

Teachers' Capacity Building Strategies and Pupils' Academic Performance in Muslim Public Primary Schools in Namutumba District of Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of teachers' capacity building strategies on the pupils' academic performance in muslim public primary schools in Namutumba district, Uganda. The specific objectives were to: establish the effect of in service training strategies on pupils' academic performance; find out the influence of teachers' collaboration on pupils'; and ascertain the influence of teacher's mentoring on pupils' academic performance in muslim funded public primary schools in Namutumba District. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Cluster sampling method was employed to select one hundred and thirty four (134) teachers from the schools for the study, while census was used to select the DEO and the ten (10) Head teachers. The study used questionnaire and structured interview guide to collect the data. The value of CVI obtained was 0.78 while the values of reliability obtained were 0.767, 0.755 and 0.787 for in- service training, collaboration and mentoring respectively, which indicates that the questionnaire items were relevant and suitable. One hundred and thirty four (134) questionnaires were administered while a total of ninety eight (98) teachers returned giving a return rate of 73.1%. The data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis approaches. The quantitative data were descriptively and inferentially analyzed. Frequencies and percentages were used and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics was used to establish the level of the relationship. On the other hand, the qualitative data were thematically analyzed using data collected from interviewing the head teachers and DEO. Majority 54.1% of the teachers were males, majority 57.1% of the teachers were below 38 years, and overwhelming majority 92.8% of the teachers did not hold University degree. The study concluded that teachers' in-service training, teachers' collaboration in teaching and teachers' coaching strategy improves the pupils' academic performance in Muslim primary schools in Namutumba district. Finally, the study recommended that government should hold in-service training to include themes on professional skills and subject matter to enable all teachers benefit and be able to help learners improve in their performance; school administration should setup academic committees in schools where teachers discuss learners' challenges and ways of helping learners improve; and school management should identify the teachers' competencies in their teaching areas and assign them responsibilities of coaching other teachers.

Keywords: In-service training; Collaboration; Mentoring; Academic performance; Muslim schools.

1. Introduction

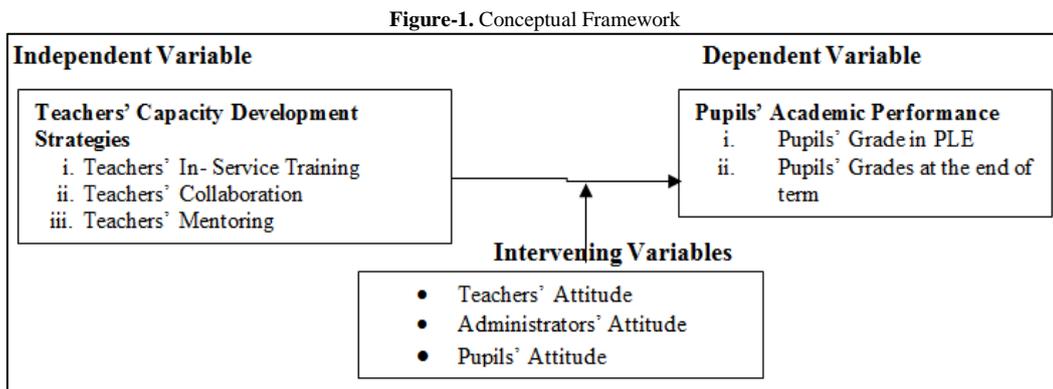
Education not only benefits the person learning, but also the community in which they live. [Obanya \(2010\)](#) posited that teachers remain essential actors and catalysts for change in all efforts aimed at promoting quality education in schools. The new teaching and learning paradigm requires teachers to be prepared to participate in knowledge co-creation with learners. Reforms on teacher training and management are required (OECD, 2012). [Sanyai \(2013\)](#), emphasized that countries in Africa have designed satisfactory processes, mechanisms and policies for ensuring the standard of teacher education hence there is need for elevating and up-scaling the on-going teacher enhancement struggles. [Ndungu \(2015\)](#), found out that, in Nandi sub-county Kenya, teachers who have been prepared with necessary skills, knowledge and competencies in their teaching areas are able to eloquently teach, enabling pupils' to perform well. Similarly, [Chelangat \(2015\)](#) noted that teachers' capacity development is the most instrumental in enhancing the academic performance of learners.

