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Enhancing educational excellence: An analysis of teacher capacity building and its impact on instructional delivery in public secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between teacher capacity building, instructional delivery, and effectiveness in public secondary schools. Utilizing the descriptive survey methodology, data were collected from 400 teachers in Embu and Tharaka-Nithi Counties, Kenya. A survey questionnaire was used for data collection, whereby the efficacy of instructional delivery was assessed through a Likert-scale survey consisting of 17 items. Demographic information highlighted the diverse composition of the teaching workforce, with varying age groups, educational qualifications, and work experience. The study explored teachers' participation in professional development programs, revealing substantial engagement in subject-specific training among other capacity building programs. Findings indicated high agreement among teachers on statements related to syllabus completion, assignment design aligned with objectives, and regular collaboration with colleagues. Some areas for potential improvement were identified, including the incorporation of student questions to guide lessons, ensuring adequate instructional materials, and integrating higher-order thinking strategies. Capacity building was found to have a significant influence on the effectiveness of teachers in instructional delivery, whereby teachers who had attended more courses obtained higher means scores in instructional delivery than those who had attended fewer or no courses. The study contributes to the understanding of teacher capacity development's impact on instructional practices and effectiveness. The findings underscore the importance of ongoing professional development tailored to teachers' needs, emphasizing collaborative strategies and resource provision. Policymakers, educational administrators, and teachers can leverage these insights to inform targeted interventions that enhance the overall quality of instruction in Kenyan public secondary schools.

Keywords: Teacher capacity building; Instructional delivery; Teacher effectiveness; Professional development

1. Introduction

Capacity building, defined as “the process of developing and strengthening skills and instinctual abilities” by Deprez et al. (2021), plays an important role in shaping the dynamics of organizations, including educational institutions. In the education sector, teacher capacity building emerges as a crucial facet, aiming to enhance educators' skills and knowledge for increased efficiency in the classroom. The significance of such initiatives is underscored by the views of Kumari (2022), who defines capacity development as the process through which individuals and organizations acquire, enhance, and maintain the essential resources necessary for competent work.

The link between teacher capacity building and instructional effectiveness is emphasized by Ejekwu (2022), who highlights the positive impact of professional development activities on a teacher's ability for success in the classroom. The centrality of teacher performance in influencing student success is articulated by Burgess (2019), setting the stage for exploring the relationship between teacher capacity building and student outcomes. Vidyalakshmi and Praveena (2022) define teacher effectiveness as the degree to which a teacher can influence student learning through various

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actions in the classroom, encompassing instructional strategies, classroom management, and resource utilization. This aligns with Darling-Hammond's (2010) perspective that a good educator not only imparts knowledge but also inspires initiative and enthusiasm in students, setting high expectations for intellectual growth.

In the context of Kenyan education, the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) Act of 2012 emphasizes the role of the TSC in ensuring teacher registration, certification, and ongoing professional development (Republic of Kenya, 2012). This legislative framework underscores the imperative of capacity development, especially given the evolving landscape of education in Kenya. Key institutions such as the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), and the Centre for Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education in Africa (CEMAS) are identified as primary providers of teacher capacity building (Republic of Kenya, 2019). As the education sector undergoes transformations, understanding how teacher capacity building influences instructional delivery and, consequently, teacher effectiveness becomes paramount. This paper seeks to explore this relationship within the context of Kenyan public secondary schools, contributing valuable insights to educational policies and practices.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Increasing teacher efficacy has been linked to higher student accomplishment in a number of studies from across the globe. Strengthening the abilities of educators is frequently cited as a potential silver bullet for improving students' academic outcomes. Consequently, investments from both government and educational institutions are directed towards courses and programs aimed at improving teachers'' skills, viewed as a potential catalyst for improving academic outcomes. Despite the substantial resources devoted to teacher capacity development, the existing body of research on how these initiatives impact teachers' performance remains limited.

