

An Assessment of Kiswahili Teachers Characteristics as Determinants of Student Performance in Kiswahili Subject in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of teacher characteristics on students' performance in Kiswahili subject in Secondary schools in Kenya. This research focused on teacher characteristics in education, more so in Kiswahili language. Every year results in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations depict different achievements by students in Kiswahili subject. This raises mixed reactions from teachers, parents and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, it is this disparity in students' performance that made the researcher interested in determining its cause. This research therefore aimed at determining if teacher characteristics predicts students' performance. The study objective was to find out how teacher characteristics of Kiswahili teachers in secondary schools influence students' performance in Kiswahili subject. This study was guided by the theory of Input and Output which was advanced by Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2004). It states that input reflects output. The research adopted a case study design and used library and field research oriented methods. Purposive sampling technique was used to acquire data based on teacher characteristics such as experience, level of academic achievement, specialization in the areas of study, responsibility, teamwork, creativity and linguistic competence. The research was carried out in 12 schools of levels of national, county and sub-county, which were purposively sampled in Kakamega and Siaya counties. The research involved 36 secondary school teachers of which 3 teachers were selected from each school inclusive of the principal. In this research, 24 form four students were involved in the study representing 2 students from each of the schools selected. Different questionnaires and observation guides were used for the different categories of respondents. Statistically Quantitative data was analyzed by way of descriptive as well as inferential statistics by use of SPSS program and presented graphs, pie charts and tables of frequencies and percentages. The findings of the research showed that teachers 18 (79%) who posted good results exhibited three major characteristics, namely: teamwork, regular class attendance and good preparation before going to class. This research recommended that there was an urgent need by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and the Ministry of Education to still hold seminars and workshops for Kiswahili teachers on effect of teacher qualities on student performance in Kiswahili in secondary schools in Kenya. Better still there is need for KICD to review the curriculum with the view of reducing workload and increasing time allocated for Kiswahili lessons in secondary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: Teacher characteristics, Student Performance, Kiswahili subject

1.1 Background to the study

In Kenya, National examination results in Kiswahili depict significantly different performance levels among students (Daily Nation, March 2012). As a result of performance in Kiswahili subject, various schools have been acknowledged for excellent performance while others have been rebuked for consistently undesirable results. As a result of this state of affairs, some teachers have been threatened and sometimes transferred for non-performance in their respective subjects (K.N.E.C, 2012). What comes out clearly is that some teachers' characteristics contribute to positive student achievement in Kiswahili subject while other characteristics have been associated with poor performance of students in national examinations (Tuntufye, 1986). The impact of teacher characteristics (both qualifications and demographic characteristics) is important for education policy. Ensuring that teachers best suited and most able to enhance student performance are employed is a key responsibility for policymakers. Wayne and Youngs (2003) explain that a large body of literature about teacher characteristics and education outcomes exists. The focus on the studies vary between questions about teacher quantity and turnover and issues surrounding teacher quality. In many countries (South Africa included) certain qualifications need to be obtained before teachers are permitted to enter the teaching force. Much of the literature surrounding teacher characteristics and student performance is comprised of analyses of the impact of these and other qualifications.

Attempts have been made to identify trends in the quality of teachers, and the question whether characteristics of teachers in different parts of the schooling system exist is often investigated (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). The relationship between teacher characteristics and student performance is surprisingly elusive, however. Researchers have found it difficult to find aspects of teacher training that correlate with student performance in a statistically significant way (Chingos & Peterson, 2011). Conflicting or indeterminate results occur often. Summers and Wolfe (1977) investigated the impact of teacher scores on "Philadelphia's National Teacher

Evaluations” on performance amongst primary schools students in that state, finding a negative relationship between teacher performance and student scores on standardised tests. Anderson (2000) investigates the determinants of student performance in mathematics and language in

Mexico and finds a positive and statistically significant impact in both mathematics and language for teachers making use of a more interactive approach to teaching as opposed to a traditional approach in which lessons are dominated by teachers talking and instructing (Anderson, 2000). She also finds evidence of a positive relationship between hours spent teaching and performance in both subjects (Anderson, 2000). Teacher effort variables therefore impact positively and statistically significantly on student performance. An interesting and important result is the positive and significant impact on both language and mathematics observed for teacher training during the year in which the study was conducted (Anderson, 2000). Angrist and Lavy (2001) find positive estimates of the impact of inservice teacher training on both mathematics and language in secular primary schools in Jerusalem. They report that their results are robust to a number of estimation techniques, namely regression, difference-in-difference techniques as well as matching techniques. The fact that the effect is only observed in secular schools may be due to the fact that the training programme was introduced later and on a smaller scale in religious schools (Angrist & Lavy, 2001). Evidence from Pakistan suggests that teacher qualifications are indeed important for student performance. Arif and Saqib (2003) control for the individual and family characteristics of students, the characteristics of the schools they attend, geographic characteristics as well as a range of teacher characteristics and find that whether a teacher has a bachelor’s degree or higher is positively and statistically significantly associated with student performance in language, mathematics and general knowledge as well as a measure capturing performance in all three (Arif & Saqib, 2003).