The Uganda Government is committed to developing education at all levels and endeavors to advance pupils' academic achievement in primary education through Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE). Namutumba District is one of the eleven districts in Busoga region of Uganda. The PLE's failure rate in this district was at 24.6% as compared to other Busoga districts like Jinja with 1.8 % (MoES, 2017). According to the DEO of Namutumba Report on PLE results in 2016, the PLE average pass rate was 66.7% hence not meeting the 90% as the MoES pass rate demands. The issue of poor performance has become an area of concern

to many stake holders in education within and outside the district. Performance in PLE is therefore a good indicator of the quality of education offered in schools. This is because it is a homogeneous instrument and therefore a reliable measure of academic performance. Teachers are among the key factors that influences students’ academic performance and their competence level influence pupils’ performance.

According to District Education Officer (2016) Report steps have been taken to ensure that the academic performance improves like Joint promotional examination for the P.7 class, emphasizing 100% of teachers’ attendance and engaging teachers in continuous professional developments (CPD) by Center co-coordinating Tutors (CCT) and the non- government Education organization like STIR and EGR all being supervised by the education department. Despite the various efforts by MoES to improve pupils’ performance in Uganda, the trend on pupils’ academic performance in Namutumba district remains poor according to MoES circular to Chief Administrative Officer Namutumba District (MoES-Uganda, 2016) Circular. Teaching changes with changing trends and teachers in primary schools need to improve their teaching competences, skills and knowledge of teaching practice by taking advantage of available professional development opportunities. It is upon such a background that the study investigated the effect of teachers’ capacity development strategies on pupils’ academic performance in Public Muslim Schools in Namutumba District, Uganda.

2. Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher (2020)

The conceptual frame work given in Figure 1 shows how the independent variable, intervening variable and the dependent variable interrelate to lead to pupils’ academic achievement that subsequently lead to students out comes. The pupils’ academic performance was taken to be as the dependent variable which is discussed through the relationship of the independent variables like teachers’ in-service training, teachers’ collaboration and teacher mentoring as the teacher capacity development strategies and the intervening variable which included the teachers’ attitude, administrators’ attitude and the pupils’ attitude.

2.1. General Objective

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of teachers’ capacity building strategies on the pupils’ academic performance in Muslim Public Primary Schools in Namutumba.

2.2. Specific Objectives

To establish the effect of in service training strategies on pupils’ academic performance in muslim founded public primary schools in Namutumba District.

To find out the influence of teachers’ collaboration on pupils’ in muslim founded public primary school in Namutumba District.

To ascertain the influence of teacher’s mentoring on pupils’ academic performance in Muslim founded public primary schools in Namutumba District.

2.3. Literature Review

Bowra *et al.* (2011) established that institutions that succeed are aware of many factors which contribute to academic performance but human resource is absolutely the most vital. According to Tharenou, Alan and Celia (2007), the aim of training human resources is to improve the institutions’ success in what they do. It also demands an influence on workers’ performance, as well as in relation to institutional performance which is mediated by means of workers’ performance.

In-service training is an essential strategy in influencing the professional development of teachers and it plays a constructive role in improving their knowledge and teaching and learning qualities improve (Saiti & Saiti, 2006 cited in Arinaitwe (2018)). Teachers are trained and possess the basic teaching qualification but still require additional knowledge and skills in their areas or discipline, to improve their competency in teaching and improve their status Alabi and Ige (2014). According to Asswathapa (2010) there are two methods of training and these are on job and off. In-service training involves activities such as seminars, workshops, conferences, classes among others.

Studies by [Ekpoh \(2013\)](#) noted that when teachers attend in-service training; they perform well in their work especially in areas of subject knowledge, classroom management, teaching methods and pupils' evaluation. On educating adolescents in New York, reported that in-service training made teachers improve on their teaching skills and knowledge thus enhancing their content delivery. Found that a well trained teacher is able to have a strong knowledge and understanding of the subject content they are teaching their pupils and such teachers integrate various teaching methods thus improving their content delivery in the classroom.