In the context of Kenyan public secondary schools, particularly in Embu County and Tharaka-Nithi County, where the focus of this study is directed, the link between teacher capacity building and instructional delivery is a critical yet underexplored domain. While the government and schools invest significantly in courses designed to enhance teachers' abilities to teach, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific ways in which capacity development initiatives influence the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom.

The central problem addressed by this paper is the need for a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which teachers in public secondary schools in Kenya benefit from capacity development programs, specifically focusing on instructional delivery. The scarcity of research in this area limits the ability to formulate evidence-based policies and interventions that can maximize the impact of capacity building initiatives. By addressing this gap, the study aims to shed light on the relationship between capacity development and teacher effectiveness, providing valuable insights for educational stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners. Ultimately, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on optimizing educational practices and outcomes in Kenyan public secondary schools.

1.2. Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of capacity building in instructional delivery on the effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

Instructional delivery refers to a teacher's personal approach to teaching based on his or her own professional identity helping to create a unique classroom culture. Instructional delivery combines the complexities of teaching with institutional expectations and student demand for quality instruction. Effective teachers prioritize the material they address to ensure that it meets the course's learning objectives. Effective teachers focus on core topics and sequence information to cover basic material before introducing new topics (Paolini, 2015). Instructional delivery refers to the systematic and intentional process through which educators convey subject matter content to students in a manner that promotes effective learning (Canales, 2020). It encompasses various aspects of teaching, aiming to facilitate understanding, engagement, and mastery of the intended curriculum.

The indicators of instructional delivery include pedagogical competence, lesson planning, learning materials' improvisation and mode of curricular delivery, and they all play a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness and quality of teaching methods. Pedagogical competence is a key aspect, reflecting the teacher's proficiency in employing diverse instructional strategies and techniques that cater to the diverse learning needs of students (Emiliasari, 2018). Effective lesson planning is another indicator, representing the careful organization and sequencing of instructional content to optimize student comprehension and retention. Learning materials' improvisation involves the ability to adapt and

create resources that enhance the learning experience, fostering a dynamic and interactive classroom environment (Kiambi & Waithaka, 2023). Additionally, the mode of curricular delivery assesses how well teachers align their instructional methods with the prescribed curriculum, ensuring that educational objectives are met while promoting a comprehensive and engaging learning experience for students. Together, these indicators contribute to the holistic evaluation of instructional delivery and its impact on the overall effectiveness of teaching.

One critical aspect of teacher effectiveness is pedagogical competence, encompassing the ability to employ effective instructional strategies. Capacity building initiatives focused on instructional delivery play an important role in enhancing pedagogical competence. Teachers, through professional development programs, gain exposure to innovative teaching methodologies, strategies tailored to diverse learning styles, and advancements in educational research (Abakah, 2023). As teachers integrate these newly acquired skills into their teaching practices, their pedagogical competence improves, enabling them to create more engaging and effective learning experiences for students.

Capacity building initiatives have been shown to contribute significantly to teachers' ability to plan and structure lessons that align with educational objectives (Reimers, 2020) Workshops, seminars, and training programs provide educators with insights into efficient lesson planning techniques, helping them design coherent and purposeful instructional sequences. As teachers refine their lesson planning skills through capacity building, they become better equipped to deliver content in a manner that maximizes student comprehension and engagement, ultimately enhancing their overall effectiveness in the classroom.

Building teachers' capacity on instructional delivery extends to the improvisation of learning materials, fostering resourcefulness among educators. Teachers who undergo capacity development gain the skills to adapt and create supplementary materials that resonate with students. This adaptability is crucial, especially in diverse educational settings (Li & Xu, 2020; Kiambi & Waithaka, 2023). When teachers can improvise and tailor learning materials to suit the specific needs of their students, it not only enriches the instructional process but also contributes significantly to teacher effectiveness by promoting a dynamic and responsive teaching environment.

