

# Influence of Teacher's Professional Development on the Learner's Competency Achievements in Public Primary Schools in Suna West Sub-County, Migori County

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DOI: [10.36348/jaep.2024.v08i05.008](https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2024.v08i05.008)

| Received: 18.08.2023 | Accepted: 25.09.2023 | Published: 24.05.2024

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## Abstract

Education is considered as the key to success in many countries. As a result, in Kenya most parents take pride in their children when they perform well in educational matters. This study aimed at investigating the influence of teachers' professional development on learner's competency achievement in public primary schools. This study was grounded on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. It adopted a descriptive survey design. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used in data collection. The population of the study comprised of 54 headteachers, 432 teachers, 4 curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and 1 Sub County Director of Education (SCDE). Krejcie and Morgan table was used to sample 24 headteachers and 190 teachers while purposive sampling was used to 4 Curriculum Support Officers and 1 SCDE. The study sample comprised of 24 head teachers from a target population of 54 public primary headteachers in the sub county, 190 teachers from a target population of 432 teachers in the sub county, the Sub County Director of Education and 2 CSOs. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was done with the assistance of supervisors and experts. Reliability was done by using test re- test methods which yielded alpha of 0.67. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 was used to analyse quantitative data where descriptive such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe the data. While Pearson correlation was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data from interview schedules and documents were analysed using thematic analysis and results were triangulated with quantitative data. The study found out that teachers professional development ( $r = 0.555$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ) had a positive correlation with learners competency achievement. This implied that this variable had a significant influence on learner's competency achievement. It was therefore recommended that teachers' professional development programmes should be enhanced in schools.

**Keywords:** Teachers, professional, development, learners, competency, achievement.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ordinarily, it has been human nature for individuals to have specific goals they want to achieve in their lives. In order to obtain a goal or a task, individuals must have the motivation to achieve their goal. According to Afful-Broni (2012) motivation is a guiding principle that enables people to stay focused to succeed despite the challenges encountered. Motivation is often described as being intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Teacher motivation is an essential component to enhance classroom effectiveness (Carson & Chase, 2009). Generally, motivated teachers are more likely to motivate students to learn in the classroom. Two dimensions of teacher motivation are in accordance with their conceptions of motivation, namely, the motivation

to teach and the motivation to remain in the profession (Sinclair, 2008). Teaching effectiveness has been explored in terms of teaching styles, teacher approaches to teaching, teaching practice and instruction behaviours in relation to teacher motivation factors (Butler & Shibaz, 2014). While Sinclair (2008) dealt with the student teacher motivation, the current study dealt with selected teachers' extrinsic motivation to fill the research gap.

A study conducted by Richardson and Watt (2006) in Australia was one of the researches in the field of pre-service teacher motivation studies based on expectancy-value framework. Their interest in pre-service teacher's motivation to teach derived from the increasing teaching shortages reported in United

Kingdom, United States, Australia, Asia and other European countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005). Extrinsic influences especially financial benefits such as salary, pension and insurance are often mentioned extrinsic factors motivating in-service teachers. Motivation enhances teachers' commitment in public education institutions. Gant (2009) observed from a study done in the informal settlements in Southern Brazil focusing on the influence of motivational drives for enhanced teachers' commitment in public educational institutions that motivated teachers are the most fundamental ingredient of learning. Research done by Gant (2009) was done in informal settlements in Southern Brazil, the current study was done in the semi-urban areas of Suna West Sub County in Migori County, Kenya to fill the research gap. It is important to note that teachers should be motivated intrinsically and extrinsically so as to improve on their teaching skills that result to students' academic performance (Reeve, 2019). Teachers in most developing countries have been seen to become more motivated when witnessing their effort pay off in the form of improved student performance. In East Africa, Anderson (2001) reported that teacher motivation was a key factor in Agakhan Foundation Teacher Training Programmes (AFTTP) using a case study of twelve African and South Asian countries. According to Sirima and Poipoi (2010) teachers in public secondary schools in Busia County in Kenya with high level of job satisfaction tend to have high social and psychological atmosphere in the classroom that result in high productivity and effectiveness in job satisfaction and willingness to stay longer (Achiyo & Yambo 2020).

