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Administrative Strategies Adopted to Enhance Learners Performance of Kiswahili Language in Secondary Schools of Ruhaama County in Uganda

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Abstract

This study investigated the Administrative Strategies Adopted to Enhance Learners Performance of Kiswahili Language in Secondary Schools of Ruhaama County in Uganda. The study adopted to embedded mixed methods a descriptive design with much emphasis on quantitative data. The sample size was 314 participants including 27 Kiswahili teachers selected purposively, 267 students selected on a simple random basis, and 20 headteachers on a census basis. Data collection adopted the use of semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using graphs, pie charts, and frequency tables, and qualitative data was analyzed thematically categorizing emerging themes together. The secondary schools had own initiated strategies adopted for improved learner Kiswahili performance. However, learner-centered teaching strategies of Kiswahili debates, group discussions, and libraries use were rare in schools. This findings from this study advocates for Transformative leadership in schools to champion Active Teaching and Learning (ATL) to cater for individual learner differences and them exploit their potential in learning.

Keywords: Secondary Schools, Administrative Strategies, Learners Performance, Kiswahili Language.

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Introduction

Kiswahili Language in Uganda's Education

Kiswahili language is an African lingua-franca that has gained dominance worldwide though formal and technical fields are still dominated by the English language. It is a Bantu multilingual rooted in East Africa that has been massively adopted in Sub-Saharan African communities and schools. Kiswahili is recommended by the Organization of African Union, (Bendor, 2011; Rutgers, 2019; 2020), and currently taught worldwide as an optional subject alongside French and German, (Lang'at, 2020). The language is successful among the South Saharan languages, especially in East Africa, (Lodhi, 1993).

The Constitutional Amendment Act (2003) in Uganda proclaimed Kiswahili as the second official language of Uganda after English. The Government White Paper (1992) recommended the teaching and learning of Kiswahili in secondary schools in Uganda supporting it's growth due to its ethnic unattachment. In 2006, The Parliament of Uganda made Kiswahili a second official language after English and added it to the curriculum, (MoEs, 2008). Consequently, Kiswahili was made a compulsory subject in the lower secondary education curriculum in 2020 though still optional at the senior three class level.

School administration is not a mere department inside a school organization, rather, it is a process of making things function properly. Administrative strategies relate to conducive learning situations, improved academic outcomes, teachers' involvement in decision-making, and teachers' instructional and delivery, (Madukwe et al., 2019). Lee, (2019) and Heick, (2020) explain that academic performance measures students' learning capabilities based on certain educational criteria.

Nonetheless, the schools' administrators have a stake in empowering their teachers in being and demonstrating professionalism, effectiveness, accountability, innovation, and creativity by creating new knowledge and applying new methods to teach for better outcomes and efficiency (MoES, 2019). Lorenz, (2019) adds that Kiswahili has all along been viewed as the army and police language and less used by other community members to date despite being a lingua franca. This paper discusses the school administration strategies in proper and effective proper management of school activities to meet the academic set goals, (Osakwe, 2015).

Curriculum Delivery Strategy and Academic Performance

The curriculum combines lessons, assessments and evaluation, and other similar academic material taught in a school, on a certain program, or else by a teacher in a class, (Stauffer, 2020). Ensuring quality education calls for frequent checks on the curriculum, improving and availing the teaching-learning materials, such as textbooks and schools' infrastructure (Yogi, 2017).

School administrators are charged with ensuring the availability of the teaching and instructional materials have positive impacts on learning Kiswahili, (Mwangi, 2017). Having a rich curriculum and responsive modes of instruction guided by components of existing curricular and instructional models enhances student learning, (Callahan et al., 2015). Teachers who do not consider applying instructional materials hinders enriched student academic outcomes are a result of ineffective curriculum delivery to meet the curriculum components and learner characteristics. Teacher-retooling keeps teachers updated on the teaching strategies, teaching materials, and general curriculum-related issues, (Omariba et al., 2016). This calls for schools need to adopt multiple approaches to enhance student engagement and performance, (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014) citing Canha & Peckman, (2006).

