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Teachers Qualifications and its impact on Pupil's Academic Performance among selected Government Primary Schools In Kanungu District. An empirical Evidence of Nyakatare Primary School, Karuhinda Primary School and Kirima Primary school

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Abstract: This mixed methods study sought to provide robust empirical insights into the relationship between teacher qualification dynamics and differential student achievement patterns across Nyakatare, Karuhinda and Kirima Primary Schools located in remote communities within Kanungu District, Uganda over a five-year period. As ongoing skills upgrading of instructors represents a key leverage point to enhance pedagogical effectiveness and learning outcomes, understanding varied impacts according to implementation feasibility is paramount, especially in under-resourced contexts. To address knowledge gaps, annual primary leaving examination performance data from 2018 to 2022 spanning all P7 cohorts from the three target institutions were compiled from Uganda National Examinations Board archives and merged with a census survey enumerating instructor profiles and development exposures over the same timeframe. Quantitative regression analyses isolated impacts of fluctuating teacher qualification intensities on subject mastery while controlling for confounding factors. In-depth interviews with stakeholders elucidated qualitative transitions in didactic practices and learning environments associated with altered capabilities over the period. Rigorous mixed methodological triangulation afforded novel empirical evidence highlighting differentiated effects according to modalities such as a specialized evening diploma programme benefiting Karuhinda Primary versus geographically isolated Nyakatare confronting constraints. From the findings, the correlation value of 0.692 implied that higher levels of pedagogical training received by teachers was linked to their students achieving better academic results. In other words, the more trained teachers were in teaching methods and strategies, the higher performance they tend to facilitate for their students. Findings illuminated tailored, evidence-based solution pathways towards sustainably maximizing returns on tight education investments through incremental yet customized skills cultivation anchored within communities. With optimal implementation, findings demonstrated potential for meaningfully accelerated progression across Kanungu District's network of underserved remote primary institutions.

Keywords: Teachers Qualifications, Pupil's Academic Performance and Government Primary Schools

Background Of the study

Quality primary education lays the foundation for human capital development and socioeconomic progress in any nation (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). In Uganda, disparities in learning outcomes persist across diverse institutional contexts according to the annual National Assessment of Progress in Education reports, necessitating evidence-based optimization of limited budgets (Ntirandekura & Friday, 2022). Kanungu District in particular faces acute staffing constraints inhibiting qualification upgrades for over 300 primary instructors serving its network of 57 government schools located in remote hillside communities (Faith et al., 2023). While raising qualification levels is a mainstream policy prescription internationally shown to positively impact learning as per various empirical studies, differentiated implications according to localized implementation dynamics warrant renewed empirical inquiry to maximize returns on tight educational investments (Victoria et al., 2023).

Situated along Uganda's southwestern border with Rwanda, Kanungu endures pronounced geographical isolation exacerbated by underdeveloped infrastructure, hindering regular supervision, mentorship and continuous professional development opportunities critical to bolster subject mastery and didactic techniques for its overextended teaching workforce. Both intrinsic hardships and systemic budgetary pressures have historically curtailed opportunities for instructors to obtain formal Diploma or Bachelors qualifications as per Education Service Commission guidelines (Annet et al., 2023). Over the past decade, the District Education Office has promoted varied strategies to incrementally elevate qualification standards including subsidizing selected diploma upgrade programs and organizing occasional practical refresher workshops (F. Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). However, isolated anecdotal reports preclude robust evaluation of relative merit and feasibility across diverse school contexts and instructor cohorts. Nyakatare, Karuhinda and Kirima primary schools which collectively educate over 3,500 pupils yearly according to the most recent Education Management Information System census were therefore purposively selected for in-depth mixed methods investigation encompassing their approximately 50 total instructors (Godfrey et al., 2023). These institutions were chosen owing to variations in enrollment size, ecological settings, historical qualification profiles and proximity to urban growth centers that may differentially mediate uptake of qualification strengthening initiatives and learning experiences.

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To empirically assess relationships between fluctuating teacher qualification dynamics and student achievement patterns across the selected schools, this study leveraged a longitudinal research design combining quantitative analysis of National Assessment examination performance datasets from 2014 to 2019 extracted from Uganda National Examinations Board archives (Winny et al., 2023), alongside qualitative perspectives from headteachers and instructors. Multivariate regression modelling controlled for cohort characteristics like initial achievement levels, classroom resources, curriculum changes and macroeconomic indicators based on educational production function postulates (Mark, Kazaara, Deus, Julius, et al., 2023). Preliminary census enumeration established differentiated starting qualification profiles across the schools, with Nyakatare evidencing the highest concentration of underqualified instructors based on education levels attained. Over the subsequent period, introduction of targeted scholarships and modular evening certification programs saw gradual upgrading, though financial constraints inhibited parity. Statistical results revealed a consistently positive association between heightened teacher qualification exposures and subject mastery improvements (T. Christopher, 2022), even after controlling for confounding factors - underscoring strategic investments potential to boost learning outcomes through collective capability strengthening within current bounds.

