A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECT OF TEACHER PREPAREDNESS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A RESEARCH AGENDA

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Abstract

This is a critical review of teacher preparedness investigating the origin of teacher preparedness, the concept of teacher preparedness, academic achievement, and its effect on students' academic achievement, the theoretical framework and any gaps through desk research. In most of the studies examined for the purpose of this paper, teacher preparedness was used as an independent variable and academic achievement as dependent variable. It was identified that though studies have been done on effect of teacher preparedness on students' academic achievement on different subjects none has been done on Kiswahili subject. Therefore the researchers will intend to study the effect of teacher preparedness on students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language and find out if the findings on the other subjects in Kiswahili language. The theories which will be used to back the research include Teacher Efficacy and Walberg theories.

Keyword: Teacher preparedness, Academic achievement, teaching and learning process

1.0 Introduction

1.0.1 Origin of Teacher preparedness

Hagger and McIntyre (2000) explain that teacher preparedness originates from teacher education which refers basically to the specific program which helps the teacher in developing quality and effective strategies in teaching and learning process. Teacher education is believed to have been an idea of Benjamin Franklin as early as 18th Century. Franklin was concerned and saw a dire need of having teachers who were highly qualified, of good quality and capable for training others on how to teach. These programs finally bore fruits as teachers were finally provided with different methods of teaching and other instructional skills.

Ornstein and Levine (2006) posit that as long as one could read, write and speak was considered to have a positive moral character and therefore he or she was deemed to be a good and reliable teacher. Franklin believed that the future teachers could be trained on the

teaching skills and strategies. So much has changed in the teaching profession on teacher preparation programs all over the world since then. Most states and countries have introduced certification requirements for teachers in order to maintain their quality in teaching (Bales, 2006).

 All teachers are licensed and are charged with responsibility imparting skills acquired from their training to the students. In Kenya many colleges have been established to prepare teachers for teaching through equipping them with the necessary skills needed. These colleges include diploma and universities all both public and private. Once the teachers are trained in universities and teacher training colleges, the placement is done by Ministry of Education through Teachers Service Commission. The Commission is also responsible for certification and monitoring of teacher performance in schools.

1.1 Teacher preparedness

Teacher trainees undergo teacher education program basically with one ultimate goal; to get the basics and preparedness in creating classrooms that will help them relieve any fear as teachers. Teacher preparedness is usually necessary for it helps the teachers acquire   the very basic knowledge on classroom management skills. Zhou (2003) elaborates that teaching is a complex and multidimensional process that requires deep knowledge and understanding in a wide range of areas and the ability of the teacher to actually synthesize, integrate and apply the knowledge in different situations.

Hollins (2011) states that over the past two decades there have been a great deal of focus on the reform in teacher preparation aimed at improving learning outcomes of learners. Teacher quality can be well understood in considering the relationship between teacher productivity and teacher training including formal pre-service university education, in-service professional development and informal training acquired through on the job experience (Harris, 2010). Agyman (2013) indicates that a teacher who doesn't have both academic and professional qualification would not be effective in teaching and learning process. The researcher further argues that a well qualified teacher who works within unfavorable conditions may be less productive than unqualified teacher working in favorable conditions of service.

Urevbu (1985) indicates that the teacher needs teaching documents which are items any serious and committed teacher must know, is able to develop and use in teaching and learning process. Any serious teacher should take the following measures before beginning to teach ;(a) Read the official syllabus description of the subject. (a) Select the broad content areas to be

covered by the teacher. (c) Consider teaching within the stipulated time (Oketch &Asiach, 1986).

Kimosop (2015) states that one of the documents is a syllabus book that guides a teacher to plan for effective classroom instruction where they should use it to identify objectives, write schemes and lesson plans. The researcher says effective classroom instruction entails three main stages; (a) Preparation stage (planning stage).This involves identification of the content to be covered, identification of objectives, scheming of the content and lesson planning. (b)Implementation stage (Actual teaching).This includes selection of appropriate teaching methodology and use of teaching and learning materials. (c) Evaluation stage or achievement of instructional. This includes assessment and feedback measures.

