

# Effects of Workload on the Teachers' Performance in Kanduyi Division, Bungoma District

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**Abstract:** *This study was carried out with the main purpose of finding out the effects workload on the teachers' performance in Kanduyi Division, Bungoma District. The study was carried out in ten primary schools in Kanduyi Division of Bungoma District. Among the ten schools, one was a girl's school and nine mixed public schools. The subject samples included 24 head teachers, deputy headteachers and senior teachers. The sample also included 76 teachers and three education officers. To select the schools and subject samples, purposive and stratified sampling was used. Descriptive research method was adopted. The study mainly used descriptive statistics in data analysis and interpretation. The study made recommendations for policy makers in the Ministry of Education to work towards improving the performance of teachers in primary schools by easing the problem of teacher overload.*

**Keywords:** Workload, Performance, Attitude, Instruction

## 1. Introduction

The study of the nature of workload and the strain it causes in work place has been the focus of many researchers since 1960 (Beehr, 1995). Workload refers to time demands (Forman, 1982, paper work pressure, Walsch, 1974, overload, (Kyriakon 1987), lack of stimulation or boredom, (Cheirnis, 1980, Frendenberger, 1974 and lack of variety, Pines, 1993) experienced by workers.

Work related strain studies, have primarily focused on factors related to the work environment of the employees that are causal to strain from such studies, a field of research in workload has evolved. Beehr, (1995) posits that occupational stress related to workload among teachers has become a matter of increasing concern, not only as evidenced from the large body of studies on the subject but also from the numerous programmes and workshops developed to help teachers cope with the problem and reduce occupational stress. According to ministerial task force report (2003) on Education in Scotland, workload ranks among the problems currently facing teachers. Aspects of workload that have become most burdensome in recent years include, the number of bits of paper which teachers have to deal with and have nothing directly to do with teaching in classroom, constant curriculum reorganization based on bureaucratic guidelines from local authorities or the Scottish Executives, filling in of reports, record keeping, development of materials and form filling, stiff-resistance by the government to make any meaningful change to class sizes, indiscipline of the pupils, extra-curricular activities which have become so riddled with bureaucracy that for some teachers, the enjoyment has disappeared.

In Scotland, these are the responsibilities and legal obligations many teachers regard as unnecessary burden on top of an already onerous workload. The present study explored the concept of workload within the teaching occupation using a sample of primary school teachers in Kanduyi Division, Bungoma District.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The concept of Teacher workload

The concept of workload has been used in research to describe a situation in which factors related to the job are perceived to cause poor health and wellbeing of the employee. (Cooper, 1980, Fletcher, 1988, Lazarus, 1994, Trefmann and Punch, 1992, Zindi, 2002).

Beehr (1995) notes that workload in the workplace may be caused by situational demands made on the members of the organization. These demands may originate from the work environment itself and its related characteristics, or they may emanate from within the individual (Adams, 1999). According to Nhundu, (1999), sources of occupational or work related stress reside within work environment. These sources he posits, exist within an organizational members in ways that can induce one's occupational stress in the work.

According to the person, environment fit model of stress, (French et al. 1976), A feeling of work overload is a function of the intercourse between a person's and his/her work environment. The model focuses on the structural characteristics of the person interaction with their work environment, on the premise that the effect of workload is felt as a result of a mismatch between an individual abilities, needs, motives, goals and behaviour patterns and a given job's demands, resources, opportunities and rewards. French et al. 1976) suggest that the goodness of fit between the person and the work environment frequently offers a better explanation of stress than individual or situational differences.

Several studies have been undertaken to explore the concept of workload and the strain it causes among teachers (Adams, 1999, Fimiam & Blanton, 1987 Okebukola, 1992, Vance Miller, Humphrey & Reynolds, 1989, Young husband, 2001). In an attempt to conceptualize work overload in teaching, many definitions have been advanced for teacher overload. Okebukola (1992) observes that this is a situation in which teachers experience unpleasant demands and

negative emotions resulting from the appraisal of some aspects of their teaching work and its conditions as being threats to their personal wellbeing. Cooper (1980) maintains that occupational strain among teachers arises from. A discrepancy between the teachers' work needs, values and expectations and the failure of the work environment to provide occupational rewards, job demands and his capacity to meet the requirements. (p. 175).

