

The Influence of School Culture Adoption on the Performance of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality

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Abstract

The study aims at establishing the level of school culture adoption, level of performance of teachers and the relationship between school culture adoption and performance of teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. A cross-sectional survey research design with quantitative approaches was conducted. Data were collected using close-ended questionnaire among 134 teachers. All data analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20.0. Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test and Pearson Correlation were used. Findings showed that there was a significant difference in the level of school culture adoption and performance of teachers in secondary school across age of teachers, school type, status of school, foundation body, employment status, level of education and marital status.

However, no statistical difference was found in the level of school culture adoption and performance of teachers regarding gender ($p = 0.527$). The level of school culture adoption showed a statistically significant positive relationship with the level of performance of teachers, ($r = 0.656, p = .000$). From findings, it is recommended that interventions like regular workshops, Refresher courses and orientation programmes are needed.

Key words: School Culture Adoption, Performance of Teachers, Secondary Schools, Mbarara Municipality.

Introduction

Various educationists have indicated that performance of teachers relies on the school culture adoption (Salfi & Saeed, 2007; Rhodes et al., 2009). Globally, in a study of social relations in Chicago elementary schools in the 1990s, Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider found that one powerful factor affecting school improvement was whether staff in the school trusted each other.

In South Africa, according to Salfi and Saeed (2007), they reported that in the schools where a positive culture indicated by adherence to school norms, cultural objects, values and beliefs in addition to rituals and ceremonies showed high performance of teachers. In Uganda according to Ministry of Education and Sports (2008), some teachers are known for dodging lessons, late coming, not finishing the syllabi on time, and not marking students' work books.

Teacher performance in Uganda according to Kajubi (1989) remained low in spite of the improvements in teacher remuneration and education reforms. This is a matter of great concern since it is bound to impact negatively on the quality of education in the country. In Uganda, there is still no reported development in consideration to effective teaching and learning in many secondary schools in Uganda today (Nzabonimpa, 2011). This was because the teachers are supervised by school authorities during their course of duty and therefore do not record such information (Malunda, Onen, Musaazi & Oonyu, 2016).

Despite the above information, there is no sufficient literature in Uganda, regarding the relationship between school culture adoption and performance of

teachers in Secondary Schools. In addition to that, although Aacha (2010) conducted a study in primary schools, it was found out that information about the performance of teachers is also not well documented, yet it is important in areas like classroom management, participation in sports, guidance and counselling, conducting fieldwork among other activities. Leithwood (2006), asserts that it is hard to clearly say that a particular teacher is performing well or not since performance is determined by multiple factors. As Razak, Darmawan, and Keeves (2010) advanced, adopting to culture is an important factor that influences various aspects of human life, such as behaviour, thinking, perceptions and attitudes. The success of any school depends on commitment and general performance of the teaching staff.

Performance of teachers is a vital determinant of a given successful school characterized by school culture of teacher commitment and professionalism among others (Aacha, 2010). However, the continued disparity in performance of teachers exhibited in behaviours like low turn up for lessons, poor time management as well as absenteeism has been attributed to low adoption of contextual school cultures in Mbarara Municipality (Juma, 2014). This variation in school culture adoption threatens the performance of teachers and in turn may result into challenges like strikes, violence as well as vandalism of school property. According to Juma (2014) in a study conducted in Mbarara Municipality secondary schools, failure by teachers to adopt to school culture such as set rules and regulations have negatively affected performance of teachers. Boards of Governors and Parent Teachers Associations have been instituted in each school in order to enforce school culture adoption among teachers with the aim of strengthening their performance. However, members of Boards of Governors and Parent Teachers Associations may lack information on the differences in the level of school culture adoption in relation to the level of the performance of teachers as well as the relationship between school culture adoption and the performance of teachers. This has therefore created a problem for the clear assessment of the performance of teachers by stakeholders in the molding of future citizens. If school culture adoption by teachers is not taken care of, it

might be difficult to improve the performance of teachers in various settings. To bridge the gap, this study examined the levels of school culture adoption and performance of teachers, and their relationship among teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality.

Methods

Study design

This was a cross-sectional survey with quantitative methods of data collection in 26 secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality.

Study area

The study was conducted in the selected secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. A total of 338 teachers were recruited.