An often-overlooked aspect of teacher effectiveness is the alignment of instructional practices with the prescribed curriculum. Capacity building initiatives emphasize the importance of understanding and effectively implementing curricular requirements. Teachers who undergo targeted training on instructional delivery learn how to align their teaching methods with the curriculum, ensuring that educational objectives are met (Ayeni, 2011). This alignment not only enhances teacher effectiveness by meeting prescribed standards but also creates a coherent and structured learning experience for students, contributing to positive academic outcomes.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research design

The research design employed in this study was a descriptive survey methodology, as outlined by Gall, Gall and Borg (2007). The design was considered appropriate for this study, as it allowed the researcher to get perceptions about the concept of capacity building and teacher effectiveness in order to advance students' performance. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were used to find the relationships displayed by the variables.

3.2. Study population and sample size

The target population for this study comprised of 3,884 teachers and school administrators from secondary schools in Embu and Tharaka-Nithi counties, Kenya. Stratified random sampling was used to select 400 teachers from 40 schools.

3.3. Research instruments and data analysis process

The study employed a survey questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire captured the demographic data of teachers such as gender, age and academic qualifications. The questionnaire was also used to collect data on capacity building programmes and activities that teachers had attended, and the frequency of such programmes and activities. There was also a self-rating scale to measure teacher effectiveness in instructional delivery, as well as students' academic performance. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Frequencies, percentages, averages, and standard deviations were all used in descriptive statistics. To determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the variables of interest, we employed Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, at the 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Discussion

From the demographic data, it was established that there were 121 teachers (30.3%) between the ages of 36 and 40, 116 (29.0%) between the ages of 31 and 35, 80 (20.0%) under the age of 30, 61 (15.3%) between the ages of 41 and 50, and 22 (5.5%) above the age of 50. This concentration suggests a relatively mid-career stage for a substantial portion of the teaching staff. Additionally, the data reveal a noteworthy presence of younger teachers, with 20.0% under the age of 30, highlighting the diversity in age groups within the teaching workforce. In terms of educational qualifications, the study found that, out of the total number of teachers, 364 (or 91%) had bachelor's degrees and 36 (9%) had master's degrees or above. The majority of teachers held bachelor's degrees, indicating a strong foundational academic background. However, the presence of 9% with master's degrees or above signifies a noteworthy segment of educators with advanced qualifications, potentially contributing to a diverse range of perspectives and expertise within the teaching staff. Regarding work experience, there were 295 (73.8%) teachers who had been working at their current schools for 1-5 years, 66 (16.5%) had been there for 6-10 years, 28 (7%) had been there for more than 10 years, and 11 (2.8%) had taught in their current schools for less than 1 year. From the data, it is evident that most of the teachers had work experience of more than five years. Teachers with more than five years in the field are more likely to have participated in professional development opportunities.

4.1. Capacity building programmes attended by teachers

The main goal of this study was to establish the influence of capacity building in instructional delivery on the effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study found that 36 (9.0%) teachers had participated in seven or more capacity development courses, 197 (44.3%) had participated in four or more, 145 (36.3%) had participated in one to three, and 22 (5.5%) had not participated in any capacity building course. Table 1 shows the capacity building programmes attended by teachers. From this table, it emerges that out of the 400 teachers surveyed, 63.5% had participated in subject-specific training programs like the Strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education (SMASE) programme; 62.0% had participated in team building programmes; 58.0% had participated in motivation and staff development activities; and 53.5% had taken games and sports management courses.

Table 1 Capacity building courses attended by teachers

Courses attended	No. of teachers	Percent
Subject-based training e.g. SMASE	254	63.5
Team building	248	62.0
Motivation and staff development	232	58.0
Games and sports management	214	53.5
National examination – KCSE	182	45.5
ICT-related course	128	32.0
Decision-making and problem solving	69	17.3
Management of student discipline	62	15.5
Leadership in education	44	11.0
Guidance and counselling course	33	8.3
Curriculum implementation	32	8.0
Education management and practice	22	5.5
Physical planning and development	22	5.5
Supervision and evaluation	22	5.5
Drug abuse	18	4.5
Financial management and control	14	3.5

Less than half of all teachers also took courses in areas like drug abuse education, school financial management, physical planning and development, supervision and evaluation, decision-making, problem-solving, leadership in education, guidance and counselling, curriculum implementation, education management and practice, physical planning and development, and evaluation.

