

Primary School Headteachers' Perceptions of Competencies gained from Training at Kenya Education Management Institute Training in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The management of primary schools in every country in the world calls for head teachers to be well trained and qualified to discharge school duties. Due to enormous resources and effort that is used in training, managers are under pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of training. Despite the introduction of Diploma in Education Management by Kenya Education Management Institute Training (KEMI) in 2011, there are numerous cases of mismanagement reported in some schools in Uasin Gishu County. This paper sought to assess primary school headteachers' perceptions of competencies gained from KEMI in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study utilised descriptive research design and was guided by Kolb' Experiential Learning Cycle theory. The study targeted 471 headteachers, 5 sub-county education officers and one county education officer. Simple random sampling was used to select 30 % (141) of the public primary schools in the county. All headteachers, 5 sub-county education officers and the county education officer were purposively selected. Data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview schedule. Quantitative data collected was analysed descriptively while the qualitative data was presented thematically. The findings were presented in frequency tables, pie charts and histograms. The study established that majority of the headteachers had a negative perception towards KEMI training in relation to their management competencies. The headteachers consider management training as a mere routine and they only attend training to secure their jobs. The study recommends that the training period should be extended to enable headteachers cover adequately the management skills as indicated in the KEMI Diploma curriculum.

Key words: Competencies, headteachers, management training, perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Development of quality human resource contributes to accelerated development, industrial development, innovation, and reduction of inequalities and provision of efficient and effective delivery of essential services to the citizens (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Education being the most critical ingredient in a country's development process calls for competent managers so that the society can attain the desired progress in social, economic and political realms (Chiuri & Kiumi, 2005). The agenda of improving the quality of education has been triggered by a turbulent environment which compels modern organizations, including learning institution to conform to such environmental changes. Therefore, managers of schools to should be responsive and innovative on organizational management practices (Pearce & Robinson, 2009).

Umoh (2013) observes that the quality of principals' role is a relevant indicator of the quality of a school, and therefore underscores the importance of head teachers in school administration. The management of primary schools in every country of the world calls for school head teachers to be well trained and qualified to discharge school duties (Oliva & Pawlas, 2007). According to Armstrong (2015), training enhances employee's skills, knowledge, attitude and competence and ultimately worker performance and productivity in organizations. Due to the enormous resources and effort that is used in training, managers are under pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of training. One possible way of demonstrating that indeed training is effective is to demonstrate that the skills acquired in the training are actually transferred to the workplace and utilized by staff on their job.

Though so much is spent on training, research conducted across the world indicate that only a small percentage of what is learned is actually transferred to the workplace. According to World Bank (2008), only 15-20% of what is learned gets transferred to the workplace. A world Bank (2008) survey on training efficacy on training programmes sponsored by World bank in different countries established that while most project-based trainings resulted in learning, training only resulted in substantial work place performance outcomes about half of the time(World bank, 2008).

In Kenya, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) established the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) in 1982 to upgrade the core competencies, whose objectives are geared towards enhancing performance capacity of head teachers. The MoEST in the month of September 4th, 2011 launched out a new diploma programme on education management which is currently being delivered through Open and Distance Flexible learning (ODFL). This programme targets all principals and head teachers of secondary and primary schools to equip them with proper management skills to manage the schools effectively. The course is being offered at KEMI head quarters and regional Centres. The ODFL programme takes duration of one year to complete and involves first, second, third and fourth tutorial programmes, a project work before one sits for the final examinations. It's now 7 years since the programme started and there are many cohorts that have successfully completed the programme and they are expected to improve in their management skills.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that there exists a strong relationship between the quality of the leadership provided by the head teacher and the capacity of a school to improve teaching and learning (IIEP, 2000). In Africa to the contrary, according to Adhiambo (2010) some schools are managed by persons without the professional managerial skills. In Kenya, the head teachers are usually trained in classroom teaching and not in school management and yet the duties and responsibilities of a classroom teacher are quite different from those of the head teacher in practice.

Despite the introduction of Diploma in Education Management by KEMI in 2011, still there are numerous cases of mismanagement reported in some schools in Uasin Gishu County. Stakeholders in education are concerned with the poor and ineffective teaching in primary schools in the County. Uwezo Kenya (2012) raised concern on the teachers' absenteeism, literacy and numeracy skills among pupils.

Teachers' absenteeism is likely to affect the teaching and learning in the schools. The headteachers are expected to monitor and supervisor the curriculum implementation and the general management of schools. The KEMI programme was designed to allow the participants to study in a flexible manner and work-based learning thus sharing of experiences among the head teachers were enriched. This study, therefore, aimed at assessing primary school headteachers' perceptions of competencies gained from KEMI training in Uasin Gishu County.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilised descriptive research design and was guided by Kolb' (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle theory. The study targeted 471 headteachers, 5 sub-county education officers and one county education officer. Simple random sampling was used to select 30 %(141) of the public primary schools in the County. All the headteachers of the selected schools (141), 5 sub-county education officers and the county education officer were purposively included in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview schedule. Quantitative data collected was analysed descriptively while the qualitative data was presented thematically. The findings were presented in frequency tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents findings of the study as provided by the respondents who participated in this study. Data was collected from 104 headteachers of which 71.2 % were male whereas 28.8 % were female. Majority of the headteachers have been teaching for a period of less than 7 years. The findings further revealed that 80.8% of the headteachers were P1 holders.

