

Relationship between Implementation of Safety Policy Procedures and Compliance with Safety Standards in Public Secondary Schools in Narok North Sub County, Kenya.

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Abstract

This study is about relationship between implementation of safety policy procedures and the compliance with safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok County, Kenya. The study was aided by the following variables: awareness of the safety procedures, staff training among teachers on safety policy procedures and implementation of safety policy procedures. Descriptive survey research design was used and quantitative and qualitative research strategies will be applied with the use of questionnaires. The target population comprised of 60 public secondary schools, with a total of 60 principals and 60 heads of departments. Using 30 %, simple random sampling to select a sample of 18 secondary schools, 18 principals and 18 HoDs for the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from HODs and principals. Data collected by questionnaires was analyzed using Pearson r with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) The data analysis results was presented using Tables. The findings of the study may be utilized by Narok North Sub County secondary schools and the ministry of education in Kenya.

Keywords: *Safety policy procedures, compliance with safety standards, public secondary schools.*

1. Introduction

The safety concerns in our Kenyan schools have been documented in the Education Act No. 14 of 2013, (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Safety of students in schools is not only vital but central to provision and acquisition of quality education in any country. Jasper and Bartram, (2012). The ministry of Education in Kenya has issued to schools, Safety Standards Manual that should serve as guide to school administrators to ensure there is safe and conducive learning environment in schools, Njoroge and Nyabuto, (2014). Other legal instruments provided by the government which address safety concerns in schools include ensuring the rights of children to basic education as underscored in the Children's Act (2001) and ensuring that the children are safe. It's a cardinal requirement for all schools to comply with the Safety Standards Manual for Schools in Kenya. (RoK, 2013).

2. Background of the study

Education is a basic requirement for all children and hence school safety and order are essential conditions for learning and represents a relatively important field of study. Globally, that safety of learners is central to the provision of quality education (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Juke and Lesley, 2009). A safe and secure school environment facilitates and fosters quality teaching and learning in educational institutions Bundy et al, (2009).

In America in 2012, there was the mass shooting incident which led to the death of 30 student and six adults. Terrorism and radicalization of the youth is on the increase worldwide (Kemunto, Role and Balyage, 2015). In China, the 2001 school blast in which a storied building collapsed on school children was blamed on selective implementation of safety policies (Nyakundi 2012).

Various regulations governing safety in schools have since been strengthened. These include the law on the protection of minors, the Law on Compulsory Education and the Teachers' Law. Some Chinese schools have had to cancel activities like gymnastics to reduce death and injury associated with the rigors of physical education. Chinese schools are required by law to take responsibility for managing and protecting students in their premises (Nyakundi 2012). Consequently, they are required by the law to buy liability accident insurances to compensate death and injuries that occur in the school premises (Bryman, 2014)

3. Statement of the Problem

Safety in schools is increasingly becoming a critical issue global and of major concern to the governments, parents, students. In Kenya, the persistent recurrence of safety problems in public secondary schools even after the release of the Safety and Standards' Manual (MOEST, 2008) poses serious questions that demand urgent answers if similar cases are to be avoided in future. In 26th August 2012, eight pupils from Asumbi girls' boarding Primary School in Homa Bay were burnt to death (Oduor & Omoro, 2012). Unsafe schools disrupt learning, destruction of resources and worst of all lives are lost hence placing head teachers on the spot light (Kirui, Mbugua & Sang, 2011). Moreover, when school property is destroyed by students, parents often pay huge fines for the damages. A report compiled by the Kisumu Municipal Education Office, 2005), Tigania (Murithi, 2005), Turkana District (Ronoh & Kyalo, 2009) and Bondo District (Atieno & Simatwa, 2012) show that certain schools require renovation, electricity, water and sanitation facilities. Simatwa (2009) and Omolo (2010) conducted an assessment on the level of implementation of safety measures in secondary schools but none developed a safety policy implementation framework.

4. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested.

1. There is no relationship between staff awareness of safety policy procedures and compliance with safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County
2. There is no relationship between staff training of safety policy procedures and compliance with safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County
3. There is no relationship between implementation of safety policy procedures and compliance with safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County

5. Literature review

5.1 Compliance with safety standards

While our national's schools are expected to be and usually are safe havens for learning, unintentional injuries can occur, disrupting the educational process and negatively affecting the school and surrounding community. As demonstrated by past events, tragedy can strike any school any time. Therefore, all schools should embrace the positive impact that effective comprehensive school safety plans can have on their efforts to provide safe school environments that are conducive to learning and which positively affect student performance. The effectiveness of a school safety plan is measured in the precious lives of children, teachers and administration that are left unharmed following an incident of school based violence, an incident, a natural disaster or other hazards.