An earlier study conducted in Pakistan (Behrman, Kahn, Ross & Sabot, 1997) construct teacher quality indices for language and mathematics. These indices are linear functions of teacher performance on literacy or numeracy tests, educational attainment, and teaching experience and its squared term (Behrman et al., 1997). Controlling for student demographic characteristics and family background, school characteristics, student-teacher ratios and student ability, they found a positive and statistically significant relationship between the teacher quality index and student performance in both numeracy and literacy. It is upon this background that this study was formulated to assess the effect of Kiswahili teachers’ characteristics on student performance in Kiswahili subject.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teachers have been charged with the responsibility teaching syllabus content and ensuring that the syllabus is adequately covered. Despite the fact that teachers attend more or less the same universities and colleges, their student post significantly different results in Kiswahili subject during national examinations. This happens notwithstanding the fact that student undertake their studies in more or less similar learning environments. In addition, students join secondary schools based on marks scored at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination (K.C.P.E). despite the fact that all schools use the same syllabus (KIE 2002), there has been significant differences in student performance in Kiswahili subject during K.C.S.E examinations. Various research studies have been conducted to ascertain teachers characteristics that bring about good or bad student results in Kiswahili subject during national examinations. It is based upon this background that the study purposed to assess the effect of Kiswahili teachers characteristics on student performance in Kiswahili subject.

1.3 Study Objective

The study was guided by the following objective;

To determine the effect of teachers’ characteristics on students’ performance in Kiswahili subject in Secondary Schools in Kenya

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study has stretched the frontiers of knowledge as regards to contribution of teachers’ characteristics on student performance in Kiswahili subject in secondary schools in Kenya. Kiswahili students and academics wishing to conduct research on the relationship between teacher characteristics and student performance will use this study and its findings as a source of literature. The study has made vital recommendations to various stakeholders in the education sector regarding the strategies to espouse in order to realize improved student performance in Kiswahili subject in secondary schools in Kenya.

1.5 Review of Related Literature

Teacher Characteristics

Teachers are essential in the entire educational system of any nation and are pivots on which education wheels revolve. Ashimole (2011) emphasized that teaching and learning depends largely on teachers, and that it is on teachers” number, quality and devotion that rest the effectiveness of all educational arrangements, development

and growth. Similarly Akinsolu (2010) observed that teachers are vital pre-requisites for students' attainment of educational goals and objectives. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2006) also recognized the importance of teachers by stating that no nation's education system can be greater than the standard of their teachers. The term "teacher characteristics" can be referred to as qualities that can be measured with tests or derived from their academic or professional records. They indicate that teacher characteristics does not generally refer to the direct observation of their influence on students' learning in terms of either students' test performance or teaching behaviors. Rather, the approaches dealt within the scope of this research are those that fall traditionally into the province of personnel psychology or personnel selection. This review deals with those characteristics of teachers that might be identified and used in the initial hiring of teachers to increase their students' achievement.

Ashton (1996) indicates that these characteristics could include qualities of teachers that are viewed as personal such as mental ability, age, gender or as "experiential" – such as certification status, educational background, previous teaching experience and the like. Some characteristics are combinations in unknown amounts of personal and experiential qualities, for example; candidates' performance on teacher-certification tests such as the national teacher examinations and state-mandated tests.

Teacher Qualification and Student Academic Achievement

Darling – Hammond (1998) defines well qualified teacher as one who was fully certified and held the equivalent of a major in the field being taught. Although the formal qualification of teachers is an important indicator for their knowledge and competence in teaching, it has only limited utility in analyzing how well prepared teachers are for what they have to teach in schools. More detailed knowledge of the courses they have taken during their training needs to be compared to the actual content and skills required to teach the high school's curriculum.

Ruthland & Bremer (2002) refer to teacher qualification in two ways - traditional and alternative qualification routes. Traditional certification is when an individual completes an undergraduate degree or post graduate program in education. Alternative routes of certification are based on coursework in pedagogy and subject area without a degree in education. Hardy & Smith (2006) cite short term activities such as mentoring, peer evaluations and workshops as ways other than formal qualifications for improving teaching. More often graduates teachers with first degree content go into teaching if they cannot find another job right away. Although they often get somewhat lower salary than a fully qualified teacher; they choose not to enroll in the one year post- graduate professional training and therefore lack a basic foundation for teaching.

Huang & Moon (2009) documents that teacher qualification accounted for approximately 40 to 60 percent of the variance in average of students' achievement in assessment. Richardson (2008) reveals that students in urban areas performed better than those in rural areas. The researcher suggests that the availability of enough qualified teachers must have been a determinant for students' performance. However, in Kenya, some schools in the rural areas have performed better than their urban counterparts (Owoeye & Yara, 2011). Maundu (1986) concludes that there was significant correlation between teacher qualification and pupil performance in Kenya. The good performance was attributed to excellent instructions given by qualified teachers in addition to other inputs. Maundu (1986) establishes that teachers who had graduated from Kenya Science Teachers College were more practically oriented than those who had degrees from public universities.