The main purpose of this study was to establish primary school headteachers perceptions of competencies gained from KEMI training. The responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Headteachers Perceptions on Competencies gained from KEMI Training

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I knew the content of KEMI capacity building programme prior to attending the program.	48	46.2	45	43.3	4	3.8	0	0	7	6.7	104	100.0
I joined the KEMI capacity building programme to get promotion and salary increase.	51	49.0	49	47.1	1	1.0	3	2.9	0	0	104	100.0
I joined the KEMI capacity building programme to enhance my knowledge, skills and competencies.	49	47.1	0	0.0	0	0	54	51.9	1	1.0	104	100.0
I undertook the diploma training for self-satisfaction	50	48.1	51	49.0	0	0	3	2.9	0	0	104	100.0
The KEMI capacity building programme met my personal expectations and enhanced my work productivity.	36	34.6	0	0.0	5	4.8	62	59.6	1	1.0	104	100.0
At the end of the KEMI capacity building programme, I felt motivated to transfer learning to the workplace.	38	36.5	4	3.8	0	0.0	2	1.9	60	57.7	104	100.0
KEMI capacity building curriculum was well planned and organized.	37	35.6	3	2.9	6	5.8	58	55.8	0	0	104	100.0
KEMI capacity building programme had practical applicability to my work.	45	43.3	3	2.9	0	0.0	56	53.8	0	0	104	100.0
There is a clear link between the KEMI capacity building programme and career progression of school head teachers.	4	3.8	45	43.3	1	1.0	5	4.8	49	47.1	104	100.0
Knowledge, skills and competencies learned in the KEMI capacity building programme have increased my management competencies.	42	40.4	2	1.9	3	2.9	57	54.8	0	0	104	100.0

As shown in Table 1, 93(89.4 %) of the headteachers agreed that they knew the content of KEMI capacity building programme prior to attending the program whereas 7(6.7%) disagreed and 4(3.8 %) were undecided. It is also revealed that 100(96.2 %) of the headteachers agreed that they joined the KEMI capacity building programme to get promotion and salary increase, while 3 (2.9%) disagreed. Another 55 (52.9 %) of the headteachers did not join the KEMI capacity building programme to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies. However, 49 (47.1%) joined the KEMI capacity building programme to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies. Further, 101(97.1 %) agreed that they undertook the diploma training for self-satisfaction while 3(2.9 %) disagreed. This is contrary to Nerdrum and Erikson (2001) who assert that for head teachers to be competent in management they need constant exposure to training seminars, workshops in order to improve their competence behavior. Rather than depending on experience alone it would be imprudent to consider experience as a classroom teacher as the only prerequisite in the appointment of primary school teachers.

Majority 63 (60.1%) of the headteachers asserted that KEMI capacity building programme did not meet their personal expectations and enhance their work productivity, whereas 36 (34.6%) agreed. Further, 62 (59.6 %) of the headteachers did not feel motivated to transfer learning to the workplace after the KEMI capacity building programme, while 42(40.3 %) agreed. According to Fraziz and Spetlizer, (2005), employees who enhance skills are more likely to engage fully in their work because they derive satisfaction from competence in mastering new skills and then enhance commitment to organization.

There were 40(38.5 %) of the headteachers who stated that KEMI capacity building curriculum was well planned and organized. However, majority 58(55.8 %) disagreed. Another 56(53.8 %) disagreed to the statement that KEMI capacity building programme had practical applicability to their work whereas 48(46.2%) agreed. The study also established that 54(51.9%) of the headteachers stated that there was no clear link between the KEMI capacity building programme and career progression of school head teachers, while 49(47.1%) stated that there was a clear link between the KEMI capacity building programme and career progression of school head teachers.

It was also established that 44(42.3%) of the headteachers who participated in this study stated that Knowledge, skills and competencies learned in the KEMI capacity building programme increased their management competencies. However, more than half (54.8%) of the headteachers were of contrary opinion. This means that knowledge, skills and competencies learned in the KEMI capacity building programme did not increase their management competencies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that most of the headteachers knew the content of KEMI capacity building programme prior to attending the program. This implies that they did not learn anything new. This might be due to their experience as headteachers in the schools where the study was done. It was also revealed that majority of the headteachers joined the KEMI capacity building programme to get promotion and salary increase. This is why

over half of the headteachers did not join the KEMI capacity building programme to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies. The study established that the headteachers who participated in this study asserted that they undertook the diploma training for self-satisfaction.

Further, majority of the headteachers had a perception that KEMI capacity building programme did not meet their personal expectations and enhance their work productivity. The headteachers did not feel motivated to transfer learning to the workplace after the KEMI capacity building programme. It was also established that KEMI capacity building curriculum was not well planned and organized and did not have practical applicability to the work of the headteachers who participated in this study. There was no clear link between the KEMI capacity building programme and career progression of school head teachers. Knowledge, skills and competencies learned in the KEMI capacity building programme did not increase their management competencies. All this indicates that most headteachers had a negative perception on competencies gained from KEMI training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes the following recommendations:

- i. There should be clear policies on career progression of school head teachers who attend and successfully complete the KEMI capacity building programme.
- ii. There is need for the headteachers to be sensitized on the importance of the KEMI capacity building programme.
- iii. Since the findings indicated that most of the headteachers knew the content of KEMI capacity building programme prior to attending the program, there is need for the organizers to come up with additional content in the curriculum that is related to the management of primary schools in Kenya.

Suggestions for Further Study

The following suggestions are made for future research.

- i. In order to improve on external validity, a similar study should be conducted in public schools in other Counties with similar challenges as Uasin Gishu County.
- ii. Further research should be conducted in which the perception of other educational stakeholders on competencies gained from KEMI in relation to management of primary schools in Kenya.

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