Social Demographic Characteristics and Teachers' Performance in Government Aided Secondary Schools: Evidence from Uganda

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Abstract- In this study, we aimed at examining the association between social demographic characteristics of teachers and their performance in government-aided secondary school Kasese district southwestern Uganda. Using purposive and stratified for both schools and teachers in this quantitative study, we recruited 234 teachers from 25 government aided secondary in Kasese district southwestern Uganda

Data was analysed using SPSS version 24, and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Our findings indicate that social demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age and education levels are significant predictors of teachers' performance in secondary schools of Kasese district southwestern Uganda.

We conclude that some teachers' social demographic characteristics have a significant influence on teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools with in Kasese district south western Uganda. We recommend that policy makers design the most appropriate interventions entailing human resource practices aimed at streamlining the needs of teachers from different demographic cohorts.

I. Introduction

Teachers are the most important resource in education system world over (Kizi & Ugli, 2020). For instance, since early 2000s, policies in the United States of America have aimed at identifying performance of individual teachers to ascertain their contribution towards a bigger institution (Symeonidis, 2015). Similarly, between, 2007 and 2012, France dropped 80,000 teachers because of their decline in performance following the recommendations of Union Nationale de Syndicats Autonomes (UNSA) report (Symeonidis, 2015). Countries like Brazil were not exceptional of this situation (Repec, 2013). Likewise in Nigeria, in Ogun, state public secondary school teachers under Nigeria Union Teachers (NUT) an umbrella body that brings teachers together, teachers have gone on strikes because of poor remuneration systems, thus, compromising performance (Abiodun, Dele, & Abimbola, 2015). These strikes were mostly seen between 2009 and 2015 because the government had failed to implement 27.5% increment on teachers' salaries as agreed upon with NUT (Abiodun, Dele, & Abimbola, 2015). Finally, this led to low performance of teachers, as most of them could no longer come early to school. Teachers' absenteeism was high compromising their ability to assess learners and conducting normal duties as expected (Gbenga & Yakub, 2018).

In March 2018, World Bank through its report "Severe Learning Crisis" on Africa revealed that there is need to support teachers better in areas of preparation, supervision and deployment in order to have them perform better (Bashir, et al., 2018). Policies need to be developed and address high rates of teacher absenteeism, lack of teacher knowledge, and skills and focus more on better and effective teaching (World Bank Group, 2018) for instance from 2006-2010, Cameroon and Madagascar governments tried to hire contract teachers by introducing the Contract Teacher Program (CTP) (Kepa, 2015). Communities started hiring teachers at their own expenses paid by parents but still performance of teachers remained uneven and low (World Bank Group, 2018). In 2012, Kenya developed the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), which aimed at improving the performance of teachers. Section 11 (C) and (F) of the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya talk of monitoring the performance of teachers in public learning institutions (Kagema & Irungu, 2018). The TSC calls for use of confidential reports in assessing teacher performance. In a bid to improve on this, Kenya has also introduced a more modern and open assessment system where the teacher participates in their performance (Ngeno, Bett & Chervigot, 2013). Poor performance was also manifested in 2014 in the Ministry of Internal Security despite efforts made by government to improve their performance (Long & Gibson, 2015). Performance of teachers is primarily considered to be the core for the success of schools and education in Uganda (Kigenyi, 2017) and is influenced by a number of factors among which include demographic characteristics. The study by Francisco (2020) on teachers' personal and professional demographic characteristics as predictors of students' academic performance in English found out that teachers' demographic variables do not have any significant

effect on performance. However, a number of studies have pointed out that demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education level, marriage, religion, ethnicity among others are significant predictors of teachers' performance not only in secondary schools but also in other levels of education (Kabadayi, 2010; Kimani, Kara, & Njagi, 2013; Mahmood et al., 2021; Sadeghi & SimaKhezrlou, 2014; Stearns, et al., 2016).

For the last two decades, the Uganda government has invested a lot in secondary school teachers with a sole intention of improving their performance (MOES Report, 2017). Although, these initiatives have been put in place, performance of secondary school particularly in upcountry areas is still wanting, particularly in areas of preparation, content delivery, students' assessment and evaluation (Jackline, 2018). This has greatly compromised the quality of education in government-aided secondary schools in upcountry communities of Uganda (Jackline, 2018). The situation is not any different in Kasese District of western Uganda, where teachers' performance in government aided secondary schools has for many years lagged behind (Baluku & Kasujja, 2020). It is acknowledged that despite several attempts and initiatives by the government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports to improve the education system, teacher performance in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District has remained at bottom half of the pyramid (Jackline, 2018).