Data collection methods and tools

Pre-tested self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers. The study used a self-constructed questionnaire with borrowed ideas from School Culture Survey, Adapted from Phillips (1993) to measure school culture adoption; and MoES Performance Indicators to measure teacher performance. The performance of teachers was adopted from Best and Kahn (2003).

Data analysis

All data analyses were done using SPSS version 20. Mann Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis inferential tests were run. The mean ranks for each category in a variable were presented and the level of significance was reported. Pearson Product moment correlation was applied to establish the relationship between the level of school culture adoption and the performance of teachers among secondary school teachers.

Results

Level of school culture adoption across socio-demographic characteristics in the Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality

Table 1: Mean ranks showing the Level of Culture Adoption among Secondary School Teachers

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean rank</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender						
Male	36.4	9.3	155.37	9935.000		0.527
Female	37.4	9.9	162.42			
Age in years						
25-35	37.9	10.3	167.17		6.991	0.030*
36-46	37.2	9.3	162.40			
47+	34.1	7.7	133.82			
Marital Status						
Married	35.4	8.5	146.30		15.059	0.001*
Single	40.3	10.9	187.78			
Others	29.7	2.1	87.83			
Education level						
Diploma	40.3	10.6	189.28		15.221	0.000*
Bachelors' Degree	29.7	9.4	157.54			
Others	40.4	5.9	116.45			
Status of School						
Government	36.7	7.3	125.17	6011.500		0.000*
Private	32.2	10.0	203.26			
Foundation Body						
Religious- founded	32.0	7.1	111.52	5106.000		0.000*
Non-religious founded	41.4	9.2	203.48			
Employment status						
Government payroll	34.1	7.5	135.55	8976.000		0.000*
PTA allowance	39.1	10.5	178.09			
School Type						
Single Sex	32.1	7.1	113.16	3730.500		0.000*
Mixed	43.3	8.6	221.08			

* $p < 0.05$

Source: Primary data from the Field, 2018.

Table 1 shows that there was a significant statistical difference in the level of culture adoption of secondary school teachers regarding the age of teachers, school type, status of school, foundation body, employment status, level of education and marital status at the significance level of less than 5%. Specifically, a Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that teachers aged 25-35 years had the highest level of school culture adoption (Mean rank = 167.17) followed by those aged 36-46 years (Mean rank =162.40) and then teachers aged 47 years and above (Mean rank =133.82) showed the least school culture adoption. The relationship showed a statistical significance ($H = 6.991$, $p = 0.030$). Similarly,

Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that single teachers had the highest level of school culture adoption (Mean rank = 187.78) followed by those who were married (Mean rank = 146.30) and the least level school culture adoption was reported among others such as divorced, separated or widowed (Mean rank = 87.83). Besides, the relationship showed a statistical significance ($H= 15.059, p = 0.001$). In the same vein, Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that diploma teachers had the highest level of school culture adoption (Mean rank = 189.28) followed by those with bachelor's degree (Mean rank = 157.54) and the least level school culture adoption was reported among teachers with other qualifications such as postgraduate diploma and master's degree (Mean rank = 116.45). Besides, the relationship showed a statistical significance ($H= 15.221, p = 0.000$).

When the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted, it was found out that secondary school teachers in private schools (Mean Rank = 203.26) had a higher level of school culture adoption compared to those in government-aided schools (Mean rank = 125.17) and the difference was significant ($U = 6011.500, p = 0.000$). Also, Mann-Whitney U test indicated that religious-founded secondary school teachers (Mean Rank = 111.52) had a lower level of school culture adoption compared to those in non-religious founded schools (Mean rank = 203.48) and the difference was significant ($U = 5106.000, p = 0.000$). Mann-Whitney U test indicated that teachers on PTA allowance (Mean Rank = 178.09) had a higher level of school culture adoption compared to those on government payroll (Mean rank = 135.55) and the difference was significant ($U = 8976.00, p = 0.000$). In addition, Mann-Whitney U test indicated that teachers in mixed secondary schools (Mean Rank = 221.48) exhibited a higher level of school culture adoption compared to those in single sex schools (Mean rank = 113.16) and the difference was significant ($U = 3730.500, p = 0.000$). However, gender did not show a significant difference in the level of school culture adoption by teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality ($U = 9935.000, p = 0.527$) although females (Mean rank = 162.42) showed a higher level of school culture adoption compared to male teachers (Mean rank = 155.37). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the level of school culture adoption of teachers across their socio-

demographic characteristics in the Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Level of performance of teachers across socio-demographic characteristics in the Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality

Table 2: *Level of performance of Secondary school Teachers in Mbarara*

Municipality

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean rank</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>P</i>
Gender						
Male	24.5	5.5	157.13	10322.00		0.913
Female	24.6	5.0	158.35			
Age in years						
25-35	25.5	5.7	170.74		13.541	0.001*
36-46	24.8	4.6	164.59			
47+	22.7	5.2	124.53			
Marital Status						
Married	23.8	5.3	143.80		18.185	0.000*
Single	26.5	4.9	192.17			
Others	23.7	3.1	142.83			
Education level						
Diploma	26.5	4.9	185.01		6.018	0.049*
Bachelors' Degree	23.7	5.5	151.57			
Others	26.3	4.5	152.90			
Status of School						
Government	24.2	4.6	132.41	7343.00		0.000*
Private	24.1	5.6	193.02			
Foundation Body						
Religious- founded	23.5	4.9	111.52	7843.50		0.000*
Non-religious founded	25.5	5.3	203.48			
Employment status						
Government payroll	23.5	4.6	140.50	9728.00		0.001*
PTA allowance	25.5	5.8	173.45			
School Type						
Single Sex	22.9	4.9	125.07	6167.00		0.000*
Mixed	27.0	4.9	198.19			

* $p < 0.05$.

Source: Primary data from the Field, 2018.

Table 2 shows that there was a significant difference in the level of performance of secondary school teachers regarding the school type, status of school, foundation body, employment status and marital status at the significance level of less than 5%. Specifically, a Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that

teachers aged 25-35 years had the highest level of performance (Mean rank = 170.74) followed by those aged 36-46 years (Mean rank = 164.59) and then teachers aged 47 years and above showed the least performance (Mean rank = 124.53). The relationship showed a statistical significance ($H= 13.54, p = 0.001$). Similarly, Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that single teachers had the highest level of performance (Mean rank = 192.17) followed by those who were married (Mean rank = 143.80) and the least level performance was reported among others such as divorced, separated or widowed (Mean rank = 142.83). Besides, the relationship showed a statistical significance ($H= 18.19, p = 0.000$). In addition, Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that diploma teachers had the highest level of performance (Mean rank = 185.01) followed by those with other qualifications such as postgraduate diploma and master's degree (Mean rank = 152.90) and the least level performance was reported among teachers with bachelor's degree (Mean rank = 151.57). Besides, the relationship showed a statistical significance ($H= 6.02, p = 0.049$).

Upon analysis using Mann-Whitney U test, it was found out that secondary school teachers in private schools (Mean Rank = 193.02) had a higher level of performance compared to those in government-aided schools (Mean rank = 132.41) and the difference was significant ($U = 7343.00, p = 0.000$). Also, Mann-Whitney U test indicated that teachers in religious-founded secondary school (Mean Rank = 111.52) had a lower level of performance compared to those in non-religious founded schools (Mean rank = 203.48) and the difference was significant ($U = 7843.50, p = 0.000$). More so, Mann-Whitney U test indicated that teachers on PTA allowance (Mean Rank = 173.45) had a higher level of performance compared to those on government payroll (Mean rank = 140.50) and the difference was significant ($U = 9728.00, p = 0.000$). In addition, Mann-Whitney U test indicated that teachers in mixed secondary schools (Mean Rank = 198.19) exhibited a higher level of performance compared to those in single sex schools (Mean rank = 125.07) and the difference was significant ($U = 6167.00, p = 0.000$). However, gender did not show a significant difference in the level of performance of secondary school teachers in Mbarara Municipality ($U =$

10322.00, $p = 0.913$) although females (Mean rank = 158.35) showed a higher level of performance compared to male teachers (Mean rank = 157.13). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the level of performance of teachers across their socio-demographic characteristics in the Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Relationship between School Culture Adoption and Performance of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality

Table 3: *Pearson correlation coefficient between School culture adoption and performance of teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality*

		Performance of Teachers	School Culture Adoption
Performance of Teachers	Pearson Correlation	1	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
School Culture Adoption	Pearson Correlation	.656**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	314

Source: Primary data from the Field, 2018.