In an attempt to synthesize the various definitions of teacher workload, Dunham, (1994) discusses stress as a direct result of workload among teachers. He discusses three major approaches in occupational stress in teaching. The first approach based on the engineering model of stress is concerned with the demands exerted on teachers in the teaching/learning environment and the education context. The second approach is based on the physiological model and focuses on the individual relations of teachers to these pressure e.g. frustration and headaches. The third approach based on the interactional model of stress is concerned with the demands and pressure experienced by the teachers, reaction of the teacher and coping resources which teachers use in their attempt to cope with stress. Dunham (1994) concludes that the interactional approach provides a more all-encompassing approach for understanding teacher stress.

Dunham (1994) thus provides a broader yet more precise definition of teacher stress as a "process of behavioural, emotional, mental and physical reactions caused by prolonged, increased or new pressure within the teaching environment which are significantly greater than their coping resource" According to Dunham's view, teachers' appraisal of job demands and their coping strategies, their anticipation of future demands and readiness to deal with them, their preparation and possession of skills to handle work pressure are factors which contribute to stress in teachers.

The present study adopted Dunham's (1994) interactional conceptualization of teacher workload and stress. Against the conceptual backdrop, this study explored the nature of prevalence of the teaching work demand and characteristics and the teachers' perception of their overload using a sample of primary school teachers in Kanduyi Division, Bungoma District. The specific aspect of teaching environment that was investigated in this study included school management and administration factors like lack of participation in decision making at the school level, factors relating to managing students' behaviour and learning, lack of motivation by students, workload and time pressure factors, working relationship and reward factors.

## **2.2 Factors that contribute to teacher workload and their effect on performance**

Many multi-disciplinary studies have generated some consensus on the variables that cause occupational strain (Kahn & Byosiene, 1990). Within the teaching and learning environments, research has identified several factors that are responsible for the teachers' overload and strain. These include teaching factors, administrative and school management factors among others. The most frequently cited sources of strain for teachers generally include poor working conditions, (Okebukola & Jegede, 1998) misbehaviour of

students, Dunham, 1994), lack of resource for teaching and overload with non-teaching duties (Payne & Funham, 1987) and students' poor attitude towards work (Kyriakon, 1987).

Nhundu (1999) conducted a comparative study to investigate the sources and nature of overload / occupational stress among teachers in Zimbabwe using a sample of 478 school teachers. His findings revealed that teaching and teaching related task factors like excessive marking, overcrowded classes and lack of teaching learning materials were perceived as the major source of occupational stress among the sampled teachers. Other factors were concerned with the working conditions such as low salary, deteriorating working condition and problems with student behaviour and performance. Nhundu reported that primary school teachers experienced significantly more work-related stress as compared to their secondary counterparts.

Okebukola (1992) investigated the sources of stress among science teachers in Nigeria. A total of 368 science teachers in 68 schools were randomly selected from those who had been teaching in their present posts for at least 3 years. The findings revealed that the problem of overload among the sampled teachers was created by lack of teaching equipment and facilities, overloaded curriculum and students' misbehaviour and attitude towards schoolwork. Wilkinson (1988) conducted a study using a sample of 60 teachers to investigate the causal factors in teacher stress, he found that the major source of teachers' strain was difficulty in the teachers achieving desired objective, daily workload being too great and class sizes being too large for facilities. In another research study, Engelbrecht et al (2000) sought to identify the problems of teachers and their performance. Results of the study indicated that most stressful issues for teachers in the sample, related to some administrative issues particular behaviours of learners, perceived self-incompetence and the parental expectations of the learners.