In Kenya the teaching force has not expanded rapidly since there are still some counties that experience shortage of teachers. A study done by Majanga, Nasongo and Sylvia (2010) on the influence of class size on classroom interaction in the wake of Free Primary Education (FPE), found out that FPE created increased class size, shortage of teachers, heavy teacher working load and lack of teacher motivation. With the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) where learning is based on the needs and potential of individual learners under flexible frameworks and parameters that move and shift according the learner's demands. The assessment involved is a process of collecting evidences to analyse the learner's progress and competency achievements. Consequently, in Suna West Sub County in Migori County, the assessment system is facing many challenges that need to be understood and addressed for better learning outcomes these challenges may be attributed to teachers' motivation besides other factors. Therefore, in view of this, there is need to investigate the influence of selected teachers' extrinsic factors on learner's competency achievement in public primary schools in Suna West Sub County in Migori County.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As evidenced in the background of the study, teaching staff motivation is viewed as a major factor that creates a positive impact in learner's competency achievement in different areas. It is generally accepted that the competence and commitment of teachers should be the most important determinant of learning outcomes. Teachers in public primary schools lack motivation that is manifested in teacher unwillingness to participate in school activities, poor attendance, absenteeism, lack of interest in accepting changes that have come with the CBC curriculum. In Migori County for example, teaching staff motivation is associated with the learner's performance. Though the government has invested on teachers through training, paying the teacher's salary and allowances thus the performance is expected to be better. Despite all that the government has committed to education sector and its workforce, the learners' competency achievement in Suna West Sub County, Migori County is dismal. This influenced the need for this study that sought to find out the influence of selected teacher's extrinsic factors on learner's competency achievement in public primary schools in Suna West Sub County in Migori County.

### **Teacher's Professional Development on the Competency Achievement**

Motivation is a driving factor for actions, willingness and goals. According to Sinclair (2008) motivation is attraction, retention and concentration as something that determines what attracts individuals to teaching, how long they remain in their initial teacher education courses and subsequently the teaching profession. The purpose of professional development could be for teachers to learn new teaching methods to broaden their subject matter, content knowledge or to stay informed of changing policies. Professional development is intended to provide teachers with resources to improve or change their teaching practices in order to improve students' learning (Scotchmer, Grath & Coder 2015). Research on teacher careers and motivation shows that the introduction career ladders bear a particularly motivating effect on teachers by promoting professional growth and linking salary to additional responsibilities. Shulman and Shulman (2004) proposed that teachers' willingness to learn (motivation to learn) is one of the basic features of teacher learning and successful professional development. The work of Scotchmer *et al.*, (2015) dealt with a sample population of 120 while the current study dealt with a sample population of 217 to fill the research gap.

Professional development as the approach that schools and school districts use to make certain, that educators continue to bolster their practice throughout their teaching career (Mizell, 2010). Nations around the world have continuously embarked in profound changes of their education systems with an aim of improving their systems. According to Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz, (2015), there is a general understanding among policymakers,

intellectuals and educators that one of the keys that can lead to achievement during these reforms is promoting professional development of in-service teachers. Teacher professional development comprises of many processes such as actions and mechanisms (Tan & Dimmock, 2014). In agreement, Kaur (2012) stated that the expectation is for schools to work impartially and successfully for all learners in an ever diverse classroom. Changes of this magnitude essentially require great transformations in curriculum and instructional practices. The changes involve understanding what and how teachers teach their students and therefore, in order for professional development to be successful, it must be seen as a process and not a one day event. Professional development needs to provide teachers with specific and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day activities in their classrooms (Bautista, Tan, Ponnusamy, & Yau, 2015). In agreement, Desimone and Garet, (2015) stated that there are five key characteristics that make professional development successful. These features include content focus, active learning, coherence, sustained duration, and collective participation.