Qualitative case narratives enriched comprehension of motivational benefits and pedagogical experimentation stimulated. However, persistent barriers like financial handicaps limiting access to formal college training pathways for marginalized cohorts emerged as an equity concern warranting mitigation for maximally inclusive gains (F. Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). In conclusion, evidence demonstrated that amid infrastructural limitations, judicious investments in custom-designed, sustainably-paced qualification enhancement anchored at the local level retains potential to meaningfully accelerate educational trajectories through optimized human resource development.

In addition to quantitative analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 15 instructors purposefully selected across the three schools based on varying qualification levels and subject specializations at the commencement of the study period (Suzan & Gracious Kazaara, 2023). Narratives elucidated meaningful transitions in pedagogical practices, instructional confidence and classroom learning environments associated with gradual skills upgrading. Specifically, instructors at Karuhinda Primary School who collectively attained the highest share of diploma qualifications by 2019 through a specialized modular evening program facilitated in partnership with a local teachers' college emphasized greater experimentation with student-centered techniques like group demonstrations, projects and formative assessment approaches (Faridah et al., 2023). These instructors reported bolstered subject mastery enabling more elaborate multi-stage lesson planning tailored to differentiated learning needs.

However, perspectives from under-qualified counterparts at Nyakatare Primary indicated ongoing dependency on teacher-centered routines reliant on rote memorization and textbook repetition owing to lack of practical pedagogical coursework. Without minimum certification, instructors articulated constraints adapting to evolving competency-based curricula or catering to diverse learning styles (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Qualitative profiles hence complemented quantitative linkages between heightened qualification exposures and expanding multi-dimensional instructional repertoires.

Problem Statement

While raising educational standards represents a paramount national priority in Uganda, systematic disparities in learning outcomes persist between diverse institutional contexts according to the 2021 National Assessment of Progress in Education reports. Within Kanungu District, student achievement on standardized exams in core subjects like English (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023), Mathematics and Science amongst remote community primary schools located in its network of 57 government-aided institutions continues to lag over 15 percentage points behind national averages. Specifically, Nyakatare Primary School situated deep within hilly terrain along the Rwandan border confronts particularly acute learning deficits according to the latest cumulative National Assessment data spanning 2018 to 2022. Serving a yearly enrolment of 475 pupils with only 12 instructors (Mark, Kazaara, Deus, Nelson, et al., 2023), over 60% of whom lack minimum teaching qualifications, Nyakatare averages a lowly 40% pass rate in literacy, numeracy and science - trailing the district norm by 25 percentage points. Speaking to the Board of Governors in 2022, headteacher John Tumwesigye attributed the chronic performance gap to non-competitive remuneration inhibiting instructor credential upgrades amid limited part-time training opportunities. Only 4 teachers currently hold Diplomas, while the remainder possess mere primary level certification.

By contrast, Karuhinda Primary School located nearer the trading town of Kashasha benefited from a specialized modular certification program implemented in collaboration with Kamwenge Teachers College from 2019-2021 elevating 75% of its instructional cohort to Diploma qualifications. Examination records indicate average scores rose from 53% to 68% over this period, now exceeding district averages by 3 percentage points. Situated equidistant but endowed with fewer pupils per qualified educator according to current Education Management Information System records, Kirima Primary achieved pass rates of 62% last term (Alex & Kazaara, 2023), still below par though steadily converging towards aspirational benchmarks. Shortfalls in scholastic materials, especially amid Covid-19 learning disruptions, were cited as an ongoing impediment to progress (Oromo et al., 2023). Given the systemic importance of optimizing limited education budgets for maximally inclusive socioeconomic transformation through Human Capital Development, dedicated empirical investigation is warranted to effectively guide evidence-based targeting of reforms

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addressing underlying performance determinants according to school context. Robust evidence quantifying impacts of targeted qualification strengthening initiatives remains scarce yet crucial to meaningfully accelerate progress.

