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THE EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENTS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAKINDYE DIVISION OF KCCA.

Kiwanuka Ismail [1] Nabukeera Madinah [2] Matovu Musa[3]

[1] Post Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Department of Education management, Islamic University in Uganda.

[2] *Assoc.Prof. Dr.* Faculty of Management studies, Department of public administration, Islamic University in Uganda.

[3] *Assoc.Prof. Dr*. Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, Islamic University in Uganda.

Abstract

In school settings, the dynamic role of work environments cannot be understated especially with reference to improving teacher performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of work environments and the performance of teachers in selected secondary schools in Makindye Division. Specifically, the study was out to: examine the influence of physical environments on teacher performance and; investigate the influence of psychological environments on teacher performance.

This study adopted a casual-comparative research design using a population of 224 teachers in all the secondary schools in Makindye division of KCCA of which a sample of142 teachers was randomly selected. A self-administered questionnaire and structured interviews were used as the main methods of data collection. Descriptive analysis, where conclusions were based on the percentages was used together with inferential analysis (Linear regression) run in SPSS (Version 22) at a 5% significance level and conclusions (on statistical significance) were based on comparing the p-values with the level of precision (0.05) whereas the conclusions on the magnitude was based on the size of the coefficients (both correlation and regression). For qualitative data analysis, narratives obtained from the respondents were analyzed in themes that were interpreted to make a general conclusion.

It was concluded that physical work environments significantly affect the performance of teachers. Secondly, it was concluded that psychological work environments significantly affect the performance of teachers.

Key words: teacher performance; work environments

Introduction

Work environments are amongst the most important factors that affect the performance of teachers in any school. In the case of Uganda, the effects of work environments on the performance of teachers has been documented but, with the use of different parameters, it is not clear whether similar results will be obtained. Over the ages, though methods have greatly differed, teachers have always been evaluated. The goal of such evaluation has always been ensuring that they perform to the best and acceptable standards (Izuegbu, 2023). In so doing, their contribution towards the performance of the learners would become very significant.

The 21st century has come forth with the challenges and opportunities of globalization and ultimately a change in teaching and learning (Lipscombe et al., 2020). This shift has led to altering the direction of learning from teacher centeredness to student centeredness and hence the level of interaction must be high enough (Keller et al., 2017). Though one word, performance has had a number of definitions by a number of scholars. For example, Ngabirano et al. (2023) describes that

performance attainment of goals by the teachers whereas others emphasize the behavior of the teacher when executing their duties in and outside the classroom and the school premises (Lee & Lee, 2020).

In Uganda, the performance of teachers has been documented by Akinyi (2023) as unsatisfactory and this was based on the fact that there is limited use of broad range of multiple instructional strategies, teachers do not always convey accurate content knowledge and that most teachers do not routinely asks thought provoking questions. This is supported by Nyende (2021) who indicated that through qualitative assessments, the performance of the teachers in Uganda has stagnated over the years.

It has been documented that work environments are very important factors explaining the performance of the teachers (Suleiman, 2023) and that schools need to put up a series of strategies to endure that the environments in which the teachers work are improved. By work environments, Deutscher and Braunstein (2023) meant the space in which a teacher works. To the above scholars, this space can be physical, social or psychological and these will form the components of the independent variable.

Statement of the problem

In Uganda, the performance of teachers has received sound academic attention yet in all the various studies, the outcome is the same, poor performance (Nyende, 2021). To address this issue, secondary schools in Makindye Division have put up strategies to improve the work environments to improve performance of the teachers.

Even with such strategies, teacher performance has stagnated over the years because the respective inspection reports of KCCA Department of Education and Social Services (KCCA, 2023) provide evidence of the stagnation in teacher performance in a majority of the years yet in the others, there are reported cases of performance declines.

Further, whereas most of the research has focused on the effects of work environments and employee performance in schools (all employees, including teachers have been treated as homogeneous) which is not correct. By singling out teachers, this study aims to establish the size of the problem and hence lead to efforts for designing long term solutions to the problem.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of work environments and the performance of teachers in selected secondary schools in Makindye Division