Collaboration is one of the most powerful strategies for teacher professional development. [Leonard \(2003\)](#), noted that students' performance were enhanced when the instructional staff functions as a team and abandons its traditional norms of isolation and individualism. Teachers in a team help to guard the quality of the teaching force in ways that are impossible when teachers work in isolation. Working in teams helps to understand the different emotions one has and how to relate with one another to achieve the most. [Chenoweth \(2009\)](#), opined that teacher collaboration must be in place because no teacher is an expert on all elements of the curriculum. All teachers have expertise that should be used by other teachers to improve knowledge of subjects. When all involved in the collaboration process learn together, the team will ultimately produce a list of the most essential outcomes in each subject in which the members are committed to helping all students learn ([DuFour, 2010](#)).

Mentoring plays a critical role in continually improving the professional knowledge and skills that teachers need to instruct and prepare students for the next century. Both new teachers and experienced teachers need mentoring too. Both mentors and mentees, as a means for professional growth, should be able to learn from each other, including an "openness to receiving constructive feedback and a willingness to provide it" as a part of two-way relationship. Noted that mentoring as part of professional development creates opportunities, not only for teachers to enrich their pedagogical and subject content knowledge, but they can also create new career pathways for experienced and 'good' mentor teachers.

In Uganda the primary teachers colleges release new teachers every year after their training of two years and these teachers are absorbed in the public and private schools across the country. It is paramount that these teachers are inducted into the system and culture of teaching and learning.

2.4. Importance of the Study

Teaching changes with changing trends and teachers in primary schools need to improve their teaching competences, skills and knowledge of teaching practice by taking advantage of available professional development opportunities.

2.5. Research Gap

The study employed a descriptive survey design during the study. It enables the researchers to maintain a high level of confidentiality and enables questions to be asked personally in an interview or impersonal through questionnaires about things which cannot be observed easily.

3. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population for the study consisted of District Education Officer (DEO), Head teachers and teachers in the selected Muslim public primary schools. Yamane's sampling formulae was used for sample size determination and was based on a 5% level of precision (e). Cluster sampling method was employed to select one hundred and thirty four (134) teachers from the schools for the study, while census was used to select the DEO and the ten (10) Head teachers.

The study used questionnaire and structured interview to collect the data. The value of CVI obtained was 0.78, which indicates that the questionnaire items were relevant. The values of reliability obtained were 0.767, 0.755 and 0.787 for teachers' in-service training, teachers' collaboration and teachers' mentoring respectively. This range is considered high and acceptable; the results ensure the reliability of each construct of the questionnaire; and indicate a good degree of reliability of the entire questionnaire, as supported by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and [George and Mallery's \(2003\)](#). Hence, it was proved that the questionnaire is valid, reliable and suitable for the study.

The data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis approaches. The quantitative data were descriptively and inferentially analyzed. Frequencies and percentages were used and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics was used to establish the level of the relationship. On the other hand, the qualitative data were thematically analyzed using data collected from interviewing the head teachers and DEO.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Data

One hundred and thirty four (134) questionnaires were administered while a total of ninety eight (98) teachers returned the filled questionnaires giving the return rate as 73.1%. According to [Babble \(2001\)](#), a response rate that is above 60% is appropriate to make conclusions. The return rate was a clear indication that a good number of respondents (teachers) participated in the study.

Results in [Table 1](#) indicated that the majority 54.1% of the teachers were males, majority 57.1% of the teachers were below 38 years, and overwhelming majority 92.8% of the teachers did not hold University degree.

Table-1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (n=98)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	53	45.9
	Male	45	54.1
Age of Respondent	22-29	30	30.6
	30-37	26	26.5
	38-45	26	26.5
	46 and above	16	16.3
Educational Qualification	Grade III	56	57.1
	Diploma in Primary Education	35	35.7
	Bachelors' Degree	7	7.2

Source: Primary Data (2021)

4.2. Teachers’ In-Service Training and Pupils’ Academic Performance

Results revealed that majority 82.7% of the respondents totally agreed that the workshop they attended covered the theme about curriculum knowledge and interpretation, and 16.3% were in disagreement, 1% were undecided. This therefore implies that the workshop attended covered the theme about curriculum knowledge and interpretation.

Similarly, majority 90.8% of the respondents were in agreement that the seminar they attended had exposed them to several teaching methods, 8.2% were in disagreement while only 1% were undecided. This implies that the seminars they attended had exposed them to several teaching methods.