Wilson et al. (2001) suggest that even with the shortcomings of current teacher education and licensing, fully prepared and certified teachers are more successful with students than teachers without this preparation. Ashton (1996) notes that teachers with regular state certification receive higher supervisor ratings and student achievement than teachers who do not meet standards, but this observation was based on data with virtually no statistical controls having been imposed. In spite of the quantity of research on the benefits of teacher certification for student learning, little of the past research exercised controls over student "inputs" that would give the critical reader confidence in the findings. Laczko & Berliner (2001) assert that the impact of certification status on student achievement in two large urban school districts in the United States of America. These school districts provided information about teachers hired for the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. Information included the school where they were currently teaching, the grade level taught, the teacher's certification status, highest degree earned, date and institution where it was achieved, age, and number of years teaching experience.

It has been evidenced that in many countries, teacher qualifications that are considered to be related to student learning have become desirable targets of teacher education reform. Some of these reforms call for the professionalization of teacher education by making it longer, upgrading it to graduate programs, and regulating it through mechanisms of licensure, certification, and promotion aligned with standards (Darling-Hammond et al., 2001; 2002). Findings related to teachers' academic degrees (for example; bachelors or masters among others) are inconclusive. Some studies suggest positive effects of advanced degrees (Rice, 2003; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Some argue that the requirement of a second degree raises the cost in terms of teacher education and the time it involves and may prevent quality candidates from choosing this profession (Murnane, 1996). This characteristic is related to the subject-matter knowledge teachers acquire during their formal studies and pre-

service teacher education courses. The evidence gained from different studies is contradictory. Several studies report a positive relationship between teachers' preparation in the subject matter they later teach and student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), while others have less unequivocal results. Monk & King (1994) find both positive and negative effects of teachers' in-field preparation on student achievement.

Teacher Experience and Student Academic Achievement

Teacher experience has a significant effect on pupil performance in primary schools and at upper secondary level. Experienced teachers have a richer background of experience to draw from and can contribute insight and ideas to the course of teaching and learning, are open to correction and are less dictatorial in classroom. Teachers' experience and student achievement was that students taught by more experienced teachers achieve at a higher level, because their teachers have mastered the content and acquired classroom management skills to deal with different types of classroom problems (Gibbons et al., 1997). Furthermore, more experienced teachers are considered to be more able to concentrate on the most appropriate way to teach particular topics to students who differ in their abilities, prior knowledge and backgrounds (Stringfield & Teddlie, 1991). Teachers' attendance of in-service training are one of the indicators of experience. Teachers' motives to attend in-service training can be manifold e.g. increase in salary, career planning, keeping up with developments, filling in lacunae, removing insecurity and meeting colleagues. In the Science Education Project in South Africa (SEP), the objectives were mainly formulated by the developers after having consulted various experts who had experience with Education in Africa. The teachers in this program had been and did not have any experience with practical work. Only in a later stage of their in-service training course they had a better idea of the possible content and methods, did formulating objectives of their own lessons become part of the program (Fullan, 1992). Therefore, the more the teachers know about students, the better the teachers can connect with them and the more likely they will be able to benefit from the teachers' experience in reconstructing their world. The knowledge that teachers need about students in order to connect with them is gained through interaction. For many reasons, measuring the real impact of experience on a teacher's effectiveness is complex, more so than measuring any other teacher attribute. Consequently, many well-constructed research attempts to interpret the relationship between experience and effectiveness have produced varying results that reveal no particular pattern.

Murnane (1996) found that teacher effectiveness improves rapidly over the first three years of teaching and reaches its highest point between the third and fifth year but found no substantial improvement after year five. In contrast, a small number of studies suggest that teacher experience effects may be evident for a longer period of time. Ferguson (1991) reveals that at the high school level, students taught by teachers with more than nine years of experience had significantly higher test scores than students whose teachers had five to nine years of experience. Rivers & Sanders (2002) suggest that teacher' effectiveness increases dramatically each year during the first ten years of teaching". In the extreme case, Clotfelter et al., (2007) found evidence of growing teacher effectiveness out to 20 or more years in their analyses of North Carolina teacher data, although more than half of the gains in teacher effectiveness occurred during the first few years of teaching. Stronge et al. (2007) assert a positive relationship between teachers' verbal ability and composite student achievement, verbal ability has been considered an indicator of teacher quality. The basic logic is that teachers rely on talk to teach (explaining, questioning, and providing directions). What verbal ability means and how to measure it, it turns out, are not straightforward. Lai (2011) measured teachers' verbal ability with a 30-item sentence completion test. Thus, though talk about the importance of teachers' verbal ability persists, it is not a strong measure of teacher quality.

1.6 Study Methodology

The research adopted a case study design and used library and field research oriented methods. Purposive sampling technique was used to acquire data based on teacher characteristics such as experience, level of academic achievement, specialization in the areas of study, responsibility, teamwork, creativity and linguistic competence. The research was carried out in 12 schools of levels of national, county and sub-county, which were purposively sampled in Kakamega and Siaya counties. The research involved 36 secondary school teachers of which 3 teachers were selected from each school inclusive of the principal. In this research, 24 form four students were involved in the study representing 2 students from each of the schools selected. Different questionnaires and observation guides were used for the different categories of respondents. Statistically Quantitative data was analyzed by way of descriptive as well as inferential statistics by use of SPSS program and presented graphs, pie charts and tables of frequencies and percentages.