A study of 42 special education teachers from Virginia who decided not to return for their teaching position for the 1991-92 school year, (Carter, 1994) indicates that stress as a result of heavy workload was one of the leading factors in their decision to leave the profession. The teachers listed the following factors as contributing to their bad feeling about the profession i.e. lack of resources, lack of time, excessive meetings, large class sizes, lack of assistance and hostile parents. In another study, Pullis (1992), cited in Carter (1994) sampled 224 teachers of behaviourally disordered students to determine the effect of work load on the teachers. The teachers identified inadequate discipline policies in the school, attitudes and behaviour of the school administrators and teachers' poor evaluation by administrators, work overload, poor career growth opportunities, low status of teaching profession and lack of recognition for good teaching.

Vance et al (1989) investigated the sources and nature of occupational stress for a sample of teachers working on an Indian Reservation. The findings revealed from the sample of teachers, that teachers are stressed by inadequate salary and lack of recognition, involvement in decision-making or airing of personal views, time management like inability to find time to relax and lack of enough time to get their work

done. The results also indicated that the teachers feel frustrated by having inadequate or poorly defined discipline policies and having their individual authority rejected by students or the administration.

A study by Dunham and Scott (2000) cited in Naylor (2001) investigated factors which caused dissatisfaction in Australian schools. The findings of the study showed that the systematic changes to staffing ratios, promotion procedures, changes in school responsibilities and management, were dissatisfying to the teachers and were perceived as potential stressors in the teaching environment. Dunham and Scott also reported that teachers in the research sample raised specific concern with workload and that virtually all the sampled teachers underscored this and noted its increase in the recent times. The teachers found that increasing teaching administrative workload was problematic, that it even impacted negatively on family life.

Richardson (1997) conducted a study inquiring into the level of stress experienced by elementary school teachers in the Eastern Caribbean. Findings from this research work pointed to seven factors that interfere with the performance of the teachers, namely, pupil recalcitrance, poor remuneration, curriculum demands, low professional recognition, poor working conditions, community antagonism and time demands.

In a paper published in 1985, the well - known German comparativist Wolfgang Miller, refers to the realization of the fact that there is a phase of disenchantment which he believes is a crucial factor in the practice of teaching in education systems in the west, socialist states of eastern and central Europe. Miller attributes this situation to the low value placed on teacher training and observes that, weighing up the present situation from an international comparativist point of view, one is inclined to a pessimistic rather than an optimistic conclusion. In 1982, the American, Blasé talked about a degenerative cycle in teaching efficiency produced by a combination of various social and psychological factors and which was beginning to become apparent in present day teaching.

Researches have categorized problems related to teacher workload into categories. e.g. Beehr and Newman (1978) propose four broad categories. The first is the role demands or expectations category. This includes factors such as role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, formal and informal relationships between workers themselves and their superiors. The second category is the job demands and characteristics. This category includes a set of all demands that are less directly attributable to members of one's work role set such as over and underutilization of skills, variance in workload, pace of work, responsibility and job characteristics and condition. The third category factors such as organizational size, occupational position with the occupational structure and job security. The fourth category according to Beehr and Newman's classification is the organizations' external demands and conditions. This category is supported by Boring and Riding (1993).

Cole, M and Walkers (1989) have categorized factors related to workload into primary and secondary factors. Primary

factors are those that have a direct effect on the teacher in the classroom and which result into tension hence affecting his performance. Secondary factors are environment i.e. They affect the situation in which teaching takes place. Recent research has unanimously emphasized the importance of the secondary factors given that the problems which exist in the classroom are considered to be both "nonnal" and the responsibility of the teacher. Both primary and secondary factors have a profound effect on the teacher's self- image and view the she or he may have of the profession, bringing about an identity crisis which may eventually lead to self-depreciation. Secondary factors can be looked at under the following headings:

### 3. Methodology

#### Sample Size

To achieve the objective of the study, Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, teachers and Education officers were a useful source of information. To select them, the researcher used purposive and stratified sampling. She sampled the head teacher, one deputy head teacher, one senior teacher and eight other teachers from each of the ten schools yielding ten Head teachers, ten Deputy Head teachers, and eight other teachers. From the Ministry of Education Science and Technology three officers were selected. The entire sampling matrix yielded a total sample size of one hundred and three for the study.