Overwhelming majority (92.9%) were in agreement that the workshop they attended involved the teacher professional skills, (6.2%) were in disagreement that the workshop they attended did not involve teachers’ professional skills and (1%) were undecided. This means that the workshop they attended involved teachers’ professional skills.

Majority (84.7%) were in agreement that the workshop they attended engaged them in understanding the subject knowledge that they taught to their learners, while (13.3%) were in disagreement and only (2.0%) were undecided. This implies that the workshops they attended engaged them in understanding the subject knowledge that they taught to their learners.

Simple majority (53%) were in agreement that workshops are organized every term, 35.7% were in disagreement while 11.2% were undecided. This implies that workshops are at least organized every term.

Simple majority (46%) were in disagreement that workshops were usually organized at the beginning of the term, 41.8% were in agreement while 12.2% were undecided.

Simple majority (49%) were in agreement that teachers are actively involved in the planning of the workshop, 34.7% were in disagreement while 13.3% were undecided. This means that teachers actively involved in the planning of the workshop.

Majority (83.7%) were in agreement that they applied the knowledge and skills got from the workshop, 12.2% were in disagreement while 4.1% were undecided. This implies that the teachers applied the knowledge and skills got from the workshop.

Table-2. Pearson product moment correlation between teachers’ in service training and pupils’ academic performance

Variables Computed index		Teachers’ in service training	Academic performance
Teachers’ in service training	Pearson Correlation	1	0.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	98	98
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	0.824**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data (2021)

Results showed that the relationship between the teachers’ in-service training and pupils’ academic performance in public primary schools in Namutumba district was positive, strong and statistically significant ($r=0.824^{**}$, $p<0.000$). This implies that the teachers’ in-service training improves the academic performance of pupils and therefore the stated hypothesis was rejected. The more the training the more the teachers improve in their practice enabling learners to improve in their performance.

The qualitative data revealed that the most common in-service training courses engaged in by teachers in Namutumba district are workshops and upgrading. One head teacher was quoted say:

“Upgrading is really very common and there are people who have motivated many of us to go for upgrading like our DEO is now a PhD holder and even my neighbour in the next school who is a head teacher is a Dr. So really this motivates us and we use such examples to give encouragement to our teachers”.

Head teachers also said that the in-service training through workshops are held twice in a term and that once a year they receive in-service training.

When asked about important issues in the in-service training, head teachers noted that scheming, lesson planning and making of instructional materials were the main areas of concentration. They further noted that the in-service training was about quality education which involved motivation, pronunciation of words, accuracy in English and interpretation of the curriculum. They said that the service training were about addressing the challenges faced in school and how to help parents. And that code of conduct is always key issue in the in-service training. One head teacher reiterated:

“We cannot leave a meeting without discussing something about our school especially some challenges among learners and therefore all our meeting we try to address a certain issue”.

When asked about the relevancy of in-service training courses, head teachers acknowledged that there is a lot of new knowledge and new methods of teaching which they do not know of as of yet and therefore the in-service training helps them to be updated with the new information. They noted that teachers are able to get certificates which help them get promotions at work. Whenever their teachers attend workshops, there is always a big change in terms of professionalism and also learners’ interest for school increase, and that teachers unite and create more friends and grow in relationship and this has been noted by the teachers who attend the STIR programs at the district.

This was supported by the DEO who noted that:

On job training is very good and in- service teachers are better than pre-service teachers because they are supervised by the CCTs who prepare for them Peer Group Meetings (PGM) on Saturday. The in- service training have greatly improved the performance especially for those learners whose teachers participate.

4.3. Teachers’ Collaboration and Pupils’ Academic Performance

Results indicated that majority (87.7%) of the teachers were in agreement that they regularly collaborate with other teachers on academic matters, 6.2% were in disagreement while 6.1% were undecided. This implies that the teachers always collaborate with others on academic matters.

Majority (89.5%) of the teachers were in agreement that interact with other teachers concerning lesson planning, 6.2 were in disagreement while 4.1% were undecided. This implies that the teachers usually interact with others concerning lesson planning.

Overwhelming majority (92.8%) of the teachers was in agreement that they discuss with other teachers on how to best deliver content effectively, 4.1% were undecided while 3.1% were in a disagreement. This implies that teachers usually discuss with others on how best to deliver content effectively to the learners.