These findings shed light on the dynamic landscape of professional development among the teachers in Kenya. The high participation rates in subject-specific training, team building, and staff development activities underscore a proactive approach to enhancing instructional skills and fostering a positive working environment. In support of these results, Jepketer et al. (2015) claimed that educators need training in areas such as subject matter expertise, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum expertise, and awareness of current developments in the field, such as the use of technology in the classroom.

4.2. Influence of capacity building on teachers' performance in instructional delivery

Table 2 Teachers' ratings on instructional delivery

Instructional Delivery statements	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
I always make sure that my students complete the syllabus on time	4.59	.49
I regularly consult with my colleagues to identify the best strategies to improve teaching and learning	4.58	.49
I regularly provide feedback (verbal, nonverbal, and written) as the lesson progresses	4.50	.55
I design and base assignments on objectives	4.48	.50
I use a variety of activities and strategies to engage students	4.38	.48
I effectively use the entire classroom (e.g. by making movements throughout the room)	4.36	.77
I always keep updated professional documents (schemes of work, lesson plans & records of work)	4.30	.73
I use varied instructional delivery strategies depending on the subject or topic.	4.32	.46
I ensure that instructional time allocated is adequate to ensure syllabus is covered & learning takes place	4.24	.78
I monitor student engagement in all activities and strategies	4.13	.49
My classroom is mostly student-centred rather than teacher centred	4.10	1.07
I always ensure that there is adequate time in the classroom for learning each task	4.00	.615
A high number of my students are actively engaged in the class continuously	3.83	.748
I assist students in planning for homework assignments	3.82	1.07
I incorporate higher-order thinking strategies	3.59	.89
I ensure there are adequate instructional materials per student, for learning at school and at home	3.22	.91
I use student questions to guide the lesson	3.12	1.02

The teachers were given a survey consisting of 17 questions that gauged their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements about instructional delivery in order to determine the efficacy of the teachers' delivery of instruction. The 17 items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 indicating strong agreement and 1 indicating severe disagreement. The midpoint of the scale was 3, with scores above 3 denoting agreement with a statement while scores close to 3 denoted a neutral view. Scores below 3 denoted that the teacher disagreed with the statement. The results from the 17-item scale are shown in Table 2 along with the means and standard deviations. The highest-rated statement, "I always make sure that my students complete the syllabus on time" (M = 4.59), suggests a strong commitment among teachers to cover the curriculum within stipulated timelines. This dedication is crucial for maintaining pace and

ensuring comprehensive coverage of the syllabus, aligning with the broader educational objectives. The next most common responses with high mean scores include "I design and base assignments on objectives" (M = 4.48), reflecting a thoughtful approach to assignment creation tied to instructional goals. Additionally, "I regularly consult with my colleagues to identify the best strategies to improve teaching and learning" (M = 4.58) and "I regularly provide feedback - verbal, nonverbal, and written as the lesson progresses" (M = 4.50) underscore collaborative efforts and a commitment to ongoing improvement in teaching methodologies.

On the other hand, items with lower mean scores point to potential areas for improvement. "I use student questions to guide the lesson" (M = 3.12) suggests that there might be room for more active incorporation of student queries in shaping the instructional process. Similarly, "I ensure that there are adequate instructional materials per student, both for learning at school and at home" (M = 3.22) highlights a potential challenge in resource provision that could impact the overall learning experience. Lastly, "I incorporate higher-order thinking strategies" (M = 3.59) indicates a moderate agreement with the integration of advanced cognitive skills, suggesting a possible avenue for enhancing instructional strategies. These findings provide an understanding of teachers' perspectives on instructional delivery. While certain areas receive high ratings, identifying specific aspects with lower mean scores allows for targeted interventions and professional development initiatives to enhance teaching practices. In a previous study, Waweru and Nyagosia (2013) conducted research on the relationship between teachers' use of class time and their students' performance in secondary school in Kenya. They found that the vast majority of instructors made sure the curriculum was covered in a timely manner. Making sure that there is enough time for each topic in class to cover the curriculum and facilitate learning was also a high priority in the study by Waweru and Nyagosia (2013). Importantly, the mean score for teacher-to-teacher consultation was 4.58, indicating that many educators use this strategy to enhance their own teaching. According to Blase and Blase (2006), peer consultation leads to educator growth, assurance, and school performance and improvement by fostering an environment marked by strong forms of educator cooperation and collegiality.