The majority of the teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa use the available instructional resources with less attention to educational technology with textbooks being most used instructional material, (Ngugi, 2017). This can imply that lacking adequate and updated teaching-learning materials distracts teachers from delivering the required content and skills to the students lowering their academic performance. A teacher as a classroom administrator has to decide on which teaching-learning materials and aids to use that can better the students have the content delivered with appropriate materials.

Debating systematically nurtures the active engagement of students improving on their critical thinking skills, mastering course content, and improving their speaking capabilities, (Zare & Othman, 2015). This cultivates multiple thinking approaches, building absorption, and retention in learning that gives students an atmosphere to learn, share their ideas and develop their ways for academic problem-solving.

The Teaching Staff Resource and Students' Academic Performance

Achieving academic goals in schools calls for human resources management in schools to be in the plan by the education policymakers, (Ekwen & George, 2018). This means that teachers have to be updated to change their attitudes through training to be in position to adapt to the dynamics in their teaching and learning activities, (Chepkemoi & Wanyonyi, 2017), and the administration must boost morale in teachers to adopt such a culture, (Tety, 2016). Teacher retooling on teaching and learning adjustments modifies learning, (Omariba et al., 2016), thus teachers strives to employ the appropriate strategies and teaching materials to meet the modern educational challenges, (Dang & Bulus, 2015).

Teachers are the key players in supporting the process of leading inclusive educational systems, (Navarro et al., 2016); they have to be equipped with appropriate competencies for addressing the diverse needs and preferences of their students and providing them with equal educational opportunities, (Sherin & Drake, 2009; Nzoka & Orodho, 2014; Orodho, 2014).

However, studies explain that teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa perform poorly in several dimensions as they teach little content, and lack the necessary skills and knowledge to teach effectively, (Bold et al., 2017). The work of school administrators is increasingly seen as vital to students' academic performance, (Johnston et al., 2016) though they are more focused on leadership making instructional focus difficult because they are often with many responsibilities.

Student Supervision and Academic Performance

Modise, (2017) posits that supervision aims at supporting, assuring, and developing the knowledge, skills, and values of the practitioners through revising the current processes. Adds that supervision provides accountability for both the supervisor and the supervisee in exploring their practice and performance, providing evidence, and enhancing evidence for performance appraisal.

Evans et al., (2015) study on *Clinical legal education* explains that effective supervision is fundamental across all models of education to safeguard the interests of the clients and provide the structure that supports and constructively challenges students. Nzoka & Orodho, (2014) citing Mobegi et al., (2010) explained that schools' Principals should engage in classroom

supervision to ensure that a variety of teaching methods are used. This means that teachers as student supervisors in a school setting play a central role in helping students to make sense of the complex environment they encounter, and availing the necessary resources for the students to succeed in learning.

Abusive supervision, job frustration, and deviant behaviors among the supervisors frustrate the subjects and the supervisees in this context the teachers and the students, (Avey et al, 2015). Supervisors with poor professional etiquette, emotionally driven, lack problem-solving skills, poor communication, and poor rapport make school coherence a failure and finally poor academic outcomes. Supervisors with effective communication skills, respect for all, and professional control make teachers, students, work cooperatively and uplift the academic standards of their students.

Purpose of the Present Study

This paper thus presents the findings of the study that was conducted in Ruhaama County, Ntungamo District, South Western Uganda in government-supported, community-founded, and private secondary schools. Kiswahili teachers, students, and the schools' headteachers were involved in investigating the secondary schools' administrative strategies adopted in a way to enhance learners' performance of Kiswahili language. The ordinary-level students under private, government-aided, and community-founded secondary schools participated in curriculum delivery on enhancing learner performance in Kiswahili language and establishing the teacher resources on enhancing learner performance in Kiswahili language in secondary schools in Ruhaama County.