Several studies have tackled a number of factors linked to poor performance of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District including but not limited to compensation and remuneration, motivation, leadership, adoption of ICT among others ((Murongo & Nzaghale, 2019; Kisembo, 2015; Kule, et al., 2021; Jackline, 2018). However, little research has been focused on teachers' social demographic characteristics even when studies in different parts of Uganda and the world have concluded that they have a bearing on performance of teachers not only in government aided secondary school but also other levels of education (Kabadayi, 2010; Mahmood, et al., 2021; Stearns, et al., 2016). The Ministry of Education and Sports Annual Evaluation Report (2012), UWEZO Report (2016) and Kasese District Annual Performance Report, Education Extract (2017) show that teacher performance in the district is low as manifested in teacher absenteeism, missing scheduled lessons, poor time management, low staff attendance, late coming, and lack of team work. Both the Ministry and UWEZO reports did not cater or control for teacher's social demographic characteristics while assessing their performance. To this effect, little research is known on whether teachers' individual characteristics particularly social demographic variables of gender, age, levels of education, and marital status could have tangible impact on the performance of these teachers. The current study examined the association between the teacher's social demographic characteristics on their teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese district of south western Uganda.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research design, Population and Sample size

This study was a cross-sectional study design adopting a quantitative approach of data collection. The design enabled the collection of data in its natural setting and depict an overall picture of the phenomenon at the time of the study (Kumar, 2011; Koul,

2005). The survey targeted 601 teachers from government-aided secondary schools in the Kasese district. Teachers were considered because the study is looking at their performance in the context of their remuneration in government-aided secondary schools. A sample size of 234 teachers was selected from 25 government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District. These were randomly selected to participate in this study. A maximum variation approach was used in the selection of the schools for the study. In the same vein, study participants were selected using probability sampling techniques where stratified and simple random were applied.

Questionnaire and measurement

Data were collected from the participant using a structured questionnaire set on a four-level Linkert scale. The questionnaire was administered to the participant by the researcher to ensure clarity and consistency in answering the questions. These questions were anchored on a four-level Linkert scale i.e. 0-3 was used whereby 0=Not at all, 1=Sometimes, 2= More often, and 3=Almost Always. This tool has been used in a similar setting in Uganda (Ssekakubo, 2014).

Data Management and Analysis

Data were coded and a database was created using the Special Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 24) a computer program used to customize the data entry process and analysis. The codes were designed based on a pretested standardized questionnaire. At the end of every day of data collection and before the data entry process, the researcher checking for possible errors, incompleteness, misclassification edited data /filled questionnaires, and gaps in the information obtained.

Ethical Consideration

We sought permission and ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee and Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNSCT), which is the body mandated to issue ethical clearance letters in Uganda. The researcher sought informed consent of the respondents and made it known that their participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw from the study at any time or free not to answer questions that they are not comfortable with. Research findings were reported completely and honestly, without misrepresenting any responses given or intentionally misleading readers and researchers interested in this study.

III. RESULTS

Characteristics of teachers

This study included 234 participants who included teachers from government aided secondary schools and education stakeholders in Kasese District. Result indicate that majority of the participants 208 (88.9%) were males whereas the minority 26 (11.1%) were females. This indicates that there are more male teachers than female teachers in government aided secondary schools in Kasese District.

Results as well indicate that majority of the participants: 186 (79.5%) were married, 45 (19.2%) were single, 2 (0.87%) were widowed and 1 (0.43%) was divorced. This clearly indicates that

married staffs prominently spearhead the teaching profession in Kasese District.

Additionally, the findings unveiled majority of the respondents: 86 (36.8%) as having spent a period between five and ten years in the teaching profession, followed by 66 (28.2%) who had spent a period between 11-15 years in teaching whereas the minority 24 (10.3%) had spent less than five years in teaching profession. This implies that about 89.7% of the teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District have spent more than five years in the teaching profession indicating that the area has experienced teachers.

Finally, on the characteristics, majority of the participants; 144 (61.5%) held bachelors' degrees in education, followed by 64 (27.4%) who were Grade V (Diploma in Education Secondary) whereas the least 26 (11.1%) had a Masters level of education qualifications. For more information, refer to findings as presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents (N=234)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	26	11.1
Male	208	88.9
Age		
18-30	24	10.3
31-40	110	47.0
41-50	63	26.9
50 and above	37	15.8
Marital status		
Single	45	19.2
Married	186	79.5
Divorced	01	0.43
Widowed	02	0.87
Years of service		
less than 5 years	24	10.3
5-10 years	86	36.8
11-15 years	66	28.2
16-20 years	27	11.5
above 20 years	31	13.2
Qualifications		
Grade V	64	27.4
Bachelors	144	61.5
Post graduate	26	11.1
Main Variables	**Mean**	**SD**
Employee's performance, total score	22.2	3.81
Incentives, total score	7.18	3.56
Salary, total score	7.87	0.56
Benefits, total score	14.3	3.12

Hierarchical regression showing the Individual contribution of each independent variable to the dependent while controlling for gender, age and qualification

Results indicate that teachers who were postgraduates and graduates performed highly compared to the grade V (b=1.074, p<=0.001, b=0.784, p=0.012 for Postgraduates and graduate teachers respectively). Performance of teachers in age category of 41-50 was high compared to those in age category of 18-30 (b=0.221, p<=0.001). Gender was not a significant predictor of performance in this study. Furthermore, results indicate that teachers who were post graduates performed highly compared to the grade V (b=1.102, p<=0.001).