On the other hand, with a process of decentralization, planning and oversight of school construction increasingly fell at the local level, so the lack of guidance and standards raised concerns for safety, among other issues. The development of a comprehensive set of school construction standards to address key issues and guidelines for safety in construction design and materials was compulsory. This was to be used as guidance on making the school environment safe (protecting school grounds, ensuring safe water supply, etc.) and fitted within a larger framework that addressed child-friendly school design and construction. ilure by regulatory authorities to enforce safety norms. (Reuters, 2004).

In Kenya, a lot of study has been done on compliance to school safety guidelines. According to the Director of Education in her Circular Ref No G9/1/169 dated on 10th 18 April 2001 (Republic of Kenya, 2001), there have been a number of incidents of fire and other risk situations in educational institutions. This made it necessary for the Ministry to review all Health and Safety Standards in all educational institutions, and also provide the relevant guidelines that affect the welfare of students. In the introduction of the above mentioned circular the Director of Education observed that educational institutions in this country are for greater part of the year, home to the majority of students. She further explains that in the last few years, there have been a number of incidents of fire and other health risk situations in the educational institutions.

5.2 Awareness of staff and students on the safety policy procedures

In May 2010 the study “Assessing World-Wide Progress on school safety – a scoping study” was undertaken as a joint UNICEF-UNISDR initiative in follow-up to the conclusions of the 2009 session of the UNISDR Global Platform. An independent consultant was contracted to develop a multi-dimensional analytical framework and to discuss methodological issues based on desk research and interviews with key stakeholders. Before the finalization of the report, its main conclusions were presented and discussed at the June 2010 session of the UN TPKE. The conclusions drawn through the paper presented by the consultant indicated that while there is an emerging consensus on what constitutes a “safe school.” There remains no comprehensive systematized methodology or process to assess school safety globally.

Knowledge about effective school safety practice has expanded considerably, Shaw (2012) in a study on international experiences and actions in promoting school safety states that new collections of exemplary, good or promising practices have been 26 published. Data have been collected and tools developed that support effective practice. Manuals, guides and training materials have been written (Bryman, 2014). This lack of awareness has also led to partial or total lack of implementation of school safety policies in both India and China (Reuters, 2014).

5.2 Staff training on safety policy procedures

The areas of concern in this study include whether: Staff are aware of safety policy procedures as prescribed by the MOEST; whether the policy documents are available; whether training of staff is conducted; whether policies are implemented accordingly and whether there is periodic monitoring and evaluation by the principals. It is imperative that educational stakeholders foster safe and secure environments to facilitate increased learners enrolment, retention, completion and hence attainment of quality education.

5.3 Implementation of safety policy procedures

All over the world, there has been an upward trend in the numbers of school children dying or getting injured in school violence, disasters and emergencies, that would be avoided if safety policies were strictly adhered to from the incidences in America and European schools, the 2014 Besian massacre in Russia to the Chinese school blast and India school fires, hundreds of schools children have died in preventable incidents (Cavanagh, 2014, Soomeren, 2012 and Reuters 2014). The partial or total lack of the implementation of school safety policies has been a cause of concern in both India and China. Reuters (2014) in a report documenting the India school fire of July 2014 blames the tragedy in which 90 children died, on failure to fully implement safety norms. The school building in this case was overcrowded and had only one exit. There was no emergency door or firefighting equipment. School tragedies in India, including the 2005 school fire, which led to the death of 400 students, are blamed on failure by regulatory authorities to enforce safety norms. For examples schools may stay for as long as three years without being inspected. In China, the 2001 school blast in which storied buildings collapsed on school children was blamed on selective implementation of safety policies.