Teacher preparedness for instruction of different subjects it's a concept which has to be taken seriously. This always ensures proper delivery of the content to the learners hence achieving the learning outcomes intended. According to different researchers on teacher preparedness may include teacher training, subject content mastery, professional documentation and syllabus coverage.

1.2 Academic Achievement

Stop and Smith (2013) define academic achievement as the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved the educational goals. Kuenzi (2008) elaborates that this achievement is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment though there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are important. Terrence and Peters (2010) define academic achievement or performance as the outcome of education. Academic achievement is arguably always as a primary business of education.

Polloway, Edgar and Edward (1994) argue that there are two indicators of students' performance namely; course grades and perception of teachers. Heubert and Hauser (1999) explain that measuring academic performance can occur at multiple levels and serves multiple purposes, for example; classroom teachers often conduct formative and summative tests to evaluate student mastery of course content and provide grades for students and parents. Adegoroye (2004) argues that improving performance depends on improvement of quality of classroom practices of the subject teacher. The researcher further argues that there are cases where there are qualified teachers and adequate materials but students' achievement is not high.

Insufficient workforce, lack of concentration during lesson, lack commitment and motivation to work, lack of instructional equipment, poor attitudes of students, poor understanding of concepts, inability to study well, neglect of class assignment and pleasure sought attitude contribute to low academic achievement (Olarewaju,2007).Walaba (2008) argues that academic performance in schools is always attributed to adequate preparation by teachers for classroom instruction and their laxity on the same seriously hampers its achievement.

Academic achievement in schools is always the main expectation of different stakeholders in education. Underperformance to many researchers is caused by laxity among students, lack of commitment of teachers, lack or poor use of instructional resources, poor school culture among others.

1.3 Empirical review

Newstrom and Davis (2012) in their study on quality and teacher training and student achievement showed that trained teachers do make a difference and in particular teacher qualification, experience and amount of education and knowledge were positively imparted to students. Cheng (2013) asserts that availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources were related to and perceive organizational effectiveness in terms of academic performance. Availability of learning resources like textbooks is a great factor that impacts on students' academic performance as documented in several studies in Africa on positive effects of textbooks on learning achievement (UNESCO, 2014). Sanders and Rivers (2011) show that those students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers get lower achievement than those assigned efficient and effective teachers.

Brown (1994) argues that teaching is a complex endeavor involving classroom management, lesson preparation, and organization of teaching and learning activities. In addition, evaluation and feedback and students' success in the classroom is largely based on effective and adequate teacher preparation. Ofoegbu (2004) confirms that ineffectiveness of teachers in classroom interaction with the students and in their instruction could be responsible for the observable poor performance of students and widely acclaimed fallen standards of education in Nigeria.

Griffin (2013) confirms that quality of leadership of an educational institution or a school makes the difference between success and failure in academic achievement of students. Akinsolu (2010) explains that availability of qualified teachers determined the performance of students in school. Ombui (2012) argues that attitudes of students towards a subject have an implication on their academic performance in the said subject. Eshiwani (1993) names

three determinants of academic achievement in the third world countries namely, school library, Laboratory, school administration, and teacher characteristics which include teacher qualification, training and experiences.

Kosgei (2013) notes that teachers have a lot of influence on their classroom practices. The researcher further adds that for students to be able to make connection between what is taught in school and its application in problem solving in real life the teacher has to be effective in their teaching. Ongwae, Oketch and Ezeh (2008) elaborate that principals are therefore in a very advantageous position as heads to strongly influence the outcome of an effective and efficient school.

1.3.1 Summary of empirical review

In these studies,researchers have clearly indicated that teacher preparedness can influence students' academic achievement through classroom management practices, training; experience the teacher, mastery of subject content and preparation of professional documents in various subjects ranging from sciences, humanities and mathematics. For the purpose of this paper, the researchers would like to find out if the findings of the various studies highlighted mentioned will apply to Kiswahili language.