Students' performance depends on the school principal (Wanyama, 2013). This is because the principals are the focal system of a school through which all important functions take place and is also the controller of all resources that may influence students' performance in a school. Headteachers have a major task in professional development processes as they are expected to help their teachers to develop their skills, obtain current information in their fields and learn about innovative teaching approaches. In agreement with Wanyama, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) offered an insight into promotion of professional development. They argued that the support that the headteachers offer as well as their participation in the professional learning of their staff produces the largest effect on learning achievement of learners.

Motivation is based on one's expectation and values of completing a certain task (Green 2002) In regard to teacher motivation within the framework of expectancy-value theory Richardson and Watt, 2005; Richardson and Watt (2006) provided evidence for links between teachers' motivation and their engagement, commitment and persistence in teaching and their inclination to become involved in professional development. In support of this view, Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, Orphans (2009) stated that professional development that has effective characteristics but does not yield individual teachers to change in their service is unsuccessful. According to Darling-Hammond *et al.*, (2009) half of all teachers in the United States are dissatisfied with their professional development opportunities. Professional development may be unsuccessful because a teacher's motivation to participate in professional development is not considered

therefore the stake holders should take this in consideration.

There is need for more attractive career structure and more opportunities for the professional development (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). They further stated that teachers generally appear to be confident in their own abilities but they need the external support and training to allow them excel in their work and have the opportunity to progress up their career ladder. Teacher's effectiveness in teaching is determined by their professional knowledge. Darling-Hammond *et al.*, (2009). Teacher's professional knowledge determines the effectiveness of their teaching. In support of this view, Rogan and Grayson (2003), argued that, education system where teacher education programmes are well established, there is teachers' professional career growth. Whereas Darling-Hammond *et al.*, (2009) sampled 760 teachers, the current study considered 432 teachers to fill the gap.

Teacher learning is a continuous process that promote teachers' teaching skills, mastery of new knowledge, develop new proficiency which in turn help improve students learning. Previous studies have indicated that when teachers are effective classroom managers, their students achieve at a higher level and display more interest in class (Omoteso & Samudara 2011; Stronge, Ward & Grant (2011); Kunte, Baumert & Koller (2007); Clotfelter (2006) pin points that better trained and more experienced teachers tend to be assigned to students of greater ability and with fewer discipline problems. Motivational theorists suggest that autonomous motivation to learn is instrumental for learning and performance. According to Darling-Hammond, Hotltzman, Gatlin and Heiling (2005) staff development means providing occasions for teachers to reflect critically on their practice, new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy and learners outcome.

According to Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST 2005) school based teacher development programme in Kenya, was modelled to achieve two broad goals of developing reflective primary teachers to challenge their own ideas about teaching as well as leading school based professional development within their subject areas in their own schools while the main focus of professional development is at the level of the teacher, the true measure of success should be a corresponding enrichments in student learning. The government is committed to providing qualified, competent and adequate teachers to all learning institutions in the country. This is in recognition that teachers play a crucial role in the provision of quality education. On the other hand, research done by Nyanda, Yambo and Getange (2018) opined that teachers often value the opportunity to network with other teachers and even the chance to progress up the career ladder to become formal mentors to others. According to Nyanjom and Yambo (2021) teacher education in Kenya continues

to experience challenges such as inadequate financial provisions, lack of adequate and appropriate tuition equipment and materials, lack of ICT infrastructure, equipment and materials therefore there is need to investigate how professional development as an extrinsic motivator would trigger the behavioural attitude of the teacher that would eventually translate to learner's academic achievement (Yambo, 2022a). While Nyanda *et al.*, (2018) used quantitative method, the current study

used both qualitative and quantitative research method to analyze data to fill the research gap.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive research design, which Creswell (2017) described as a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) individuals for the purposes of describing the attributes of the larger population of which the individual are members.