1.7 Study Findings

Both descriptive as well as inferential statistics were used in the process of data analysis. Descriptive statistics used included measures of dispersion and variability as well as measures of relative position while inferential statistics employed included Pearson Product moment Correlation Coefficient, Chi-Square, t-test and simple regression. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise and describe study data while inferential statistics were

used to deduce relationship patterns between and among study constructs. This is in line with the suggestion by Malhotra (2007) the statistical tools used are appropriate for procedures described above. Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for windows.

To verify the appropriateness of data sufficiency in conducting the study, the principal component analysis (PCA) was applied, as the sample was considered to be representative of the population. In order to check if the data was appropriate for such an analysis, the Kayser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (refer to table 1) was applied, which showed a value of 0.817. Field (2009b), referring to Hutcheson & Sofroniou (1999), states that values above 0.9 are superb; values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great; values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, and values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre. Kaiser (1974) recommended a minimum of 0.5. Therefore in this study the sample was significantly adequate for this kind of study.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also conducted in order to test if there are any relationships at all in the correlation matrix or if the matrix is an identity matrix (in an identity matrix all correlation coefficients would be zero). For the data at hand, Bartlett's Test gave a highly significant result, which is below 0.001. In conclusion, the data was significantly appropriate for this kind of statistical analysis.

Table 1: Test of Sampling adequacy and Sphericity of data

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.817	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	24954.442
	Df	2502
	Sig.	.000

The collected data was also tested using Kolmogorov – Smirnov (K-S) statistic to ascertain normality and uniformity in data in distribution. K-S is a non-parametric test that compares the cumulative distribution function for variables within a specified distribution (Malhotra, 2007). The overall outcome of K-S test using normalized Z –statistics for all the study variables obtained at the level of significance of (.000) (2-tailed) indicated that the collected data was normally and uniformly distributed. Such normal and uniform distribution made it safe for the researcher to use statistical analysis models and procedures that rely on normality of the distribution of data like correlation coefficients and regression.

1.7.1 Response Rate

The study targeted 60 respondents being 12 head teachers, 24 teachers and 24 students from 12 public schools in Kakamega and Siaya Counties. All the respondents participated in the study and returned their data collection instruments. This gave the study a response rate of 100%. According to Mugenda and Gitau (2009), a response rate 70% and above is excellent for generalization of findings from a sample onto the entire population from which the sample was drawn. With regard to this study, the response rate was excellent for generalizability of findings.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents from Teachers' category

The study sought to investigate basic information from the teachers who took part in the study as respondents. Of interest to the study were the education level of respondents and length of service as teachers. Study data relating to the two basic characteristics was subjected to descriptive statistics and findings presented below.

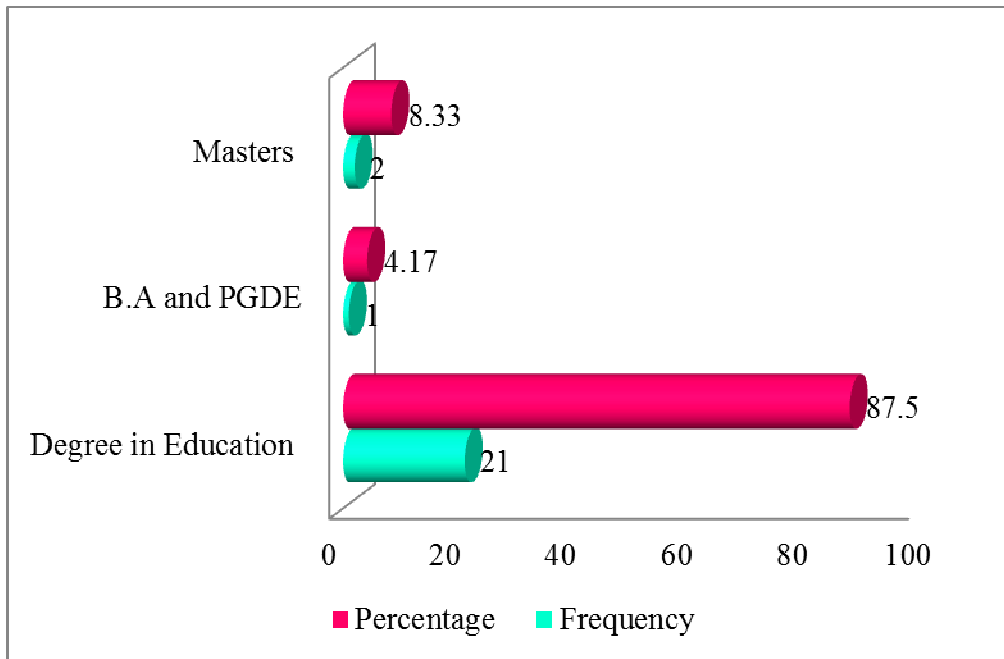


Figure 1: Education Level of Respondents

Findings in figure 1 reveal that 87.5% of the respondents from the category of teachers had bachelors degree in education while 8.33% had masters. It was also established based on the study findings that 4.17% of the respondents Bachelor of Arts degree and post Graduate Diploma in Education. This is a clear indication that study respondents were well educated and qualified individuals to teach Kiswahili subject at secondary school level.