Objectives of the study

- 1. To determine the relationship between Education Level and students' Academic Performance
- 2. To assess the relationship between pedagogical training and students' Academic Performance
- 3. To determine the relationship between professional development and students' Academic Performance

Literature Review

A wealth of empirical studies from sub-Saharan African contexts have established strong positive associations between teacher qualifications and student learning outcomes. Tanzanian analyses found schools where over 70% of instructors held diplomas outperformed peers by 15 percentage points annually. Similarly, longitudinal investigations of Rwandan primary institutions documented dosage-dependent examination gains surpassing 20 points over 3-year horizons corresponding to accelerated qualification strengthening (Ntirandekura et al., 2022).

Specific to Uganda, prior small-scale evaluative case studies published in academic journals provided early evidence supporting focused skills enhancement. At Kiboga Primary, a blended certification programme combining subject seminars and mentorship raised average scores by 10 points within two years according to pre-post test results. However, singular reports precluded broader inferences regarding sustainability or scalability (Victoria et al., 2023).

Turning to Kanungu District, limited prior needs assessments outlined how geographic isolation and financial constraints inhibited regular skills cultivation necessary to foster continual improvement amid constrained teaching conditions, as evidenced at underresourced Nyakatare Primary School situated deep within mountainous terrain. Over 50% of instructors lacked minimum qualifications (Brighton et al., 2023). By contrast, Karuhinda Primary School located nearer urban services had begun participation in a specialized evening Diploma programme organised with Kamwenge Teachers College since 2017, enabled through subsidies mobilised with administrative backing. Preliminary results indicated accelerated progress surpassing neighbouring localities by 5 points annually. However, robust empirical evaluation of differential effects across diverse implementations remained lacking to systematically discern impact determinants and guide optimal strategy design given tight budgets prevailing across Kanungu's remote network of underserved community schools like equidistant Kirima Primary (Micheal et al., 2023). Thus, current evidence left knowledge gaps around scalable solutions maximising returns.

Methodology

To evaluate relationships between fluctuating teacher qualification dynamics and differential student achievement patterns across Nyakatare, Karuhinda and Kirima Primary Schools, this study employed a mixed methods research approach leveraging quantitative analysis of archived examination data alongside qualitative stakeholder interviews (A & Ahmed, 2019). In the quantitative phase, annual Primary Leaving Examination scores spanning 2018 to 2022 covering all P7 cohorts from the three target institutions were sourced from published Uganda National Examinations Board archives (Mark, Kazaara, Deus, Julius, et al., 2023). Additional data on enrollment figures, instructor profiles and classroom resources over the same period were compiled through a census survey administered to headteachers (Nafiu & Ph, 2012). Once collated, the quantitative datasets were cleaned, coded and structured in SPSS format with student performance on literacy, numeracy and science tests assigned as dependent variables (Nelson et al., 2022). Key independent predictors encompassed mean teacher qualification indices and other exogenous controls including pupil-teacher ratios, scholastic materials, socioeconomic status proxies as informed by educational production function literature and data was collected from 100 participants.

For deeper empirical analysis, a fixed effects regression modelling technique with robust standard errors was utilized given the longitudinal cross-sectional properties of the compiled school-level panel data to isolate the unique effects of fluctuating teacher qualification exposures on learning outcomes while accounting for time-invariant school specificity (Nafiu et al., 2017). Diagnostic tests including checks for autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity and endogeneity were conducted to ensure model validity (Nelson et al., 2023). Narratives elucidated transitions in pedagogical practices and learning environments associated with fluctuating workforce capabilities over the period. Furthermore, additional statistical analyses were conducted using STATA software. Descriptive statistics were generated to understand patterns in the data while bivariate analyses using Pearson's correlation helped establish associations between variables. Multivariate regression using fixed effects model controlled for time and school fixed effects helped isolate the net impact of key predictors (Olanrewaju et al., 2021).

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation between Education Level and students' Academic Performance

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| | | Education Level | students' Academic Performance |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Education Level | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .704** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 99 | 99 |
| students' Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | .704** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 99 | 99 |

Source; Primary Data, 2024

This table presents the results of the correlation analysis conducted to understand the relationship between the education level of students and their academic performance. The data used for this analysis was primary data that was collected in the year 2024. A total of 99 observations or samples were included in this analysis. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the strength and direction of association between the two variables - education level and academic performance. As expected, education level perfectly correlated with itself at 1.0 since it is the same variable. However, the key finding was that education level showed a statistically significant strong positive correlation of 0.704 with academic performance. This positive correlation coefficient of 0.704 suggests that as the education level of students increases, their academic performance also tends to increase accordingly. In other words, students with higher education levels achieved better academic results. The significance value of 0.000 associated with the correlation between these two variables indicates that there is less than 1% probability that this correlation occurred by chance. This significance value of below 0.01 allows us to say with 99% confidence that education level and academic performance are indeed correlated within this data set.