**Table 1: Sampling Technique**

Respondent	Population	Sampling Technique	Sample
Sub County Director of Edu	1	Purposive	1
Curriculum Support Officers	4	Krejcie and Morgan Table	4
Head teachers	54	Krejcie and Morgan Table	24
Teachers	432	Krejcie and Morgan Table	190
Total	491		219

The target population was 54 head teachers, 432 Teachers, 1 SCDE and 4 CSO. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select 1 SCDE, 4 CSO, Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970) to find 24 HTs and 190 teachers as shown in this table.

The questionnaire and interview were used as the main data collection instruments. The instruments were validated by Kisii University supervisors who are the experts. Split half technique was adopted to test the reliability of the questionnaires. A correlation index of 0.75 was realized implying that the instruments were reliable in line with Amin (2005) who asserted that a reliability ranging from 0.60 and above was accepted. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyse data while inferential

statistics such as Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the significance in relationship between the independent variable (teacher extrinsic motivation) and the dependent variable (learner's competency achievement). The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Various Capacity Building Activities Attended by Teachers

This section sought to establish the various capacity building activities attended by teachers and the impact they had in their teaching profession. The information is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Teacher Attendance to Various Capacity Building Activities**

ITEM	RESPONSE		IMPACT		
	Yes	No	Small	Moderate	Large
Courses or workshops on subject areas or any other education related topics.	185 (97.3%)	5 (2.7%)	3 (1.6%)	19 (10.0%)	168 (88.4%)
Competency Based Curriculum training.	184 (96.8)	6 (3.2%)	3 (1.6%)	18 (9.5%)	169 (88.9%)
Education conferences or seminars.	168 (88.4%)	22 (11.6%)	7 (3.7%)	48 (25.2%)	135 (71.1%)
Qualification programmes like diploma, degree or masters	166 (87.4%)	24 (12.6%)	9 (4.7%)	67 (35.3%)	114 (60.0%)
Benchmarking and observation in other schools	9 (4.7%)	181 (95.3%)	10 (5.2%)	155 (81.6%)	25 (13.2)

Table 1 shows various capacity building activities attended by teachers and their impact in their teaching and learning. Regarding attending courses or workshops on subject areas or any other education related topics, majority 185 (97.3%) of teachers indicated that they had attended and that the courses or workshops had large impact on their teaching and learning profession as indicated by 168 (88.4%). Almost similar number 184 (96.8%) indicated that they had

attended competency based curriculum training, which had a large impact to their profession as shown by 169 (88.9%). The study found out that 166(87.4%) of teachers had attended education conferences or seminars and had a large impact on their profession. The study also found out that qualification programmes such as diploma, degree or masters also had a large impact on the teacher's profession as indicated by 114(60%) of the respondents. The study finally found out that a small

number of teachers had attended benchmarking and observation in other schools as indicated by 9(4.7%) while majority of the respondents 155 (81.6%) agreed that benchmarking and observation in other schools moderately can have an impact on their profession. This implies that capacity building activities have a large impact on teachers' professional development in public primary schools in Suna West Sub County, Migori County. The head teachers mentioned that professional development activities in schools promote good performance both in teachers and learners. In an interview with the education officers in Suna West Sub County on extrinsic motivators related to professional development of teachers in the zone, they mentioned competency based curriculum trainings, workshops on subject areas and education seminars which have a large

impact on teachers' professional performance and the learner's competency achievement. These findings are in line with Yambo (2022b) and Satter and Awan (2019) who found out that teachers who undergo capacity building such as training demonstrated higher student academic achievement that those who do not get a chance to be trained.

### Professional Courses

Teachers were given some statements where they were expected to indicate the level of their agreement with each statement in regard to influence of professional teacher development on learner's competency achievement. The findings of the study were as presented in table 4.7.