Specific Objectives

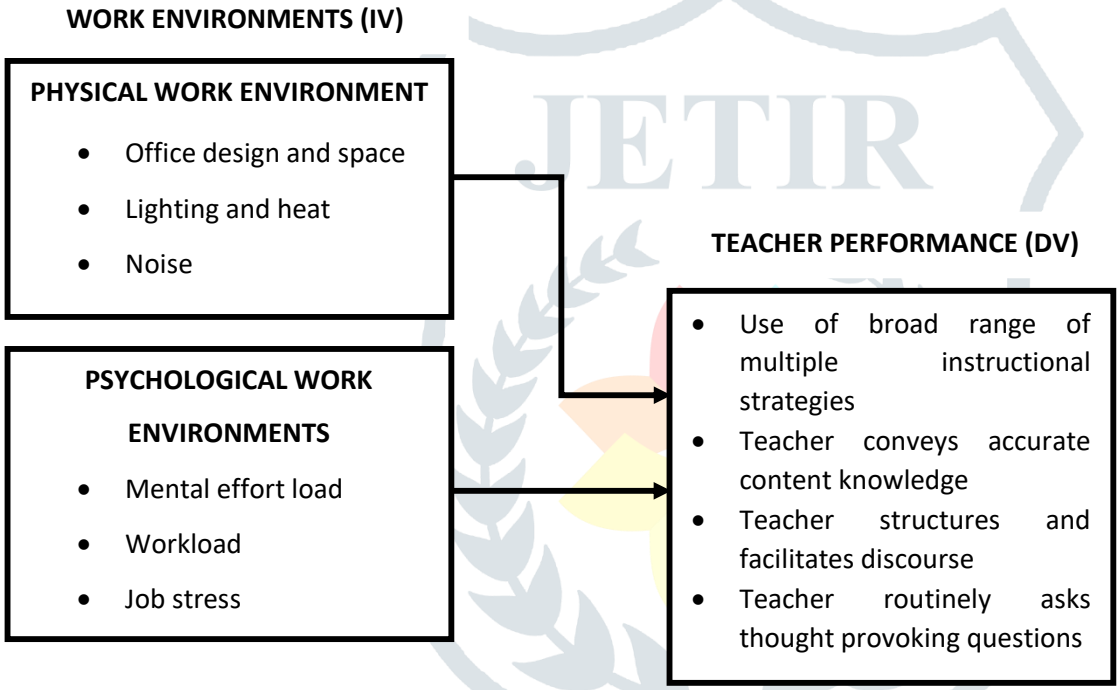
a) To examine the influence of physical environments on teacher performance
b) To investigate the influence of psychological environments on teacher

Significance of the study

The outcomes of the study may provide: Insights for the Ministry of Education and Sports, enabling them to develop more effective work environment policies and interventions in order to improve the performance of teachers. By addressing the challenges and issues faced by the schools in adopting the stated work environments, the ministry can create a conducive work environment and improve teacher creativity and performance for matters of improving overall academic performance.

Conceptual framework

Several studies have indicated that, depending on the measure of work environments, they are most likely to positively affect the performance of the employees. With differences in the measure of performance of the teachers and 'other employees', the figure below presents the conceptual framework on how the predictor affects the outcome variable.



Source: Deng et al. (2022); modified by the researcher

Though other scholars had indicated that work environments were dubbed hostile or supportive, the current study has gone with work environments by their nature. However, it is still hypothesized that the different work environments differently affected the performance of the teachers. Further, going by the parameters of teacher performance, little has been done to quantitatively elucidate the significance of how work environments affect the performance of teachers in schools in the selected area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was based on Frederick Herzberg's Theory. This theory has been into two (motivational and maintenance factors) maintenance factor also known as (hygiene factor) such as working condition and job security. This hygiene factor is de-motivator of employee. So, workplace environment is related to this theory because the absence of maintenance brings high negative feeling and their presence generally brings employee on neutral state.

In a working environment, physical surroundings are an important factor. Aladetan (2023) distinguishes two types of physical work environment i.e., internal and external office setting, temperature, workspace, and office

arrangements. Physical work environments are also areas within the school that are being laid out or organized, enabling it to reach its objectives. A person's physical work environment can also determine whether he or she is suited to the working environment (Pusparani et al., 2021).

The physical work environment has a significant impact on the productivity and engagement of the employees. In the case of teachers, a positive and well-equipped workplace environment, including factors such as classroom layout, lighting, and furniture, can enhance their well-being and satisfaction, leading to higher levels of commitment and performance (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023).

In today's modern world, psychological workplace design is mostly considered one of the most essential factors in improving the performance of the teachers in the classroom. According to Rubio González et al. (2019), psychosocial factors refers as the relationship of teachers with their psychosocial working conditions such as social supports from their colleagues and supervisors, role in their jobs, interaction with the outside of world etc. In the current study, social work environment refers to one characterizing employee relations, teamwork as well as grievance handling (Venkataraman, 2023; Alvesson, 2021). Based on the scholarly work above, there is a positive relationship between social work environments and the performance of the employees. In the case of teachers, it is possible to conclude that social work environments positively affect the performance of teachers although the measures of performance of the teachers are quite different from those of other employees.