Overwhelming majority (90.8%) was in agreement that they discuss learners’ assessments with other teachers, 6.1% were in disagreement while 3.1% were undecided. This therefore implies that teachers always discuss learners’ assessments with others.

Majority (87.2%) were in agreement that their lessons are observed by fellow teachers and they share feedback with them, 9.2% were in disagreement while 3.6% were undecided. This means that the lessons are usually observed by fellow teachers and then share the feedback.

Overwhelming majority (90.8%) of the teachers was in agreement that they discuss with other teachers about common learning challenges facing learners, 5.1% were in disagreement while 4.1% were undecided. This implies that teachers always discuss with other teachers about common learning challenges facing learners.

Table-3. Pearson product moment correlation between teachers’ collaboration and academic performance

Variables Computed index		Teachers’ collaboration	Academic performance
Teachers’ collaboration	Pearson Correlation	1	0.949**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	98	98
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	0.949**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	98	98

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data (2021)

Results in Table 3 show the Pearson product moment correlation was applied to establish the influence of teachers’ collaboration and pupils’ academic performance in public primary schools in Namutumba district and the results indicate that the two variables has a statistically strong and significant relationship ($r=0.949^{**}$, $p<0.000$). This means that teachers’ collaboration in teaching improved the pupils’ academic performance therefore the stated hypothesis was rejected.

Head teachers noted that:

“Teachers collaborate during scheming and lesson planning, during material development and these were especially teachers who attended STIR workshop and teachers also collaborate during marking guides development and panel marking”.

When asked about who initiates the collaborations, one head teacher noted that:

“As head teachers, we initiate collaboration. This is because as the top administrators, our task is to initiate collaboration. Although some teachers also initiate collaboration among themselves”.

These finding are supported by the finding from the interviews with the DEO who said that:

“Teachers in schools collaborate during scheming and lesson planning most especially the lower class teachers using EGR approach of teaching. Then the upper teachers invite other teachers from other schools to help them teach certain topics”.

4.4. Strategy of Teachers’ Mentoring and Pupil’s Academic Performance

Results indicated that majority of the teachers (89.8%) were in agreement that they seek professional advice from their senior colleagues on a regular basis, 7.2% were in disagreement while 3.1% were undecided. This implies that teachers seek professional advice from their senior colleagues.

Majority (69.4%) of the teachers were in agreement that monitoring programs is initiated by the school, 18.4% were in disagreement while 12.2% were undecided. This implies that monitoring programs were always initiated by the school.

Majority 80.6%) were in agreement that they receive mentoring from senior colleagues on how design relevant instructional materials, 11.2% were in disagreement and 8.2% were undecided. This implies that teachers receive mentoring from their senior colleagues on how to design relevant instructional materials.

Majority (86.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that experienced subject teachers often mentor them on innovative teaching methods, 9.2% were in disagreement while 4.1% were undecided. This therefore means that experienced subject teachers often mentor the junior teachers on innovative teaching methods.

Majority (84.7%) were in agreement that they present their lesson plans to their seniors, 8.2% were in disagreement while 7.1% were undecided. This implies that teachers present their lesson plans to their seniors.

Majority (81.6%) of the teachers were in agreement that they present their assessment questions to their HODs, 10.2% were in disagreement and 8.2% were in undecided. This implies that teachers always present their assessment questions to the HODs.

Table-4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Teacher coaching and Academic Performance

Variables Computed index		Teacher mentorship coaching	Academic performance
Teacher mentorship coaching	Pearson Correlation	1	0.867**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	98	98
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	0.867**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	98	98

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data (2021)

Results in Table 4 show the Pearson product moment correlation was applied to establish the influence of teachers’ coaching and pupils’ academic performance in public primary schools in Namutumba district and the results indicate that the two variables have a statistically positive and significant relationship ($r=0.867^{**}$, $p<0.000$). This means that teachers’ coaching strategy improves the pupils’ academic performance and so the more the teachers work together with a mentor the more they perform their work better consequently improving the pupils’ academic performance.

When asked about topical issues done in mentoring, head teachers said that discipline always needs one to be mentored. They noted that guidance and counselling are key topics down mentorship and that issue of quality education needs mentorship especially to the new teachers. One head teacher said:

“School culture and attitude need mentoring especially in the Muslim schools where not all learners and teachers are muslims, there is need to mentor them about the dressing code, and flexibility when it comes to time of learners learning Islam and going for prayers”.

