demands from administrators, discouraging team spirit, lack of teacher motivation, inadequate remuneration and rewards as some of the factors related to lack of improved learners' performance in mathematics . Study recommends that teacher salaries should be at least doubled. The government and other stakeholders should work towards employing more teachers to cope with ever increasing teacher workload especially after the introduction of FPE and FSE. School heads should be encouraged to involve other teachers in decision making processes in the schools and schools should provide adequate teaching and learning resources. A more rigorous study can be carried to cover the whole country. The relationship between increasing rewards and student academic achievement is unknown. Therefore, from a policy perspective, it would be useful for another study to analyze the effect of increased reward on teacher behaviour and student academic achievement.