Table 3 shows that there was a strong positive correlation between school culture adoption and performance of teachers in the secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality as indicated by correlation coefficient (r) greater than 0.5 ($r = 0.656$). This finding shows that when there is high school culture adoption among teachers, then performance of teachers is also high and vice versa. These findings were subjected to a test of significance and it is shown that the critical significance of the correlation ($r = 0.000$) is less than the recommended level of significance at 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no statistical significant relationship between school culture adoption and performance of

teachers among Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Discussion

Level of School Culture Adoption among Secondary school Teachers

The first objective of the study was to determine the level school culture adoption among teachers in the secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. The findings indicated that school culture adoption varied by age of teachers, school type, status of school, foundation body, employment status, level of education and marital status. This finding concurs with previous scholars in which the extent to which teachers adapt to the school culture was reported to vary across various contextual settings. For example, Deal and Peterson (1999) explained that culture adoption is the behind-the-scenes context that reflects the values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals that build up over time as people in a school work together, that is, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members. It influences not only the actions of the school population, but also its motivations and spirit. For instance, the finding in this study in which teachers aged 25-35 years were found to have higher level of school culture adoption is similar that conducted in Turkey where it was found out that age moderated the relationship between teachers 'job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the secondary schools in that younger age showed a positive effect (Yucel & Bektas, 2012). This difference was attributed to the fact that younger teachers when oriented, they tend to abide by their respective school cultures after which with advancing in age other commitments emerge which interfere with those of schools.

Also, finding of a higher school culture adoption found in non-church founded schools compared to church founded schools in this study is similar to the finding by Butler and Ruane (2009) in which it was reported that church-founded entities tend to have many and stringent social and political identities. In this study, the finding that younger teachers showed a relatively high level of culture adoption is similar to that of Yucel and Bektas (2012) in Turkey who found

out that age moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers in the secondary schools in that younger age showed a positive effect.

Similar to Collins and Porras, (1998), school culture whether positive or negative stems from its vision and its established values. This finding highly concurs with the finding in this study in which culture adoption was found to vary by the foundation body. But whether the culture is strong or weak depends on the actions, traditions, symbols, ceremonies, and rituals that are closely aligned with that vision. In their study of visionary companies, Collins and Porras found that many executives thrash about with mission statements and vision statements that evoke the response 'True, but who cares?' Building a visionary company requires one per cent vision and ninety per cent alignment.

This study further reported that school culture varied by school type, status of school and foundation body similar to the findings by Enz (1986) and Hofstede (1980) who earlier indicated that school culture adoption measures what teachers believe is good, right or desirable. The regarded values, therefore, are to be considered as standards of desirability; they reflect what is conceived to be important to pursue or worth striving for in school. Such circumstances vary by school type, status of school and foundation body as reported in this study. Teachers, for instance, may consider respect for others important, or may value collaboration with other staff members against the school values which in turn are influenced by the school type, status of school and foundation body.

Although this study has shown that school culture varies by foundation body, employment status, level of education and marital status, Rossman, Corbett and Firestone (1988) showed that teachers are not always conscious of the values that guide their behaviour, most are able to express their core values. Values like collaboration or respect are often 'translated' into norms for behaviour. Such behavioural norms, in fact, are 'unwritten rules' according to which others are expected to behave.

Level of performance of Secondary school Teachers

The second objective of the study was to determine the level of performance of teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. The findings showed that the level of performance of secondary school teachers regarding the age of teachers, school type, status of school, foundation body, employment status and marital status varied. For instance, teachers in government schools showed a significant lower level of teacher performance (Mean = 127.44) than those in private schools (Mean = 198.41) at the margin of error ($p < 0.05$). This is similar to the findings of Leithwood (2006) who showed that performance is generally measured by looking at the measurable outcomes of someone's activities. These are referred to as the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Every profession has its key indicators that are considered so as to determine one's performance level. Teachers too work in a school setting and have set standards against which their performance is measured. However it is not easy to clearly determine the level of performance of teachers. Leithwood (2006), asserts that it is hard to clearly say that a particular teacher is performing well or not since performance is determined by multiple factors.