Respondents were asked to indicate how long they had served as teachers and findings presented in figure 2.

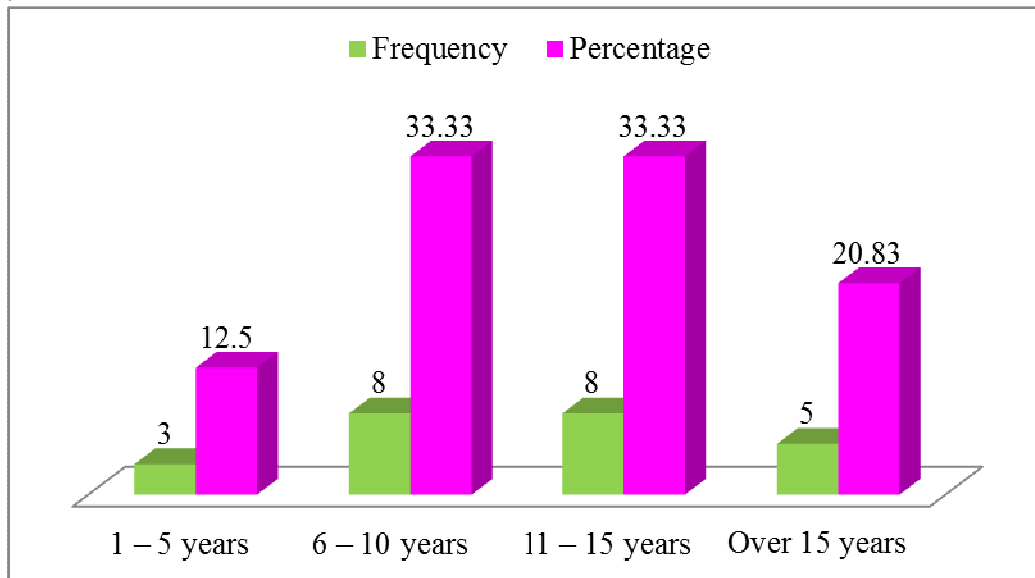


Figure 4.2: Teaching Experience of Repondents

Findings in figure 2 reveal that 33.33% of the respondents had served as Kiswahili teachers for 6 to 10 years and another 33.33% had served as Kiswahili teachers for 11 to 15 years. It was also revealed from the study findings that 20.83% of the respondents had served as Kiswahili teachers for over 15 years while those who had taught for 1 to 5 years. This shows that majority of the study respondents were experienced individuals with vast knowledge in Kiswahili syllabus coverage and curriculum delivery.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of Students

Respondents in the study were asked to indicate whether they had a personal study time table and if Kiswahili subject was included in the personal study time table. Findings are presented below.

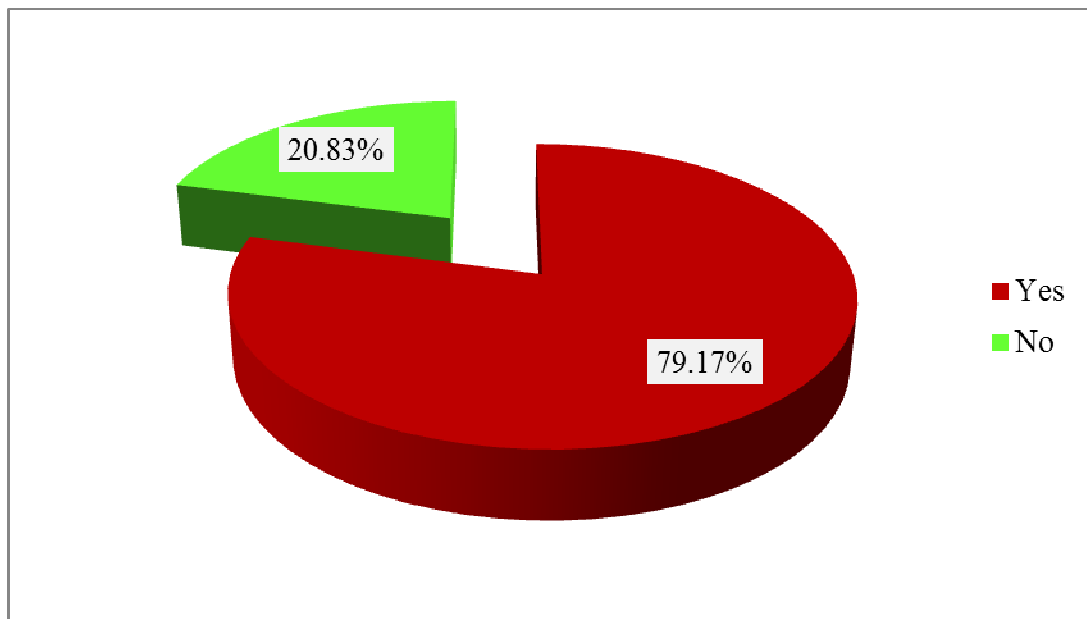


Figure 3: Respondents from Students Category with Personal Study time tables

Respondents were asked to state whether they had personal study time tables. Findings in figure 3 show that 79.17% of the respondents had personal study time tables while 20.83% did not have. This shows that a large majority of students had time tables that guided their personal reading.