Cases of student unrest have intensified with more schools being burnt down, property destroyed and with more innocent lives being lost. Studies on implementation of safety standards and guidelines in secondary schools have been conducted: Omolo and Simatwa (2010) investigated the implementation of safety policies in public schools in Kisumu East and West Districts, Kenya. The study established that some safety policies were implemented to lesser extent as evidenced by the following cases: there was a decreasing trend in conducting fire drills, fire extinguishers were found in only 26.6% of the schools, there was overcrowding in 70% of the schools. Constraints in the implementation of safety policies included inadequate funds, time, capacity, transport and coordination. Based on these findings it was concluded that the overall implementation of safety policies fell short of the requirement as stated in the safety standard manual and policy circular hence the purpose of the current study is to investigate why safety standards guidelines are not fully complied to in all public secondary schools in Kitui Central sub county Kitui county, Kenya (Cavanagh, 2014).

6. Methodology

This study adapted the descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study comprised of all the 60 secondary schools in Narok North Sub County. Stratified random sampling was used in this study. This strategy was used to ensuring that all parts of the population are represented in the sample in order to increase the efficiency (that is to decrease the error in the estimation) (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It also catered for obtaining of estimates of known precision for certain subdivisions of the education stakeholders in Narok North Sub County. Data was analysed using paired t-test with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while results were presented in Tables.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the principals and teachers This was because they could gather voluminous amount of information on a timely basis (Orodho, 2005).

To ascertain validity, the instruments used for the study were subjected to scrutiny by the researchers who happen to be specialists in educational administration. To ensure whether the measure reflected the content of the concept in question, the researchers applied face validity before the items were used to collect data from principals and teachers that formed the accessible population. Estimation of the tool's reliability was essential for reliable results (Bryman, 2012; Gay, et al, 2006). The tool's reliability for data collection was tested using Cronbach's alpha index and was found to be .82.

7. Data analysis and Research Findings

Data was analysed based on the three main variables, the main research questions and on the research items that emerged out of the research questions

7.1 Staff awareness of safety policy procedures

To ascertain whether awareness of safety policy procedures was conducted in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County, hypothesis 1 was tested:

There is no significant relationship between staff awareness of the safety policy procedures and the compliance of safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County.

To test this relationship, a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was done to determine the relationship *between staff and students awareness of the safety, security, policy and procedures and their management by principals in public secondary schools in Nyeri County*. This was out of data collected by questionnaire items 1 to 8 put in a Likert scale form that got information on staff and students awareness of the safety, security, policy and procedures (see appendix 1). The computation produced a p -value of .000 and an r -value of .400 at a df of 18 at an alpha level of .05. The results of the computation is shown in Table 7. With a Pearson's correlation value of .400, it means that the relationship was moderate but significant. The results also indicated that a p -value of .000 was less than the chosen alpha level of .05 that was used to determine the rejection or retention of the null hypothesis in this study. This means that the null hypothesis was rejected thus "There is a significant relationship between staff and students awareness of the safety, security, policy and procedures and management in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County. The two variables were moderately correlated ($r(18) = .400, p < .05$).

From the results of the analysis done to test Hypothesis 1 (see Table 1), it was found that there is a significant relationship between *staff and students awareness of the safety, security, policy and procedures and management in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County*.

Table 1

Pearson's Correlation Analysis of the relationship between staff awareness of the safety, policy procedures and compliance in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County

		Awareness of safety, Policy procedures	Compliance of safety standards
Staff awareness of the safety policy procedures	Pearson correlation	1	.400
	sig (2 tailed)		.000
	N	18	18
Compliance of safety standards	Pearson correlation	1	.400
	sig (2 tailed)		.000
	N	18	18

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed); $df = 18$; $\alpha = 0.05$.

7.2 Staff training on Safety Policy Procedures

The researcher wanted to ascertain whether safety training and policy procedures were adhered to in public secondary schools in Nyeri County. To do this the researcher used hypothesis 3 that read:

HO₃: *There is no significant relationship between training among staff and students on safety, security, policy and procedures and their management in public secondary schools in Nyeri County.*

Data was collected by items put in a Likert scale form on items getting information on safety training among staff and students on safety, security, and policy procedures (see appendix 1).

The data were computed using a Pearson's r correlation to establish whether there was a relationship between staff training and safety policy procedures in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County. The results of the analysis is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlations on staff training and Compliance to safety standards

		Staff training	Compliance to safety standards
Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	18	18
Compliance to safety standards	Pearson Correlation	.640**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	18	18

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

With 18 df, the analysis produced an r of .640 which was greater than .05 (see Table 14). On the other hand, the computation produced a p -value of .000 which was less than alpha (0.05) (see Table 14). This shows that there was a strong positive correlation between the two variables ($r(18) = .640, p < .05$). These results indicate a positive significant relationship. In addition, with p-value less than alpha as shown in Table 2 it means that the null was rejected thus there is significant relationship between staff training and safety policy procedures and their management in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County.