Similar to the findings in this study in which the level of performance varied by employment status, Bennell (2004) indicated that teaching has become employment of the last resort among university graduates and secondary school leavers. About one-half of junior secondary school leavers in Malawi and Tanzania who finished school in 1990 were employed as teachers in 2001. The corresponding figure for Uganda is a staggering 81 per cent (Al-Samarrai & Bennell, 2003). Consequently, teachers often lack a strong, long term commitment to teaching as a vocation. Also, in Uganda, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) add that weak teacher management and lack of a sense of accountability means that public school teachers often get away with under-performance and, at times, gross professional misconduct. This is particularly the case when teachers cannot be effectively disciplined for unacceptable behaviour by school management because it is difficult to dismiss them since pay and promotion are done centrally and are largely unrelated to actual performance. Nonetheless,

teacher performance in Uganda is monitored by MoES guidelines to schools especially those that are government-aided; who assess teacher performance basing on them. It was therefore imperative to carry out this research so as to establish the levels of teacher performance using their duties and responsibilities as per the MoES guidelines through annual teachers' performance appraisals because the other literature is limited.

Relationship between School culture adoption and performance of Teachers

The third objective of the study was to establish the relationship between school culture adoption and performance of teachers in secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality. A hypothesis stating "There is no statistical significant relationship between School Culture Adoption and Performance of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Mbarara Municipality" was earlier set. When the hypothesis was subjected to Pearson correlation, the findings revealed that there was a strong significant positive relationship between culture adoption and performance of teachers in the secondary schools in Mbarara Municipality ($r = 0.656$). Such a finding agrees with those of Jerald (2006), who reported that some schools have a generally "positive" culture that is focused on student achievement and success but too weak to motivate students and teachers. For example, school leaders might talk about values and beliefs, but no follow-up actions, traditions, ceremonies, or rituals reinforce those messages. Similarly, a teacher might be told that improving professional practice is a value but find that the school budget provides few resources for professional development or be asked to embrace a more collegial culture only to find that no time is designated for teachers to meet and plan together. In such situations, individuals are likely to arrive at their own definitions of the situation, which makes work toward common goals difficult. Even if the climate is pleasant and orderly, it is likely that teachers quietly disagree on what their primary responsibilities are and what the main purpose of the institution is, making improvement planning and instructional collaboration non-productive. Students receive little guidance and are left to come up with their own answers to the question, "What am I here for?" Although most follow the rules, academic effort is considered voluntary.

Similarly, findings in this study agree with those reported by Deal (2005) while referring to organizational culture as “the epicenter of change”. Harris (2000) believed this so strongly that she asserted that “Successful school improvement can only occur when schools apply those strategies that best fit in their own context and particular developmental needs”. Similar claims on the need to consider school climate and culture as part of the organizational change process are made by many of the leading authorities on school improvement, including Deal and Peterson (2004), who have demonstrated the pronounced effects of school climate and culture on the institutional change process. They illustrated how dysfunctional school culture adoption is, for example inward focus, short-term focus, low morale, fragmentation, inconsistency, emotional outbursts, and subculture values that supersede shared organizational values, can impede organizational improvement. Raduan, Kumar, Abdullah, and Ling (2008) observed that, a high degree of organization performance is related to an organization, which has a strong culture with well integrated and effective set of values, beliefs and behaviours. However, many researchers concur that culture would remain linked with superior performance only if the culture is able to adapt to changes in environmental conditions. Furthermore, the culture must not only be extensively shared, but it must also have unique qualities, which cannot be imitated. Jerald (2006) clearly puts it: “Walk into any truly excellent school and you can feel it almost immediately—a calm, orderly atmosphere that hums with an exciting, vibrant sense of purposefulness. This is a positive school culture, the kind that improves educational outcomes.

Conclusion

This study has shown that there was low level of school culture adoption among teachers in government schools, those in single sex schools, those who had highest level of education above diploma, those on government payroll and those who were married, divorced or widowed. It has also shown that there was low level of performance among teachers in government schools, single sex schools, and church founded schools, those with level of education above diploma, those who

are on government payroll and those who married, divorced or widowed. Also, it has been indicated that when school culture adoption is high, performance of teachers is high and vice versa. It is recommended that emphasis on designing and implementation of school culture regulations be made for better performance of teachers.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Ethical Approval and Consent of Participants

This study was approved by Research Ethics Committee of Mbarara University of Science and Technology. The team obtained written informed consent from study participants.

Authors' contributions

Geradine Twebaze and John Baptist Mujuni were involved in concept writing, proposal writing, data analysis and presentation and manuscript writing. David Santson Ayebare was involved in data analysis and manuscript review.

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