Respondents who had personal study time table were asked to indicate whether Kiswahili subject was included on the time table and how many times the subject was included. Findings are presented in figure 4.

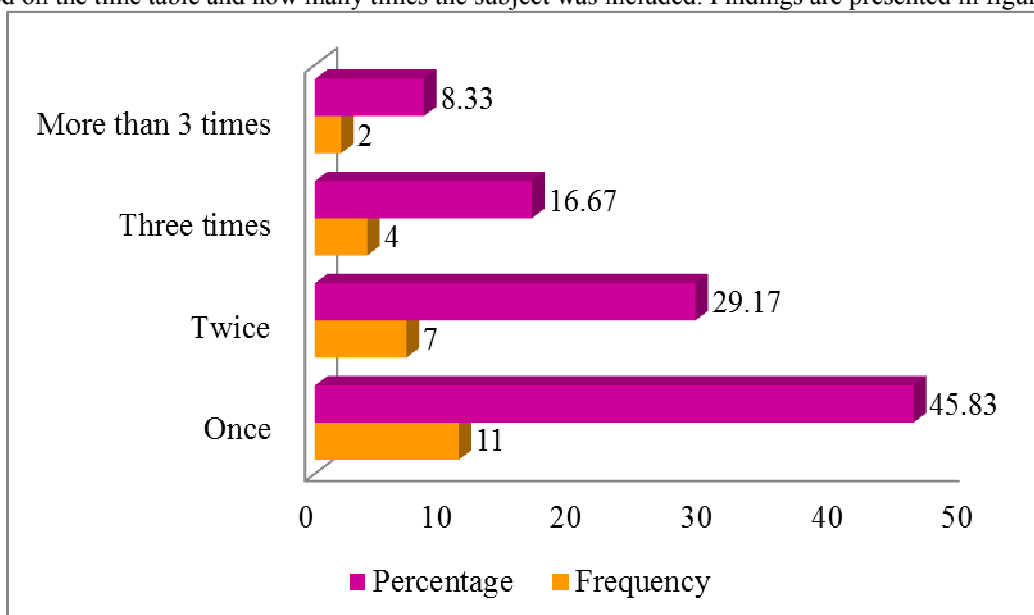


Figure 4: Number of times Kiswahili was included on students' personal reading time table

Findings in figure 4 reveal that 45.83% of the respondents who had Kiswahili on their personal reading timetable indicated that they had it just once while 29.17% had it twice on the time table. It was further established that 16.67% of the respondents had Kiswahili 3 times on their personal study time tables while 8.33% of the respondents had it more than 3 times. This reveals that many respondents who had Kiswahili on their personal time tables had it just once or fewer times. This shows that many students do not give Kiswahili subject adequate time in their revision.

4.4 Demographic characteristics of Head Teachers

In this section, head teachers were asked to indicate their education level, their teaching subjects, teaching experience and length of service in current school. Findings are presented below.

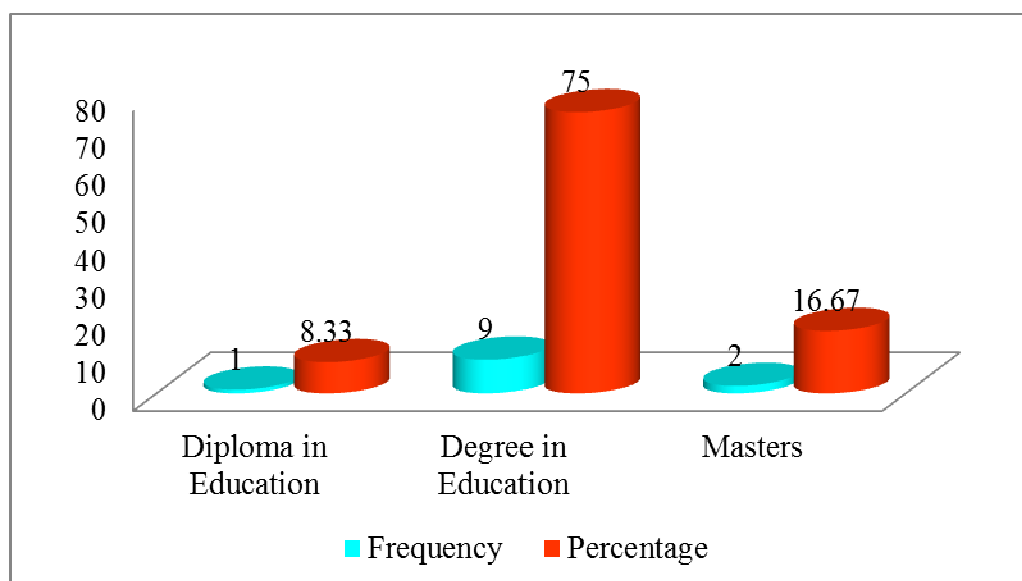


Figure 5: Education Level of Head Teachers

Results in figure 5 show that 75.0% of respondents from head teachers' category had a degree in education as their highest academic qualification while 16.67% had masters degrees. It was further revealed that 8.33% of the respondents had Diploma in education. This finding exemplifies highly qualified head teachers capable of providing direction as regards various aspects of school management.