These results therefore imply that majority of the teachers rated themselves to be effective in instructional delivery. One of the main goals of teacher capacity building is to improve instructional delivery (Kafwa, Obondo & Kisaka, 2015), and, as pointed out by Onwuagboke, Osuala and Nzeako (2017), achieving effectiveness in instructional delivery should be the prime objective of a teacher.

In order to determine the influence of teachers' capacity building on their effectiveness in instructional delivery, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was carried out with the number of capacity building programmes attended as the grouping variable and overall scores obtained on instructional delivery as the dependent variable. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations obtained by the teachers across the number of different capacity building courses attended, as well as ANOVA statistics.

Table 3 Capacity building and effectiveness in instructional delivery

No. of courses attended	**No. of teachers**		**Instructional delivery mean score**		**Std. Dev.**
Not attended any	22		65.73		6.416
1 - 3 courses	145		69.65		3.345
4 - 6 courses	197		70.15		3.798
7 - 9 courses	36		68.44		7.268
Total	400		69.57		4.361
Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between	438.15	3	146.050	8.087	.05*
Within	7151.74	396	18.060		
Total	7589.90	399			

*Significant at $p>0.05$

The results in Table 3 show that, from preliminary analysis, teachers who had attended capacity building courses were more effective in instructional delivery. The table further shows that there were significant differences in teachers' instructional delivery as a result of capacity building, $F(3, 396) = 8.087$, $p = 0.05(\alpha = 0,05)$. The results show that, those teachers who had attended more courses obtained higher means scores in instructional delivery than those who had

attended fewer or no courses. This is an indication that attendance of capacity building courses improved teacher effectiveness in instructional delivery. The finding that attendance of capacity building courses improved teacher effectiveness in instructional delivery is consistent with previous research in Pakistan by Aziz and Akhtar (2014), who found that there was a significant difference between teachers who had undergone capacity building and those who had not in terms of pedagogical competencies, management and assessment effectiveness and research effectiveness, whereby trained teachers were more effective than untrained teachers. Similarly, a Nigerian study by Uremadu (2017) established that continuous professional development of teachers had a significant role to play in their instructional effectiveness and this improved academic performance of the students. A Kenyan study by Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo (2015) revealed that capacity building through seminars, workshops and conferences improved teachers' teaching competences, enabled teachers to apply best teaching practices, and created opportunities for teachers to utilize networks for collaboration in teaching.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Majority of the teachers in secondary schools rated themselves as effective in instructional delivery. The teachers rated themselves as most effective in ensuring that the syllabus was completed on time and regularly consulting with colleagues to identify the best strategies to improve teaching and learning. On the other hand, the teachers rated themselves lowest in terms of using student questions to guide the lessons and ensuring that there were adequate instructional materials per student, both for learning at school and at home. Results of ANOVA test showed that capacity building had a significant influence on the effectiveness of teachers in instructional delivery, whereby teachers who had attended more courses obtained higher means scores in instructional delivery than those who had attended fewer or no courses. This implies that attendance of capacity building courses improved teacher effectiveness in instructional delivery. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the government, through the Ministry of Education, should place more emphasis on teacher capacity building as a means for improving their teaching effectiveness. Further, the schools, through the School Boards of Management, should organize regular school-based capacity building programmes such as mentorship, peer consultation and staff team building programmes in order to create opportunities for all teachers, including new entrants to the teaching profession.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare. There is no financial interest to report. I certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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