Method

A descriptive survey was incorporated in data collection from different categories of the population, (Creswell, 2012), describing trends in population characteristics, opinions, and behaviors answering questions of "what, where, how, and when", (McCombes, 2019; Cohen et al., 2017). This study integrated qualitative findings in a large quantitative study to better understand the phenomenon, (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). A Pragmatic research tradition was incorporated that advocates for theory to practice,

interaction, transformative and practical value in social research, (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020).

Sample

The sample size of 314 participants included 267 Kiswahili students; 27 Kiswahili teachers; and 24 headteachers. 267 students were selected on a simple random sampling, 27 teachers on purposive sampling, and 20 headteachers on a census basis. This is considered non-probability, probability sampling. A lottery system was used to make simple random sampling successful for participant representativeness and overcoming sampling biases, (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Formula; $n = N / 1 + [N (e)^2] n$ is the sample size, N is the population size, and n is the level of precision (0.05)

Instrument

The data collection instruments were semi-structured questionnaires, observation checklists, and semi-interviews to collect the data on the administrative strategies to improve learners' performance of Kiswahili language in secondary schools in Ruhaama County, South-Western Uganda guided by the research questions, and objectives.

Criterion validity was established using the already instruments measuring the same items and relating their degree of relation. Also, the researcher confirmed the credibility of the study adhering to the variables of the study, triangulating data collection instruments, and audit trails. Reliability of the research instruments was ensured, (Middleton, 2019). Test-retest reliability was used to assess the consistency of the research instruments correlated using Spearman Correlation [rho], (Goforth, 2015). A correlation coefficient of 0.742 was obtained on the Kiswahili teacher's questionnaire while a correlation coefficient of 0.78 was obtained on the Kiswahili student's questionnaire confirming acceptable correlation coefficients. Also, interrater reliability was established by the supervisors.

The researcher obtained a research clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Uganda Cristian University (UCU) and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). The researcher informed the participants of the purpose intended for the data to be collected, freedom of participation on individual will and withdrawal, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Design

Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative data analysis was for questionnaire data obtained from Kiswahili teachers and students analyzed descriptively involving the use of frequencies and percentages, graphs, pie charts, and observation checklists for triangulation. Descriptive analysis simplifies descriptions of the features of data and the samples, (Trochim, 2020). Qualitative data was generated from the field through interviews with the schools' headteachers. Data was double-checked for errors before thematic analysis to identify the participants' responses that seemed with proximal patterns to generate themes. Rich and in-depth descriptions were made to give clear and unbiased descriptions of the data and study finds.

Results

Response Rates

The study administered 294 questionnaires; 267 for Kiswahili students, 27 for the teachers, and 20 interview guides were administered to the secondary school's headteachers. The student questionnaire response rate was 244 (91%) of 267; the teachers' questionnaire return rate was 88% since 24 out of 27 were successfully responded to and 85% (17 out of 20) Headteachers' interview schedules were successful. This, therefore, indicates that the general average response rate was at 80%, thus considered to be satisfying the study's purposes.

Kiswahili students constituted 114 (47%) male and 130 (53%) female summing up to 244 Kiswahili students, Kiswahili teachers constituted 19 (79%) male and 5 (21%) female summing up to 24 Kiswahili teachers, and schools' headteachers consisted of 14 (82%) males and 3 (18%) females bringing the total headteachers to 17 participants. This reveals that both male and female students, teachers, and headteachers were engaged in the study ideal in strengthening the validity, reliability, and gender participant representativeness.

The study considered the professional qualifications of the headteachers and the Kiswahili teachers. Of Kiswahili teachers, 12 (50%) had a Bachelor's Degree, 8 (33%) had a Diploma qualification, 01 (4%) had other postgraduate awards, and 3 (13%) were senior six vacists who had completed with a UACE certificate. Out of 17 headteachers who participated in the study, 14 (82%) had a Bachelor's degree qualification,

and 3 (18%) had postgraduate awards. Majority of the Kiswahili teachers and headteachers were qualified for their positions, unlike a small number of Kiswahili teachers who were the senior six vacists without a teaching qualification, contrary to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoEs) of Uganda which recommends a two- or three-years teacher training of post-secondary education.