Table 2: Teaching Subjects of Head Teachers

Teaching Subject	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kiswahili	2	16.67
Other subjects	10	83.33
Total	12	100.0

Findings in table 2 show that 83.33% of head teachers were teaching other subjects other than Kiswahili while 16.67% were Kiswahili teachers. This may imply that schools where head teachers are not Kiswahili teachers may not receive due attention with regard to provision of teaching and learning materials in Kiswahili subject.

Head teachers were asked to state how long they had worked as teachers and findings presented in table 3.

Table 3: Teaching Experience of Head Teachers

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 10 years	1	8.33
10 – 15 years	4	33.33
16 – 20 years	5	41.67
Over 20 years	2	16.67
Total	12	100.0

Results in table 3 show that 41.67% of the respondents had been teachers for 16 to 20 years while 33.33% had teaching experience of 10 to 15 years. Findings further showed that 16.67% of the respondents had been teachers for over 20 years while a further 8.33% had a teaching experience of less than 10 years. This shows that majority of the respondents from the head teachers category had a wealth of teaching experience and had a clear understanding of curriculum implementation in schools. It also reveals that appointments of head teachers consider length of teaching experience since majority of the head teachers are those who had taught for over 10 years.

Respondents were also asked to state how long they had served as head teachers in their current schools and findings presented in figure 6.

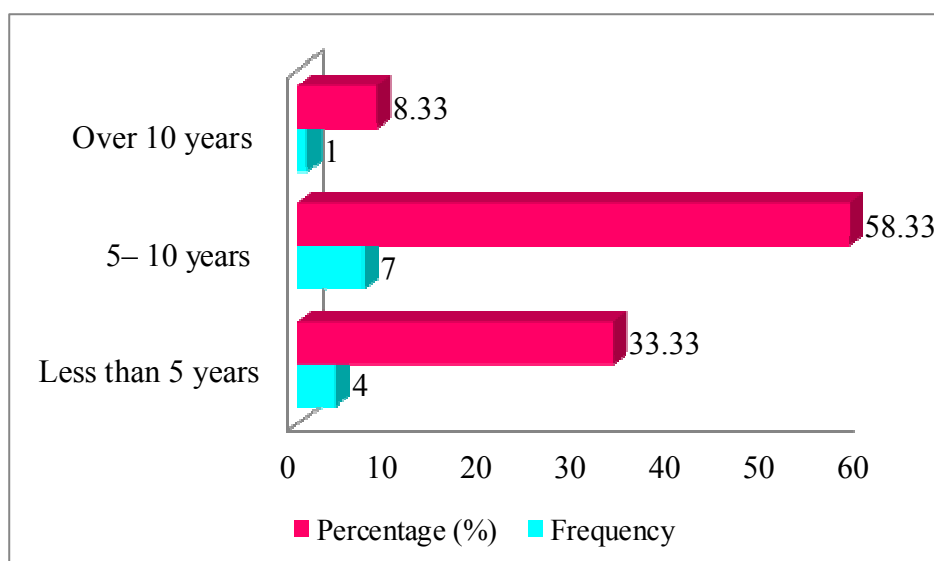


Figure 6: Length of Service in current School

Study findings in figure 6 show that 58.33 of the respondents had served as head teachers in their current schools for 5 to 10 years while 33.33% had been school heads in their current work stations for less than 5 years. It was also established based on the study findings that 8.33% of the respondents had been heads in their current schools for over 10 years. This reveals that majority of the head teachers had been in their current work stations long enough to understand characteristics of their teachers in the respective subjects and also how such teacher characteristics influenced student performance. Having been in their current schools for such a long period of time also made it possible for the head teachers to adequately respond to data collection instruments in a manner that was meaningful in addressing study variables.

The objective of the study sought investigate the influence of Kiswahili teachers' characteristics on student performance in secondary schools. Study constructs relating to teacher characteristics were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and findings presented in table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient for the relationship between teacher characteristics and student performance in Kiswahili subject

		Student Performance
Teacher Characteristics	Pearson Correlation	.584**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026
	N	60

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2- tailed)

*Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2 - tailed)

Source: Research data, 2015.

Findings in table 3 reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between teacher characteristics and student performance in Kiswahili subject in KCSE examinations in Kakamega and Siaya counties ($r=0.584$; $P< 0.05$). This implies that characteristics of Kiswahili teachers in Kakamega and Siaya counties contribute to 58.4% of the variance in student performance in Kiswahili subject in KCSE examinations in Kakamega and Siaya counties.

In order to determine the difference in magnitude of influence of teacher characteristics on student performance in Kiswahili for Kakamega and Siaya Counties, the study subjected performance related data for Kiswahili subject in the two counties to regression analysis and findings presented in table 4.

