

ABSTRACT

Studies worldwide have revealed that teachers do experience stress which affect their performance. Moderate stress has been found to enhance performance of workers whereas low and high stress characterized by boredom, fatigue, exhaustion and burnout leads to poor performance. Preliminary survey in five schools revealed that teachers in Kakamega North sub-county were experiencing stress due to some teacher management related factors. Students' performance on the other hand was below average from 2009 to 2013. The mean score in Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Examinations had remained below 4.29 compared to neighbouring sub-counties that had recorded higher means of 4.8 and above for the same period thus Kakamega North Sub County had a mean of 4.29, Kakamega South 5.38, Kakamega East 5.16 and Matete 4.84 for the same period. The purpose of this study therefore was to establish teacher management related factors influencing teacher stress and its effect on student academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakamega North sub-county, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to; establish stress levels among secondary school teachers, determine influence of school factors on teacher stress; determine influence of employment factors on teacher stress and establish the relationship between teacher stress and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kakamega North sub-county. A conceptual framework based on Bray, Camlin, Fairbank, Dunteman and Wheelless (2001) concepts that stress is influenced by work factors which in turn influences performance of workers was adopted. The study adopted descriptive survey and correlational research designs. The study population consisted of 45 principals, 900 teachers and one Teachers Service Commission (TSC) County Director. The study used saturated sampling technique to select 40 principals and one TSC County director. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 100 teachers of the form four 2014 students. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and document analysis guide while qualitative data was collected by use of interview schedules. Face and content validity of the instruments was determined by experts in Educational Administration whose input was incorporated in the instruments. Reliability of instruments was established through a test re-test method in 5(11.1%) of the schools that were not involved in the study. The teachers' questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of .8. Quantitative data from closed-ended items of the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means and regression analysis. Qualitative data from the open-ended items in the questionnaire and interviews was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub-themes. The study established that stress level among 6(6.06%) teachers was low, 37(37.37%) moderate while 56(56.57%) high. On average, secondary teachers in public schools in Kakamega North sub-county were moderately stressed with a mean rate of 3.44. School factors accounted for 4.6% of the variance. Employment factors accounted for 10.9% of the variance. Low and high stress levels among teachers had negative influence on students' academic performance as signified by Pearson's r of $-.220$ and $-.017$ respectively though not significant. Moderate stress levels among teachers had a weak positive influence on students' academic performance as signified by Pearson's r of $.278$ though not significant. The study concluded that teachers in Kakamega North sub-county were moderately stressed and stress among the teachers had little influence on students' academic performance. The study recommended that stress audits need to be conducted in schools with a view to improving stress levels among teachers to the benefit of students academic performance. The findings of this study are significant to educationists in identifying strategies to deal with stress levels among secondary school teachers in enhancement of students' academic performance in the Sub County.