Government-aided secondary schools constituted 9 (53%), Private secondary schools 5 (29%), and Community founded being 3 (18%). The majority of the participant secondary schools were Government though different school ownership statuses were involved to avoid bias from single school ownership.

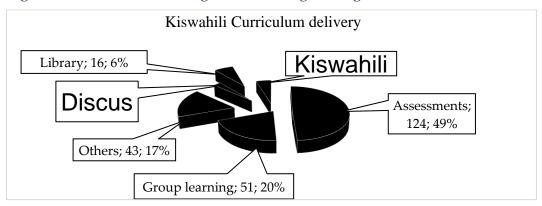
Findings

Quantitative data findings

Curriculum Delivery on Enhancing Learner Performance of Kiswahili Language

This considered the common forms of teaching and learning Kiswahili, library use, teaching materials, student assessment, Kiswahili Language debates, and Kiswahili group discussions. The findings considered a semi-structured questionnaire administered to participants who were the secondary schools' Kiswahili teachers' students in Ruhaama County, Ntungamo district in Uganda.

Figure 2: Kiswahili Teaching and Learning Strategies in Schools

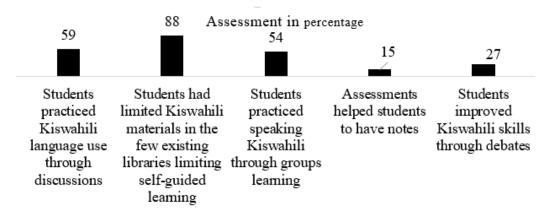


Source: Field data 2021

Figure 2 revealed that teaching and learning constituted assessment 124 (49%), Group learning 51 (20%), discussions 6 (3%), library 16 (6%), debates

12 (5%), and other strategies that constituted 43 (17%). These findings agree with Mwangi, (2017) that teachers should use various instructional strategies, Chepkemoi & Wanyonyi, (2017).

Figure 3: Kiswahili instructional delivery on learner academic performance



Source: Field study data 2021

The findings presented above (Fig.3) were based on 100% of each block.

Figure 3 above revealed that 59% of students practiced Kiswahili through discussions, 88% of few existing school libraries had limited Kiswahili materials, 54% of learners practiced speaking Kiswahili through group learning, 15% of learners had lesson notes due to assessments, and 27% students improved their language skills through debates. These findings agree with available literature that some schools have no specified library time for their students, (Michael et al., 2014).

Teacher Resources on Enhancing Learner Performance of Kiswahili Language in Secondary Schools

This was achieved through investigating the number of Kiswahili teachers, teachers missing Kiswahili lessons, the effect of Kiswahili teachers missing lessons, Kiswahili teachers working contracts, organizing teacher refreshment courses, and the effects of recruiting unqualified staff. The findings considered semi-structured questionnaires administered to participants who were secondary school Kiswahili teachers in Ruhaama County, Ntungamo district in Uganda.

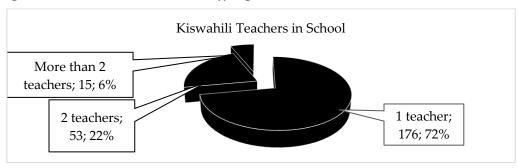


Figure 4: Kiswahili Teacher Staffing in Schools

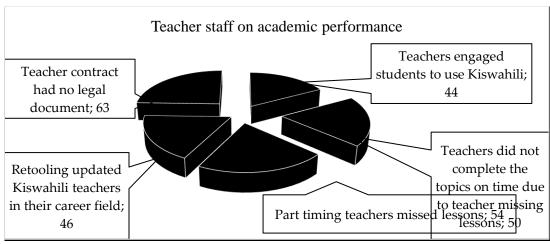
Source: Field study data 2021

From figure 4 above, majority of the secondary schools 176 (72%) had one Kiswahili teacher to prepare the lessons and instructional materials, teach, assess, and provide feedback to the students. These findings agree with Mutindi & Musyoka, (2018) that teacher numbers are inadequate in Secondary Schools.