2.0 Theoretical Review

Teacher Efficacy theory has been identified as the best theory which connects teacher preparedness and students' academic achievement. Other theories which can also explain academic achievement include Walberg theory among others.

2.1 Teacher Efficacy theory

Berman (1977) defines teacher efficacy as the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student's performance. Proponents of this theory believe that student's motivation and performance are very significant reinforcers for teaching behavior and hence teachers who have high level of efficacy are able to control or at least strongly influence student achievement and motivation.

Rotter (1966) says that teacher efficacy correlates with teacher preparedness and suggests strategies used in improving the efficacy of in-service teachers. The researcher says teacher preparation includes the ability of the teacher to deliver the instructional process with confidence and prepare the recommended documentation; in this case they may include lesson plans, schemes of work, lesson notes, and records of work among others.

Gusky (1982, 1988) relates great efficacy with positive attitude about teaching as well as high level of confidence in the teachers, mastery of content by the teacher and implementation of

teaching practices are also discussed by the researcher as parameters of teacher efficacy. Reggs (1995) states that teachers who implemented methods they learned in training saw improved students' academic achievement. Hoy and Woolfork (1993) indicate that leadership of principals who use their leadership ability to improve their efficacy also improves students' academic performance.

2.3 Summary of the theory

Though this theory has been found to have weaknesses, it is the best for any research on teacher preparedness in that it explores teacher efficacy as a product of in depth training in teacher education program ,teacher motivation, teacher and student attitude ,mastery of content, self confidence, teaching practices, student behavior, use of instructional material, teacher characteristics, teacher stress, school culture and conduct and evaluation of students among others which are necessary for high student academic achievement.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusion

From these prior researches therefore, it is very clear that teacher preparedness significantly affects students' academic achievement in the various subjects in which studies have been carried out. Teacher training is seen to be the key factor in grounding prospective teachers for the purposes of effective and efficient classroom instruction in all educational levels. Professional documents which include syllabus, schemes of work, record of work, progress record, lesson plans among others are necessary for any serious and efficient teacher.

These documents are essential in keeping track of the teaching and learning process especially in ensuring that the expected learning outcomes are fully met. Teaching and learning resources including textbooks, audio visual aids, charts and other aids are part of teacher preparedness to teaching. Finally, other intervening variables were also found to be very influential in teacher preparedness hence student's academic achievement and these include student's attitude and interests, teacher motivation, classroom climate, physical infrastructure and administrative role in teaching and learning process.

3.2 Recommendations

Teacher preparedness is a very critical aspect to any nation in its educational process. Teachers need to be well grounded with all the skills needed for preparation for teaching. Teacher management agencies such as the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission need to tighten up their supervision of the teacher for quality teaching through

the school administration. Refresher courses for teachers in the different areas of to sharpen skills are recommended for improved performance.

Curriculum developers are encouraged to fully involve teachers in curriculum development process in order to deliver the designed curriculum very well to learners. Teacher training institutions are encouraged to be relevant to the specific area of specialization and strict adherence to the existing minimum requirements for teacher placement in the different levels of educational institution. Teacher motivation is extremely paramount and therefore the school leadership may do so by providing all the teaching and learning resources needed by the teachers and also rewarding teachers for improved performance.

Many studies have been undertaken for mathematics, sciences and some art and technical subjects. Studies have been done on Kiswahili subject on the effect of different intervening variables on academic achievement. Unfortunately, none has been carried out on. It is not prudent to generalize the findings of prior studies of other subjects to Kiswahili subject because it is a language and not a science or art. The researcher therefore intends to study the effect of teacher preparedness for classroom instruction on students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language in Kathonzweni Sub County, Makueni County in Kenya to find out if the findings from other studies also apply in the subject.

4.0 Proposed Methodology

The study will adopt a descriptive research design; the research area will be Kathonzweni Sub County, Makueni County in Kenya in the randomly sampled public secondary schools. Target population also will be purposively sampled meaning only the trained Kiswahili teachers both BOM and government employed will be used in the study. The research instruments will include questionnaires and document analysis. The questionnaire will contain open and closed ended questions.