They further noted that in all meetings held in the school for all teachers and a one on one interactions mentorship is done. And that mentorship is done once a term.

In relation to these findings, in an interview with the DEO, he said:

“Teacher coaching is good and relevant in improving learners’ performance and the head teachers and CCTs do a lot of support supervision of teacher and support them in those areas that need find wanting”.

4.5. Responses on Pupils’ Academic Performance

Results indicated that majority (82.6%) of the teachers were in agreement that pupils grades in primary leaving examinations have been improving over the past five years, 10.2% were undecided. This implies that the pupils’ grades in primary leaving examinations have been improving over the past 5years.

Majority (80.7%) of the teachers were in agreement that the mocks haven improving over the past 5years, 10.2% were in disagreement while 9.2% were n undecided. This means that the pupils’ mock examination grades have been improving over the past 5 years.

Majority (89.8%) of the teachers were in agreement that pupils participate actively in the teaching learning process, 7.9% were in disagreement while 3.1% were undecided. This implies that pupils actively participate in teaching learning process.

Simple majority (74.4%) were in agreement that pupils' performance in English has been steadily improving over the past 5 years, 14.3% were in disagreement and 11.2% were undecided. This means that the pupils' performance in English has been steadily improving over the past 5 years.

Simple majority (79.5%) were in agreement that there has been improved academic performance in Mathematics, 13.2% were in disagreement while 7.3% were undecided. This implies that there has been an improved academic performance in Mathematics over the past 5 years.

Majority (81.7%) were in agreement that pupils grades in Social Studies have improved over the past 5 years, 11.2% were in undecided while 7.1% were in disagreement. This means that pupils' grades in Social Studies have improved over the past 5 years.

Majority (82.6%) of the teachers were in agreement that academic performance in Integrated Science has tremendously improved over the past 5 years, 9.1% were in disagreement and 8.2% were undecided. This therefore implies that academic performance in Integrated Science has tremendously improved over the past 5 years.

When asked about the indicators of improvement in the school, they said that good PLE results, change in behaviour among learners and writing of monthly reports. One head teacher said further that:

"Replication of what is done and learnt at school by the learners in their homes was a good indicator of improvement".

When asked about the percentage level of performance in English, MTC, Science and Social Studies, head teachers said that:

"Mock results were averagely fair. PLE results improved and were fair. There was a fair performance in English and MTC, but good performance in Science and Social Studies".

5. Conclusions

The study concluded that the workshop and seminars attended by teachers covered the theme about curriculum knowledge and interpretation, and had exposed them to several teaching methods. They gained professional skills and subject knowledge that they taught to their learners. They actively involved in the planning of the workshop, applied the knowledge and skills got from the workshop. The teachers' in-service training improves the academic performance of pupils. The more the training the more the teachers improve in their practice enabling learners to improve in their performance.

The study also concluded that teachers always collaborate with others on academic matters, interact with others concerning lesson planning, discuss with others on how best to deliver content effectively to the learners and discuss learners' assessments with others. Lessons are usually observed by fellow teachers and then share the feedback. Teachers always discuss among themselves about common learning challenges facing learners and teachers' collaboration in teaching improved the pupils' academic performance.

The study further concluded that teachers seek professional advice and receive mentoring from their senior colleagues on how to design relevant instructional materials and innovating teaching methods. Teachers always present their lesson plans and assessment questions to the HODs. Teachers' coaching strategy improves the pupils' academic performance and so the more the teachers work together with a mentor the more they perform their work better.

Recommendations

Government should hold in-service training to include themes on professional skills and subject matter to enable all teachers benefit and be able to help learners improve in their performance since a few teachers have been attending.

School administration should setup academic committees in schools where teachers discuss learners' challenges and ways of helping learners improve, teachers should utilize co-teaching strategy that will encourage lesson observation in order to improve on teachers' classroom practice and create time and offer knowledge to head teachers and teachers about teacher collaboration as a strategy in teacher capacity development in order to improve on its usage.

School management should identify the teachers' competencies in their teaching areas and assign them responsibilities of coaching other teachers, create schedules in schools where every teacher has time to make consultations and train teachers about teacher coaching model as an approach to improving pupils' performance.

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