Investigating the teacher resource on enhancing learners' performance of Kiswahili language in secondary.

The findings presented below were based on 100% of each block considering teacher contract, teacher retooling, teacher attendance, teacher competence, and teacher curriculum delivery.

Figure 5: Teacher resource on enhancing learners' performance of Kiswahili language in secondary



Note: Each block above (Fig.5) is out of 100%.

Figure 5 above, TC (teacher contract) had 63% without legal contracts, TR (teacher retooling) 46% helped teachers update their career, TA (teacher attendance) 54% part-timing teachers missed attending to lessons, TC (teacher competence) 44% engaged the students in using Kiswahili and TCD (teacher curriculum delivery) 50% did not complete the syllabus due to missing lessons. These findings concur with Muasya, (2016) that schools administrators have to discourage teacher absenteeism; by retooling teachers through regular seminars, workshops, and conferences on the teaching dynamics to keep them updated, (Omariba et al., 2016)

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative findings presented were generated from the participants alongside quantitative data. Qualitative analysis employed thematic through categorizing similar data patterns to generate themes, (Marguerite et al., 2010; Mertens, 2013). The generated themes confirmed congruence with the quantitative findings. The findings considered data generated from the interview responses of the secondary schools' headteachers in Ruhaama County, Ntungamo district in Uganda.

Curriculum Delivery on Enhancing Learner Performance of Kiswahili Language

Discussions improved learners' Kiswahili practice

Kiswahili discussion culture benefited Kiswahili students through getting practice with Kiswahili usage and getting social academic assistance from fellow discussants. Most of the headteachers did not have Kiswahili group discussions in their schools though embracing the discussion strategy made the students gain Kiswahili proficiency, shared learning, and rapport with fellow students.

Headteacher [9], "......our Kiswahili teacher is at another school on Fridays and we cannot have a Kiswahili discussion without a teacher responsible for the subject.I am not sure if he organizes Kiswahili discussions in class...... the second Kiswahili teacher we have is a senior six vacists waiting to join campus...... And we cannot trust her with the whole school academics......" [Source: Field data 2021]

These findings concur with Alaslani and Alandejani, (2020) that interacting with the facilitators and the colleagues enhances academic cooperation, sharing of learning knowledge, and an improved learning process.

Limited Kiswahili materials in a few existing school libraries

Students visited their school libraries though libraries did not exist in some schools. However, the existing libraries had limited Kiswahili learning material apart from textbooks:

Headteacher [5], "But we have been facing a problem of Kiswahili textbooks..... here I am the teacher of Kiswahili subject but the textbook of Milton Rwabushaija is the one I am using..... I was taught using the same textbook years ago. So now you can see...." [Source: Field data 2021]

Headteacher [7], "Like we have free space here, in this staffroom and we can store our teaching materials here. Just a small space is enough as you can see that shelf behind..... because we have not constructed a library by now...." [Source: Field data 2021]

Headteacher [6], ".....and emphasizing visiting the library has made the teacher reduce the burden of being overall....." [Source: Field data 2021]

Headteacher [3], ".....only that we at times lack student reading materials.our teachers at times they come with books from other schools and students use them in the meantime" [**Source:** Field data 2021]

This is an indication that Kiswahili students from schools with no library entirely relied on the teacher as the sole source of instrument for learning, implying that students consequently lacked the reading materials limiting their Kiswahili vocabulary, poor Kiswahili proficiency, and thus poor Kiswahili performance. These findings agree with the available literature that some schools have no specified library time for their students though schools have to educate the students on the library services and their benefits for their academic benefit, (Carvalho & Mandrekar, 2020).