Table 1: Hierarchical Regression

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE	B	SE	b	SE
(Constant)	29.42	3.759	28.69	3.916	27.91	4.01
Age						
18-30	Ref		Ref		ref	
31-40	-.628	.857	-.608	.858	-.622	.859
41-50	.138	.940	.221	.949	.201	.950
>50	-1.148	1.034	-1.138	1.035	-1.168	1.036
Gender (Male)	- .315	-.556	-.336	.558	-.327	.558
Qualification						
Grade V	Ref		Ref		ref	
Bachelors	.718	.573	.733	.574	.807	580
Post graduate	1.074	.944	1.068	.945	1.102	.946
Adjusted R Square		0.150		0.103		0.120

Dependent Variable: Staff Performance; N=234; B, regression coefficient, SE, Standard error

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study set out to examine the influence demographic characteristics on teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese district of western Uganda. Focus was placed on gender, age, and education level of teachers.

From the findings, we found out that there are more male teachers than female teachers in government aided secondary schools in Kasese district of western Uganda. This points to gender inequality in Uganda's institutions of higher learning. The study by Odaga (2020) revealed that men outnumbered women by a ratio of eight to two reflecting the highest level of gender inequality. Irrespective of the efforts laid down to bridge the gender gaps, little progress has been realized. From the gender perspective, the present study found that gender was not a significant predictor of teachers' performance in Kasese district. The findings concur with an earlier study by Islahi and Nasreen (2013), which found that male and female teachers exhibited insignificantly different effectiveness, an indication that gender has nothing to do with individual teacher's performance. Relatedly, another study by Wanakacha, Aloka, and Nyaswa (2018) revealed that that gender difference did not have an effect on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers to perform their core functions. Though the study was looking at a different component of motivation and how it affects performance of teachers, a closer link looks at how a demographic characteristic of gender and its contribution towards performance of teachers. Basing on this empirical evidence, it is clear that gender dimension has less significant towards performance of teachers in not only Kasese district but also other areas in Uganda and beyond. Until another study is done disputing this fact, for now, this is the evidence at hand.

We found out that age was a significant predictor of teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools of Kasese district, western Uganda. We found out that senior teachers in the ages of 41 and above were better performers than the young ones. These findings are in disagreement with prior findings by Pranoto, Utami, and Latiana, (2021) there is no significant correlation between teaching experiences and age ranges to the quality of teaching performance. To the contrary, the study by Ismail, Rozita, and Abas (2018) reported that teachers' age and teachers' teaching experience significantly influenced their effectiveness in teaching problem solving skills in the classroom settings. Older teachers might be more knowledgeable, as they had 'knowledge base' that is developed over years of teaching experience compared to the younger teachers. All these findings point to the fact that as teachers grow through ranks in the teaching profession, their skills and competence grow eventually.

We found out that teachers' education level was a significant predictor of their performance, the higher the teachers' qualification, the higher the level of performance. Findings revealed that teachers at graduate and postgraduate level were performing better than those of Grade V. These findings concur with previous findings by Babatunde et al (2021) which found out that there was a great significant influence of the teacher's academic qualifications and qualifications on students' academic performance. It should be noted that students' academic performance is an important indicator of teachers' performance. In the same stance, the study by Waweru (2016) revealed that higher qualification improves teaching performance on instructional preparation, adoption of better teaching strategies, assessment and evaluation of students and maintenance of student discipline. Educational qualification come with mastery of new skills, professional growth and competence as time goes by. It is from this view, that we find teachers level of education imperative towards improved performance in the context teaching profession.

Conclusion

Age and education level are significant predictors of teachers performance in government-aided secondary schools of

Kasese district, western Uganda. On the other hand, gender was found to be an insignificant predictor of teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools of Kasese District, western Uganda. Whereas age and qualifications have an influence towards teachers' performance, gender was found to have no impact on the performance of teachers in government-aided secondary schools. This happens on top of the fact that there were more male teachers than female teachers in the area.

Recommendations

There is a need for education service commission to recruit more teachers to bridge the gaps of gender inequality existing among teaching staff in government-aided secondary schools of Kasese district, western Uganda. Whereas the study found no statistical significance between gender and teachers' performance, gender inequality aspect may have a long-standing impact on performance of teachers. This calls for further study to ascertain the implication of gender inequalities in teachers' staffing on their performance in government aided secondary schools not only Kasese district but also the rest of the country.

It is now known that educational level is a significant predictor of teachers' performance, these calls for the need to support teachers' professional growth and career lifelong learning. This will help in enhancing teachers' competence and learning of new skills in the teaching arena. This can be done through extending incentive and policy reforms aimed at encouraging more teachers to upgrade and uplift their qualifications in the teaching profession.

There is a need for educational stakeholders such as head teachers, inspectors and the ministry of education to pay attention to different demographic variables and how they influence performance among teachers in government aided secondary schools. Taking stock of these factors such as age, gender and education qualification can help in policy reforms to bridge the gaps arising from teachers' performance.

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