5.0 Proposed Conceptual Framework

Orodho (2005) elaborates that a conceptual framework as a model of presentation of relationship between variables in the study shows independent variables, intervening variables and dependent variables.
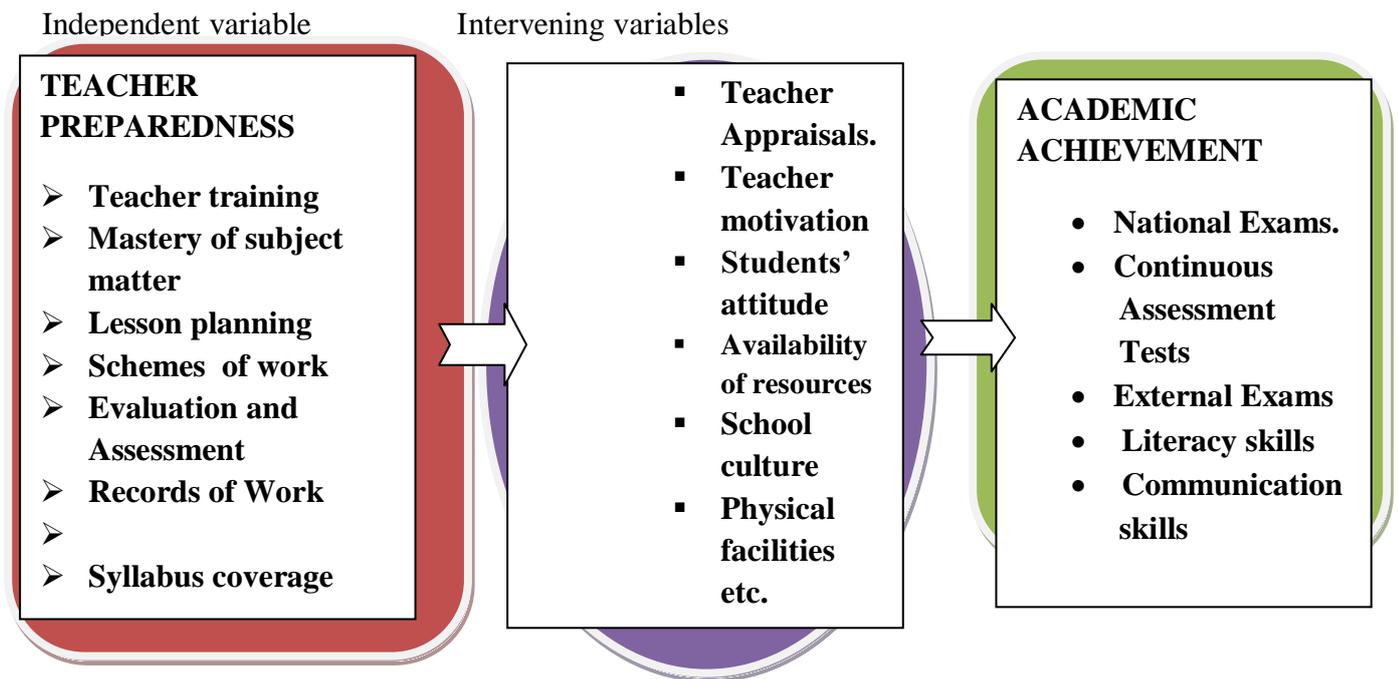
Dependent variables

Independent variable   Intervening variables

TEACHER PREPAREDNESS

➢ **Teacher training**
➢ **Mastery of subject matter**
➢ **Lesson planning**
➢ **Schemes of work**
➢ **Evaluation and Assessment**
➢ **Records of Work**
➢
➢ **Syllabus coverage**

- **Teacher Appraisals.**
- **Teacher motivation**
- **Students' attitude**
- **Availability of resources**
- **School culture**
- **Physical facilities etc.**

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- **National Exams.**
- **Continuous Assessment Tests**
- **External Exams**
- **Literacy skills**
- **Communication skills**

FIGURE 1: PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

6.0 Acknowledgement

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