Assessments helped learners have lesson notes

Kiswahili students benefited from academic continuous assessments by their teachers. The administrators therefore must make assessment plans for the students to make revisions, further reading, and review corrections. This implies that Kiswahili teachers have to use the assessment results to identify their learner differences and develop relevant approaches to helping them. These findings agree with Worale, (2017) that assessments help in monitoring the students' progress in learning to identify their

weaknesses and strengths. This encourages the learners to attend classes, and have an independent mind for creative and critical thinking, (Sharma et al., 2016).

Students improved their language skills through debates

Kiswahili students benefited from Kiswahili debates in improving their Kiswahili grammar, and acquiring more vocabulary, speaking, and listening skills. Nonetheless, Kiswahili debates were few schools and less prioritized for English debates which limited learners' continuous engagement and practice of the Kiswahili language:

Headteacher [3], "......and they walk around beating buffaloes trying to figure our correct phrases and exchanging Kiswahili words....... And most of the staff do not know Kiswahili, we largely embrace English debates here......" [Source: Field data 2021]

Headteacher [13], "To be fair, imagine we hold a Kiswahili debate, who can be opposers and proposers? I don't imagine. Fine, our teacher can help somewhere, then talk about other debate sections. So we have English debates only....." [Source: Field data 2021]

Thus school administrators have to establish a Kiswahili debating culture and avail the relevant resources to benefit the students as the classroom environment alone cannot satisfy students' mastery of the learned material. These findings concur with those of Majidi et al., (2021) that debating improves argument structure and quality both with oral and written skills and joint reasoning between an argument and the claim.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study conclusions were drawn based on the objectives which were assessing curriculum delivery on enhancing learners' performance of Kiswahili language; and investigating the teacher resources on enhancing learner performance of Kiswahili language in secondary schools in Ruhaama County, Uganda. Curriculum delivery strategies were constituted by the use of the library, debates, group learning, discussions, assessments; inadequate instructional materials of textbooks limited students' self-guided reading, limited vocabulary, and poor Kiswahili grammar use. Lacking learner participatory strategies of discussions,

debates, and libraries limited learners' practice skills, competitive learning, critical thinking, poor proficiency, poor reading, limited vocabulary. Kiswahili assessment helped teachers identify students' performance weaknesses. Teacher resources strategies including teacher staff recruitment, re-training, contracts, and teacher commitment though a single teacher per school and part-timed to other schools. This led to missing and or delays in attending class lessons, failure to complete the syllabus on time, teachers overloading the students, and inconveniencing learning. Teacher refresher courses improved their professional career skills in terms of subject changes, syllabus, approved teaching materials like textbooks, and modern technology learning materials to meet the learners' academic satisfaction. However, unqualified teachers staff incomplete topics, skip content, and leak the assessments to students compromising students' learning and general academic performance.

Conclusively, secondary schools in Ruhaama County had good administrative strategies already in use for improving learners' Kiswahili performance however there was still a need for school administration to implement, strengthen, and support the existing strategies. Curriculum delivery strategies of Kiswahili debates, group discussions, and library use were rare and none existed in most of the secondary schools limiting learners' Kiswahili practice, grammar use, Kiswahili vocabulary, and proficiency. Instructional materials were largely textbooks of which were few, with no use of modern technology learning materials like radios, televisions, projectors, and videos that all limited student-centered teaching-learning and inclusive education. Kiswahili teacher resources were majorly qualified staff though single teacher per school who parttimed characterized by missing lessons, attending classes late, and failure to complete syllabus.

Recommendations

The study recommended a curriculum instructional shift from teachercentered use of textbooks to learner-centered use of radios, televisions, video players, and projectors for enriched learners' academic performance, with emphasis on group discussion, debates, and libraries where not existing to help students improve their grammar, Kiswahili vocabulary, practice Kiswahili speaking and improve on Kiswahili proficiency for better Kiswahili performance. More Kiswahili teachers should be recruited to have more than one teacher per school to overcome part-timing-related weaknesses of missing lessons attending classes late, overloading students with notes, and failure to complete the Kiswahili syllabus.

Future research be done on the impact of Kiswahili debates on improving Kiswahili students' Kiswahili performance.

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