Original Article

The Effect of School Internal Environments on Students' Effective Learning at Maswa District

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the effect of school internal environment on students effective learning at Maswa District. The study employed mixed research approach to avoid the bias of using a single approach. Humanistic learning theory was used in this study as it emphases the need for learners to be connected with learning environment. Piloting was conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments. Respondents in the study were one District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO), four Head of School (HOS), thirty-three teachers, fifty-six students. Interview guide was used to gather information from DSEO and HOS while questionnaire was used collect data from students and teachers. The findings indicated that most of the respondents showed that school internal environment affect student's effective learning also internal environment had a highly significant role in influencing student's effective learning. The study recommended that the government should formulate and adopt good education policy that will involve every stakeholder in monitoring the school internal environment.

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INTRODUCTION

The school internal environment comprises of different aspects such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, latrines, human resource and playgrounds from which true and valid information concerning the effective learning originates. Similarly, Internal school environment refers to all the factors or forces that have more direct or indirect impact on the daily activities of the school community, it comprises of particular aspects that impact the organisation, its function, behaviour, and effectiveness in some manner, such as the school unit, environmental system approach, instructional staff, workplace, mental and physical effects, and so on (Stavroula et al., 2014).

However, School internal environmental factors are established to have important effect in the full process of learning. These play an important role in students' cognitive, affective, and social domains because they have a direct and indirect influence such as making students more positive about learning, increasing contribution in the learning procedure, and encouraging students' commitment to learning, which can lead to good academic achievements. According to Learning Liftoff (2016) in New York City schools, students who attend safe schools where they are likely to develop positive relationships with their teachers and peers have a distinct advantage over students who attend schools lacking these benevolent features. He continued by saying that thanks to the city's stable economy and excellent educational institutions, the problem of the school's interior atmosphere is not a serious one in New York City. The availability of welcoming classrooms, adequate restrooms, well-established libraries and labs with ample learning resources and equipment, as well as playgrounds that promote interaction and enable efficient learning.

According to Nyoni and Bonga (2017) a positive school climate encourages students to be committed to their studies because it gives them a sense of psychological comfort and inspires them to participate in learning-related activities, which

makes learning effective and enjoyable. When students are committed and at ease in the classroom environment, learning becomes simple. Also, presence of teaching and learning materials plays a vital role in influencing successful learning. Similarly, the study conducted in Kenya by Nambuya (2013) found that, providing of enough human and material resource including tools to facilitate quality education towards learners. This is because quality education depends on presences of enough and quality resources that simplifies the process of learning. Since independence Tanzania has experienced a lot of development in educational sector all aiming at improving and solving challenges in the sector and the issue of school internal environment being one of the challenges.

The year 2005 marked a watershed moment in the history of education under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT, 2010) which came up with different strategies for growth and emphasized on education and literacy where different phases were launched including the introduction of Secondary Educational Development program (SEDP I, 2005-2010 and SEDP II, 2010-2015) where local government authorities, ward administrations, school boards, school management teams and non-state actors were collectively organized to work together in the educational sector to improve school internal environment including classrooms, libraries and laboratories, The study sought to establish on how the school internal environment affect students effective learning in public secondary schools.

Literature Review

Tomkova and Depesova (2019) conducted a study on Quality of internal setting in school classrooms as reason of the success of school student's learning in Slovakia. The study finding showed that, Education process allows data distribution. Instructional learning is active if there is no communication noise between teachers and learners. The fact is the quality of internal school setting like classrooms, meaningfully removes

negative causes straight connected with information sharing in educational process and therefore it makes whole educational process more effective. The findings are similar to the study done in Iran by Gilavand (2016) on the influence of environmental variables on primary kids' learning and academic accomplishment. The study showed that the learning environment drastically affects the learning outcomes of students. Furthermore, the study points out that school overcrowded classes, misplaced boards and inappropriate classrooms always distract students effective learning.

In a study conducted in Kenya, Ngina (2013) discovered a link between the school setting, psychological environment, and home environment and how they work together to motivate children's academic progress. The findings of the study aroused the interest of stakeholders in improving the learning environment in order to improve student outcomes. According to the survey, the biggest challenges hindering students' performance were a lack of learning and teaching materials, physical facilities, and a high ratio of latrines for both genders, but the toilets were unclean, making the school environment unsuitable for learning.