Training increases efficiency, but as Gori (2015) notes many institutions finds it difficult to do it due to financial implications on organizations. Safety training and safety policy are essential determinants in enhancing safety performance. Safety training is defined as knowledge of safety given to employees in order for them to work safely and with no danger to their wellbeing (Law, Zimmerman, Baker & Smith, 2010). On the other hand, Lin & Mills (2001) found that clear policy statements and safety training played an important role in reducing accident rates. Studies by Huang, Verma, Chang, Courtney, Lombardi, Brennan & Perry (2006) discovered that there is a link between safety training and increased safety. They further argued that, effective training assists workers to have a sense of belonging and thus more accountable for safety in their workplace.

7.4 Implementation of safety policy procedures

In order to establish the relationship between implementation of safety policy procedures Compliance to safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County, hypothesis testing was done. Table 3 shows the results.

There is no significant relationship between of implementation of safety policy procedures and compliance of safety standards in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County

Table 16

Correlations

		Implementation of safety policy procedures	Compliance to safety standards
Implementation of safety policy procedures	Pearson Correlation	1	.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	18	18
Compliance to safety standards	Pearson Correlation	.545**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	18	18

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson's r for the correlation between the Implementation of safety policy procedures and Compliance to safety standards is 0.545. This means that there is a very strong relationship between the two variables. This means that changes in one variable are correlated with changes in the second variable.

8. Discussions

The first objective was to determine the awareness of safety policy procedures and compliance safety standards guidelines in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County. Results depict that there was inadequate awareness of the same amongst the staff. The study found that there was a rare occurrence in the public secondary schools in the area of study.

Interestingly, the opinion of the respondents on the ability of the safety training to increase safety awareness. This is implicative that their views only remained as a theory that is not yet tapped. Even though the training on safety had the potential to increase safety, training was scarcely conducted.

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tapped. Even though the training on safety had the potential to increase safety, training was scarcely conducted.

The principals also indicated that there were no training sessions conducted in most schools due to the cost implication.

The findings suggest that there was no disaster management training in the schools. Also, it was generally felt that there was no adequate presence of relevant committees to arrest disasters. On the other hand, the respondents agreed that there were implementation challenges as far as the safety and security policy procedures in public secondary schools in Nyeri County is concerned resulting to partial implementation of the safety and security policy procedures in public secondary schools in Nyeri County.

Lack of disaster management training in most secondary schools means that the schools were very vulnerable in case a disaster strikes. The challenges that were on the way of implementation of safety, security, policy, and procedures in public secondary schools in Nyeri County were doing a disservice to the schools.

9. Summary and Conclusions

Awareness creation was fully supported by the teaching staff and as a result most of the students felt safe within the school. Dormitories however were regarded by the students as the place in the school they felt less secure.

Training of teachers on the guidelines was found to be the best method to ensure that the guidelines are implemented. Availing of the copies to various outlets where they can be accessed easily by the students was also another way of ensuring that the guidelines are implemented. Some schools incorporated the guidelines in class work to ensure that the students were taught well on the standard safety guidelines.

10. Recommendations and Further Research

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made with further research recommended as shown.

The government through the Ministry of Education should ensure that Standard Safety Guidelines are availed to all schools and the schools be allocated sufficient funds to be able to implement the guidelines. The school management should ensure that all the visitors entering the school should be thoroughly screened before they are allowed in. This can be done by use of hand-held metal detectors. The schools should have a strong and effective safety and security committee to oversee the security issues within the schools. The committee should be able to brief the principals at a higher frequency such as after every two weeks so as to ensure that all measures are followed up quickly.

This study has explored the factors influencing school compliance to safety standards guidelines in public secondary schools in Kitui Central Sub County, Kitui County. There is need to carry out research on challenges faced during implementation in Kitui Central Sub County, Kitui County. The study focused public secondary schools in Kitui Central Sub County, Kitui County

thus the same study should be done in other schools in Kitui County and the rest of the 47 counties in Kenya to enable generalization of results.

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