Table 4: Regression Results showing the effect of teacher characteristics on student performance in Kakamega and Siaya Counties

Variable	Coefficients	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.263	2.890	0.005
Kakamega County Performance	0.935	9.024	0.001*
Siaya County Performance	0.381	7.160	0.002*
Goodness of Fit:			
R ²	0.591		
Adjusted R ²	0.689		
F-value	3.592		

Findings in table 4 show regression results for the effect of teacher characteristics on student performance in Kiswahili subject at KCES in Kakamega and Siaya Counties. The constructs investigated were student performance in KCSE in secondary schools in Kakamega and Siaya Counties. Study findings revealed that calculated t-statistics ($t = 9.024$ and 7.160) for parameters performance in Kiswahili in Kakamega County school and performance in Kiswahili in Siaya County school respectively were greater than tabulated t-statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that teachers in Kakamega county exhibited more instructional related behaviour and characteristics in teaching Kiswahili subject ($t=0.9024$) as compared to their counterparts in Siaya County ($t=7.160$).

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.591 indicating that teacher characteristics accounted for 59.1% of variation in Kiswahili subject performance in KCSE examination in Kakamega and Siaya counties. The remaining 41.9% unexplained variable is largely due to variation in other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The overall regression model was statistically significant in terms of its overall goodness of fit ($f=3.592$, $P < 0.05$).

Various aspects of teacher characteristics were subjected to regression analysis to determine their influence on student performance in Kiswahili subject at KCSE examination and findings presented in table 5.

Table 5: Multinomial Logistic Regression for teacher characteristics and student performance in Kiswahili subject

Mode	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.229	.294		2.704	.029
Accountability	2.193	.62	.322	2.294	.025
Teaching experience	1.849	.55	.297	2.199	.021
Education level	1.664	.51	.251	2.107	.027

a. Predictors (Constant): Accountability, teaching experience, education level

b. Dependent Variable: Student performance in Kiswahili subject

A multinomial Logistic Regression analysis was conducted using teacher characteristics as predictors of the direction and magnitude of influence on student performance in Kiswahili subject in KCSE examinations. Study findings in table 5 indicated that teacher accountability had a contributing effect of 62% in the variance observed in student performance in Kiswahili subject (Beta 1.23, T 2.294, $P < 0.05$). It was also revealed based on the study findings that teaching experience of Kiswahili teachers contributed to 55% of the variance in student performance in Kiswahili subject (Beta 1.849, T 2.199, $P < 0.05$) while academic level of Kiswahili teachers accounted for 51% of the variance in student performance in Kiswahili subject (Beta 1.664, T 2.107, $P < 0.05$). This is a clear indication that teacher characteristics had a significant effect on student performance in Kiswahili subject in KCSE in Kakamega and Siaya Counties.

Study findings were compared with findings from previous studies on the relationship between teacher's characteristics and student performance. The impact of teacher characteristics (both qualifications and demographic characteristics) is important for education policy. Ensuring that teachers best suited and most able to enhance student performance are employed is a key responsibility for policymakers. Wayne and Youngs (2003) explain that a large body of literature about teacher characteristics and education outcomes exists. The

focus of the studies vary between questions about teacher quantity and turnover and issues surrounding teacher quality. In many countries (Kenya included) certain qualifications need to be obtained before teachers are permitted to enter the teaching force. Much of the literature surrounding teacher characteristics and student performance is comprised of analyses of the impact of these and other qualifications.

Attempts have been made to identify trends in the quality of teachers, and the question whether characteristics of teachers in different parts of the schooling system exist is often investigated (Wayne & Youngs, 2003).

A study that found out a relationship between observable teacher characteristics and student performance was conducted by Slater, Davies and Burgess (2009) using UK data for 7 000 students (14 year olds) writing GCSE Keystage 4 examinations. Slater et al. (2009) investigated whether the observable characteristics of teachers are correlated with measures of teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness is measured as the effect that teachers have on student performance on the examinations. The observable characteristics available are teacher gender, age, educational attainment and teaching experience. None of these characteristics are statistically significant in explaining teacher effectiveness (Slater et al., 2009: 12).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study established that there was a significant relationship between teachers characteristics and student performance in Kiswahili subject in secondary schools in Kenya. based on the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made;

Teachers should be constantly engaged in refresher courses, seminars and symposia to update their skills on language pedagogy. The Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission should post adequate qualified teachers to all schools as well as enforcing a policy on who should be hired as a teacher by the Board of Governors. School authorities should ensure that language policies adopted are properly and fairly enforced so as not to alienate or disadvantage other languages. In this regard, the number of days that student are made to speak Kiswahili as a compulsory subject should be increased from the common one day in a week as observed in many schools. The Ministry of Education and curriculum designers should consider splitting Kiswahili into two teaching subjects (language and literature) as well as increasing the number of lessons per week from six to eight to enable teachers to concentrate on its development. Kiswahili teacher also have a second teaching subject and end up teaching Kiswahili lugha, fasihi and another subject. This overworks Kiswahili teachers as compared to English teachers who teach just English grammar and literature. Such work pressure exhausts Kiswahili teachers and leaves them pressed of time to adequately attend to their core subject.

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