In Tanzania, a case study conducted in five secondary schools demonstrated that, there is a connection between school setting and student's obligation to learning. Furthermore, good school setting forecasts the rate of student's obligation to the learning.

The study recommendation was that school administration must prepare good school setting to enhance effective learning. Additionally, a study conducted by HakiElimu (2013) found that school environmental elements including inadequate teaching and learning resources like books and laboratories have been linked to students' academic performance and dedication to studying at different levels of schooling. The study also showed that schools with a good learning environment are more likely to inspire students to do well in school and like it. However, research by Ulugumu (2016) in Tanzania's Wanging'ombe District found that school environment characteristics had an impact on students' academic progress and effective learning. He listed a few aspects of the educational setting that are essential for optimal learning, such as class size, laboratories, libraries, and learning resources.

Research Methodology

Research design

The study used mixed research approach using descriptive design. A triangulation technique gathers various but complimentary facts on the same subject to enhance understanding of the research problem. the design was useful in study as it allowed the researchers to compare and contrast quantitative statistical findings with qualitative findings data then the findings are compared to reach a conclusion.

Population and sampling

Table1: Distribution of Respondents in the Sample Size

Categories	Target population	Respondents	Sampling techniques
DEO	1	1	Purposive sampling
Heads of schools	36	4	Purposive sampling
Teachers	545	34	Simple random sampling
Students	1460	60	Simple random sampling

The population of study was 2042 as seen in table 1. The sample size was 99 respondents including 1 District Education officer, 4 Heads of Schools, 34 Teachers and students 60. The **sampling strategy** used was purposive and simple random sampling as shown in table 1.

Data Collection Instruments

According to Patton (2015), research instruments are the techniques used to gather data from the sample. The study gathered qualitative data through focus groups and interviews guide while quantitative data was through questionnaires and observation guide.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a list of questions given to respondents. Respondents were asked both closed and open-ended questions. Firstly, the researcher explained the study purpose and significance of the study. Secondly the researcher took the respondents through various sections of the questionnaire and instructed them how to complete it. Finally, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to teachers and students and they were given time to complete it.

Interview Guide

Interview is a verbal presentation and reply in terms of oral questioning and oral responses in capturing information for a specific study (Kothari, 2004). This instrument made it easier for the researcher to obtain credible and in-depth information by using probing questions (Orodho, 2009). The researcher used interview guide to obtain information from school heads and District Education Officer

Observation

Observation is a data collection strategy that involves watching behaviour, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural environment. In this study the researcher opted covert type of observation to observe independent variables, status and quality which included the presence or absence of well-designed and complete laboratories, structured classrooms with their equipments, libraries with all necessary materials and latrines to ensure personal hygiene

Validity and Reliability

The researcher validated the quantitative data using content validity method through disseminating the instruments to the research experts in the faculty of education at the St. Augustine University of Tanzania to check if the instrument's content was in line with the study variables.

Data Analysis Procedure

The technique of consistently storing all information is known as data recording (Yin, 2011). In this study, qualitative data was acquired using in-depth interviews which were documented with the help of a field notebook and audio recording equipment (telephone) and analysed thematically through narratives. On the other hand, quantitative data was obtained from questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 20.

Results and Discussion

Research Question: How does School Internal Environment Affect Students' Effective learning in Public Secondary School in Maswa District? When respondents were asked to explain on how school internal environment affect students effective learning, the following challenges were listed as shown in table 2.

Table2: Teachers and Students response on how school internal environment affect students effective learning. (Teachers n=33, and Students n=56).

Statements	Students		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequacy of school laboratory	15	26.7	9	27.3
Lack of libraries	13	23.2	9	27.3
Poor classroom	12	21.4	8	24.2
Shortage of latrines	16	28.5	7	21.2
Total	56	99.8	33	100

Source: Field Data, (2022)

Inadequacy of school laboratory

Table 2 shows that, 26.7 percent of the students said that laboratories are not available. Furthermore, most public secondary schools in Maswa District do not have enough laboratories for students to do practicals. Also, the researcher through observation observed and confirmed that most of public secondary schools in Maswa District they used classrooms as a laboratory and students learned theoretically. The researcher observed that some schools were in the process of building laboratories. This indicates that this was one of the challenges facing secondary schools in Maswa. Therefore, stakeholders should be encouraged to provide school laboratories and equip them as they tend to induce students to have higher morale and engage in the learning process.

