

An investigation of effects of free primary education on human resource performance in public primary schools, a case for Butere District in Western Province

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Abstract:

Free Primary Education has made many parents in Kenya of low level households to have a sigh of relief. Majority of the Kenyan children before the advent of Free Primary Education were not able to access Primary Education due to the escalating cost of education. The Government in 2003 introduced free primary education to public schools in Kenya. However, according to the International Regional Information Network, (2003) public primary schools' resources have been over stretched with the increased number of enrolled pupils in schools and the level of performance has gone down. Therefore this study assessed the effect of free primary education on human resource performance in these schools. Specifically this study established the teachers' attitude and motivation in relation to human resource performance in schools establish the teachers' student ratio in relation human resource performance in schools and establish the challenges to teachers' management that affects the schools' performance. This was a descriptive research design targeting 76 primary schools in Butere district in Western province. From each school two respondents were targeted and from which a sample of 76 respondents was selected using systematic random sampling method. The study used questionnaires to collect primary data from the respondents, which was analysed using descriptive statistics and findings presented for effective communication to ultimate users. The ultimate findings were invaluable in understanding the effect of human resource performance in public primary schools by introduction of free primary education in Kenya. The introduction of free primary education in Kenya had negative effect on the teachers' human resource performance. Most of the teachers started planning for their work setting targets and reviewing the performance so as to cope with the changed situation in schools. However, most teachers had negative attitude towards the appraisal policies as they regarded the appraisal to be non competitive and enhancing rivalry among teachers in schools. The teachers' motivation in schools in Butere district was negatively affected by the free primary education. The free primary education resulted into a direct effect on the teacher students ratio and hence human resource performances in public primary schools in Butere district. Some of the challenges identified by the study were inability to handle more students in schools by teachers in such schools due to free education, financial restrictions in the schools, the availability of bureaucracies in schools and inability to cover the schools syllabus. Schools should enhance their performance planning so as to improve on their performance in schools given that there are more students in school. The school managements should improve on their management styles -so as to motivate teachers in their schools. Together with the TSC the schools should strive to use effective performance appraisal methods which are acceptable to all teachers in schools and this could improve the attitude of teachers towards the increased teaching responsibilities. The government should continue to improve the terms and conditions of teachers in the country by improving their salary and other benefits in schools. The study did not look into other factors that affect human resource performances in public primary schools apart from the four main variables in free primary education. Also the factors affecting human resource performance of teachers in post primary- education system apart from the primary

school teachers was not surveyed. The study was limited only to Butere district in Western province. Future studies could be extended to other parts of Kenya.