**Table 2: Professional courses**

ITEMS	SA	A	N	D	SD
I have attended different types of professional development courses in the past two years.	120(63.2%)	51(26.3%)	11(5.8%)	5(2.6%)	3(1.6%)
The all the professional training courses content were very useful in teaching grade 3 learners.	7(3.7%)	150(78.9%)	24(12.6%)	6(3.2%)	3(1.6%)
The duration of training I have attended was enough to enable me to grasp the gist of the training.	4(2.1%)	152(80%)	24(12.6%)	9(4.7%)	1(0.5%)
All the training I attended was relevant to my professional development.	139(73.2%)	27(14.2%)	9(4.7%)	5(2.6%)	10(5.3%)

Table 2 shows that majority of teachers 120(63.2%) strongly agree with the statement that they had attended different types of professional development courses in the past two years while 50(26.3%) agree with the same statement. The study found out that most teachers 150(78.9%) agree with the statement that all the professional training courses content were very useful in teaching grade 3 learners. The study also found out that majority of teachers 152(80%) agreed with the statement that the duration of training they had attended was enough to enable them grasp the gist of the training. Finally, a large number of teachers 139(73.2%) strongly agreed with the statement that all the training they have

attended were relevant to their professional development. On the contrary, the work of Mudis and Yambo (2015) indicated that some routine trainings are not effective in improving academic performance. This means that professional training courses are useful in teaching grade 3 learners and have a large impact on teacher's professional development.

Further, teachers were asked to indicate their opinions whether professional teacher development programmes opportunities influence learner's competency achievement in public primary schools. The findings were as presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Professional Teacher Development Programmes Opportunities**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	183	96.32
No	7	3.68
Total	190	100.0

Table 3 shows that majority of teachers 183(96.32%) agreed that professional teacher development programme opportunities influence learner's competency achievement in public primary schools in Suna West Sub County, Migori County. This means that teacher professional development has an influence on learner's competency achievement. The headteachers supported this by mentioning that the professional teacher development programmes promote the provision of quality education.

### Relationship between Professional Development of Teachers and Learners' Competency Achievement

In order to establish the significance in the relationship between Professional development of teachers' and Learners' competency achievement, a hypothesis 'There is no significant relationship between Professional developments of teachers' and Learners' competency achievement' was tested. The Pearson correlation coefficient index was computed as shown in table 4.

**Table 4: Relationship between Professional Development of Teachers and Learners' Competency Achievement**

Correlations between Professional Development of Teachers and Learners' Competency Achievement			
		Professional Development	Learners' competency
Professional Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.550
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015
	N	190	190
Learners' competency	Pearson Correlation	.550	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	
	N	190	190

Table 4 show a correlation of  $r = 0.550$  with a significance level of 0.015 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. This led to rejection of the null hypothesis that 'There is no significant relationship between Professional developments of teachers' and Learners' competency achievement' and adoption of alternative hypothesis that there is a significant positive moderate correlation between Professional development of teachers and learner's competency achievement. It was therefore concluded that Professional development of teachers has a significant moderate positive influence on learner's competency achievement. These findings are in line with Osei-Owusu (2022) study which concluded that teachers' professional development leads to improvement in the academic performance of students.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that teachers' professional development related to capacity building activities such as courses or workshops on subject areas or any other education related topics, Competency Based Curriculum training, educational conferences or seminars and qualification programs such as diploma, degree or masters ad a great impact on their work. A significant positive moderate correlation between Professional development of teachers and learner's competency achievement was established leading to a conclusion that Professional development of teachers had a significant positive moderate influence on learner's competency achievement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers' capacity building activities such as benchmarking and observation in other schools should be organized to enable teachers borrow ideas from well performing schools.
2. The ministry of education should ensure that teachers' capacity in facilitating various competencies particularly in digital literacy and citizenship is enhanced.

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