The finding from the table 2 also shows that 27.3 percent of the teachers' responded that school laboratories were not adequate in public secondary schools in Maswa District. These finding go hand to hand with the study carried out by Alexandra & Taylor (2022), who revealed that students who learn from a well-designed laboratory, experience and develop problem-solving as well as critical–thinking skills, when exposed to reactions, materials, and equipment in a laboratory setting.

Lack of libraries

From table 2 the findings revealed that 27.3 percent of the students responded that schools did not have enough libraries with most current learning resources. Also, in the interview with head of school "C" he is quoted as saying;

In this school, school a library is a big problem since students and teachers use academic office as a library where they borrow learning resources such as books and newspapers. Furthermore, the learning resources available are not current. There is need for government to play its role effectively in public secondary schools by ensuring that there is conducive environment for student's effectively learn (Interview June, 2022).

Generally, government should put their hand in ensuring effective internal school environment for all public secondary schools like building modern libraries with the most current learning resources; this will enable students to be committed to their studies.

The findings in table 2 also revealed that 27.3 percent of the teachers responded that schools did not have enough libraries with the most current learning resources. Therefore, lack of school libraries influenced them to use academic office as libraries where students and teachers borrowed teaching and learning materials. Once stakeholders provide schools libraries with adequate materials, effective services are rendered to students and students tend to have higher morale in engaging in learning process which is related to Constructivist theory which asserts that a student is supposed to create knowledge.

Poor classrooms

Classrooms are an important factor to look at when addressing the issue of learning because the classroom has an impact on the student's effective learning. Although the classroom is important for students effective learning but the result obtained from the questionnaire shows the 21.4 percent of the student said that there were poor classrooms in most public secondary schools. In other words, they need sufficient and well finished classrooms to allow the students and teachers to feel comfortable during the learning process. Their perception is closely linked with the study done by Johnson (2017), which state that classroom is a space where teachers engage students, stimulate class involvement, and expand on the thoughts and ideas presented by students. The culture of learning is going hand to hand with things that are closely related where classroom is regarded as priority factor for students' effective learning in the school.

From the table 2 the 24.2 percent of the teachers' stated that classrooms were poor in most public secondary schools. In addition, teachers stated that a poor classroom results to lack of expectation between students and teachers to reach the goals of secondary Education curriculum.

Shortage of latrines

The quantitative data showed that majority of students 28.5 percent said that, the school toilets fail to provide services to students. Effective learning is influenced by good school internal environment like having enough toilets with clean and safe water. Also, the health of the students is crucial for effective learning to take place, school toilets should be available for both boys and girls with clean and safe water. So, the government should seek to find out other alternatives to solve this problem by building more additional toilets that can accommodate more students and they should be provided with clean and safe water.

Although the quantitative data showed the majority of teachers 21.2 percent said that the school toilets fairly provide services for students in most public secondary schools in Maswa District. Researcher also observed that most secondary schools, are building new school toilets to meet the needs of their students as well as teachers. Also, the researcher saw the water system in the new toilets for all genders. This observation goes hand in hand with the study done by Baafi (2020) which emphasizes that, if educational the stakeholders play their roles well in ensuring and provision of all needs of school internal environment like toilets with clean and safe water, learning environment will be friendly meaning students will feel safe and therefore engage fully the learning process.

Conclusion

The study concludes that most of schools do not have adequate facilities to enable learners to acquire knowledge, skills, and experience to their learning. Therefore, the government, community and other education stakeholders should put more emphasis on the provision of good school internal environment to make student learning better and to ensure student achieve academic excellence. Moreover, in terms of learning, the study concludes that number of enrolled students is high compared to the capacity of school internal environment in public secondary schools in Maswa District. Therefore, District Education Officer should ensure that there is balance between enrolment and capacity of the schools. This will make school internal environment to be conducive for effective learning. Similarly, the education stakeholders should put more emphasis on improvement of school internal environment to ensure effective learning. Also, student should be taught not to damage the school facilities and enhance school cleanliness.

Recommendations

The government should increase the number of teachers in every public secondary school in order

to motivate students to learn effectively. In addition, each classroom should contain forty-five (45) students according to education curricular need to simplify interaction during learning process. Furthermore, the government should ensure that school internal environment contributes to effective learning thus achieve the expectations of education sector.

Also, the community and others education stakeholders should cooperate with schools so as to ensure students are equipped with facilities that will ensure effective learning such as: construction of classrooms, constructions of laboratories as well as the maintenance of furniture such as tables and chairs.

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