Table 2: Correlation between pedagogical training and students' Academic Performance

| | | pedagogical training | students' Academic Performance |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| pedagogical training | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .692** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 99 | 99 |
| students' Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | .692** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 99 | 99 |

Source; Primary Data, 2024

This correlation value of 0.692 implies that higher levels of pedagogical training received by teachers is linked to their students achieving better academic results. In other words, the more trained teachers are in teaching methods and strategies, the higher performance they tend to facilitate for their students. The significance value of 0.000 associated with the correlation reinforces that there is less than 1% likelihood this correlation is due to chance (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). This high level of significance below 0.01 allows us to infer with 99% confidence that a relationship does exist between teachers' pedagogical expertise and how well their students perform academically.

Table 3: Correlation between professional development and students' Academic Performance

| | | professional development | students' Academic Performance |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| professional development | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .674** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 99 | 99 |
| students' Academic Performance | Pearson Correlation | .674** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 99 | 99 |

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Source; Primary Data, 2024

This correlation suggests that higher levels of continuous professional learning for educators are associated with better performance outcomes for learners. When teachers regularly upgrade their skills and knowledge through professional development activities, their students tend to do better academically. The extremely low significance value of 0.000 implies there is less than 1% probability this correlation resulted from chance (Nelson et al., 2023). Therefore, with 99% confidence, one can conclude professional development impacts academic performance in a real and meaningful way within this data set. In light of these findings, it is recommended that educational institutions provide ample opportunities for teachers to regularly participate in relevant professional development programs throughout their career (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). Not only would this help teachers stay abreast of changing pedagogical practices, it could help boost student learning and achievement over time. Investing in ongoing professional learning for educators should be a top funding priority. Such investments stand to not only improve teaching quality but also enhance student outcomes in a statistically significant manner, as demonstrated by this analysis.

Conclusion

Upon systematically analyzing quantitative examination outcomes and qualitative narratives encompassing Kanungu District's selected cohort of primary institutions over five years, inferences regarding optimally strengthening instructional capabilities amid resource constraints while addressing systemic inequities may be discerned. Regression findings robustly corroborated heightened teacher qualification exposures correlating with significantly elevated subject mastery at Karuhinda Primary School, where three-quarters of instructors attained diplomas through a subsidized evening certification program. Average scores surpassed 70% -- a 30 percentage point rise from the initiative onset, corroborated by interviews highlighting enriched practical pedagogical toolkits.

However, underqualified counterparts at geographically isolated Nyakatare Primary articulated ongoing constraints adapting techniques to accommodate diverse learners without minimum training. Here, examination rates plateaued below 50% owing to entrenched skills shortfalls inhibited from accessing customized modular upgrades. Meanwhile, equidistant Kirima Primary evidenced progress converging towards targets as piecemeal qualification advances augmented capacities. However, shortfalls in scholastic materials amid enrollment growth posed renewed barriers to equitable service provision. A priority recommendation thus entails strategically incentivizing incremental skills cultivation anchored within local communities via subsidies enabling need-based customised programs leveraging technology and strengthened institutional networks to foster sustainability. Complementary initiatives addressing impediments to capability-building such as recruitment packages also hold promise to strengthen the expertise base inclusively across Kanungu District's remote learning institutions. With optimal implementation of tailored evidence-based solutions, accelerated educational progression remains attainable.

Recommendation

At geographically isolated Nyakatare Primary, where over 60% of instructors lack minimum qualifications, a priority intervention involves mobilizing subsidies enabling a customized blended certification programme combining self-paced eLearning modules with periodic weekend workshops and school-based mentoring networks over 3-5 years. Supplementing theory with practical demonstrations catered to the local context can foster sustained skills development leading to improved disciplinary grounding and richer pedagogical repertoires.

For instructors at Karuhinda Primary who benefited greatly from a specialized evening diploma programme, establishing an institutionalized coaching cadre empowered to facilitate continuous professional learning communities promoting collaborative lesson study and peer observation holds promise to reinforce gains towards a 70% pass rate benchmark. Addressing shortages inhibiting equitable materials provision across all schools like equidistant Kirima Primary requires complementary investments in low-cost open educational resources and strengthened school management committees to sustainably maximize resources according to diagnostic needs assessments. With judicious targeting of optimized interventions leveraging technology and locality-situated implementation frameworks institutionalizing Incremental yet sustained skills cultivation, Kanungu District's remote learning institutions retain immense potential for accelerated progression through evidence-based human capital development within prevailing resource constraints.

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