From the above review, it is evident that different scholars have adopted different conceptualizations of both variables which has yielded varying results. However, it is still evident that the conceptualization of employees has been equated to the performance of the teachers which creates a gap that needs to be bridged. Nonetheless, the fact that most of the studies were carried out in other jurisdictions and using qualitative approaches which limits the applicability in Ugandan settings and policy applications respectively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a casual-comparative research design. Causal comparative research is a type of research method where the researcher tries to find out if there is a causal effect relationship between dependent and independent variables. This study population included 224 teachers in all the secondary schools in Makindye division of KCCA (KCCA Department of education and social services, 2024; MOES, 2024) of which a sample of142 teachers was randomly selected. Further a total of 16 head teachers were purposively selected.

The questionnaire method was used because of the fact that it aided the researcher obtain a large pool of data on both variables at the same time while minimizing bias and non-response (Cresswell & Plano, 2018). The best and most cost-effective way to collect information about feelings, thoughts and opinions were through structured interviews (Reissner & Whittle, 2022). However, this is usually subjective and was used to back up the quantitative information captured using other means such as survey.

Descriptive statistics (percentages and mean run in MsExcel) captured the respondents' characteristics and opinions (Truong et al., 2020). This was applied to fully understand the nature of the respondents before running inferences. With these, the conclusions were based on the percentages and the size of the mean and are often used to entice provide users into continuing with reading the document to provide them with a firm base for the next format of analysis.

In order to accept or reject the hypotheses and make conclusions about the objectives, inferential analysis (Linear regression) was run in SPSS (Version 22) at a 5% significance level and conclusions (on statistical significance) were based on comparing the p-values with the level of precision (0.05) whereas the conclusions on the magnitude was based on the size of the coefficients (both correlation and regression). For qualitative data analysis, narratives obtained from the respondents were analyzed in themes that were interpreted to make a general conclusion.

RESULTS

The study aimed at investigating whether there existed a significant relationship between physical work environments on the performance of teachers as below.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.344[a]	.118	.111	.46056

a. Predictors: (Constant), Physical environment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.576	.280		9.213	.000
	Physical environment	.322	.078	.344	4.125	.000

a. Dependent Variable: performance

Source: *Source: Field data (2024)*

It is revealed that there was a weak but significant effect of physical work environments on the performance of teachers in the stated area ($R^2 = 0.344$; $P<0.05$). The regression findings reveal that a unit improvement of physical work environments will improve the performance of teachers by 34.4%. The results imply that when physical environments improve, performance of teachers will also improve. The model further indicates that adj-R2 = 0.111 indicating that for all the teachers in Makindye, physical work environments explain only 11.1%, implying that other factors account for 89.9%. For the results, the following narratives present the summarized views of the key informants;

> *"…what would happen when you work under darkness? It would mean poor vision and poor-quality work. Similar results can be observed when you work under extreme heat and noise…all these are applicable to teachers because they are not machines…"* **Interview with HM, Crested SS on 12th March 2024**
>
> "*…good physical work environments work with the body, reduction in fatigue and burnout and improvements in the task performance of the teachers…when they are not supportive, of course we expect the worst. We aim at having the good part of it…"*
>
> **Interview with HM, St. Denis Ssebugwawo SS, Ggaba on 12th March 2024**

The implication of the said findings is that the effects of physical work environments on performance is positive and based on the fact that they reduce susceptibility to issues related with fatigue and burnout, thus improving the task execution efficiency of the teachers.

Effect of Physical work environments on performance of teachers

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.526[a]	.277	.271	.41698

a. Predictors: (Constant), psychological environment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.694	.292		5.798	.000
	Physical environment	.527	.076	.526	6.978	.000

a. Dependent Variable: performance

Source: *Source: Field data (2024)*

It is revealed that there was a moderate but significant effect of psychological work environments on the performance of teachers in the stated area (R^2 = 0.526; P<0.05). The regression findings reveal that a unit improvement of psychological work environments will improve the performance of teachers by 52.6%. The results imply that when psychological environments improve, performance of teachers will also improve. The model further indicates that adj-R2 = 0.277 indicating that for all the teachers in Makindye, psychological work environments explain only 11.1%, implying that other factors account for 72.3%.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that physical work environments significantly affect the performance of teachers. It can be concluded that psychological work environments significantly affect the performance of teachers. It can be concluded that social work environments significantly affect the performance of teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the school administration should provide ambient physical environments to ensure that the efficacy of teaching is improved in the schools in Uganda. These policies could include reduction in humidity and improve lighting in the classrooms.

The study recommends that the school administration should provide ambient psychological work environments to ensure that performance is improved in the schools in Uganda. These policies could include providing for mental and emotional needs of the teachers.

The study recommends that the school administration should provide ambient social environments to ensure that the efficacy of teaching is improved in the schools in Uganda. These policies could include improving relations and teamwork as well as collaboration between the various parties involved.

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