#### Sampling of the Teachers

People learn from other people's experiences. Otunga (1993:76) shows that there was some negativity shown by teacher respondents during her research. Basing on such experiences, the researcher left it to the discretion of Heads of the schools to choose eight teachers to participate in the study. However in the schools where there were only eight teachers, the teachers automatically qualified to participate in the study.

#### Research Instruments

To obtain the data for the study, four research instruments were used. This included the questionnaire, attitude and rating scales and interview schedules. The questionnaire attitude and rating scales were combined into one instrument headed as questionnaire for the group that will soon be highlighted.

### 4. Results and Discussions

#### Teaching, Performance and Effects of Understaffing of the Schools in the Division/District

Teaching and performance of the schools in the Division/District

The respondents were presented with statements and were required to show the situation in the Division/District as far as teaching and K.C.P.E results of the school are concerned. The responses were captured on a 5 -point scale as shown in the table below.

## Teacher Overload and the Associated Effects

**Table 4.1:** If There Is a Problem of Teacher Overload in the School

Respondents	Frequency	Percent
yes	24	100.00

Source: Researcher's Data

All the respondents agreed that there was a problem of teacher overload in the school.

**Table 4.2:** Problems Teachers Experience with Marking and Processing of Marks after Examination

Problems encountered	Frequency	Percent
Marking numerous scripts and processing the results is time consuming	16	72.7
Marking "insha" and composition is strenuous because of the different backgrounds of the pupils	4	18.2
Poor marking, delayed results and lack of time for result analysis	2	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data

The respondents were asked to state the problems teachers experience with marking and processing of marks after examination, most or 72.7% of the teachers stated that marking numerous scripts and processing the results was time-consuming. Others indicated that marking "insha" and composition was strenuous because of the different backgrounds of the pupils and that poor marking, delayed results and lack of time for result analysis were some of the problems encountered by teachers with marking and processing of exams.

**Table 4.3:** Influence of Teacher overload on the K.C.P.E Results

Response	Frequency	Percent
Slow improvement in KCPE performance	5	27.8
Good results have always been achieved	3	16.6
Mean scores have gone down	10	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data

As shown in the table above, majority (55.6%) of the respondents indicated that teacher overload has influenced the KCPE. results by lowering the mean scores. A considerable number of respondents stated that there was a slow improvement in KCPE performance as represented by 27.8% while the rest stated that good results have always been achieved in their schools despite of the overload due to the teacher's determination and ability to handle remedial teaching.

## 5. Summary

The distribution of work among the teachers was average though some incidences of overload were noted whereby majority of the teachers complained of teaching many lessons per day/weekend. They also complained marking and processing of exams is a tedious exercise. This could be attributed to over enrollment and on the other side, teachers are understaffed. In terms of subject sharing, all teachers

portrayed that they taught more than four subjects (all subjects taught in primary school) hence no subject specialization. It was further discovered that all teachers were assigned different responsibilities apart from the normal classwork, extra-curricular activities like sports, clubs etc. Majority of them to a greater extent co-operated in the discipline of the pupils.

From the study findings, it was discovered that the primary school teachers indeed are overloaded as majority of them expressed. This is evident since the teachers agreed that they teach overcrowded classes and the subsequent excessive marking of pupils' work and this is probably brought about by the free primary education which led to over enrollment of pupils suppressing the available learning resources, teach many subjects per term since there is no subject specialization in primary schools, they are understaffed hence making them to be overworked by having many lessons to teach and also increased responsibilities at school.

Teacher overload is a real problem in these primary schools as this study revealed and has a negative impact on teacher performance. This is evident since the teacher does not have a humble time to prepare and teach the pupils, individual pupil's problems are not catered for especially the slow learners because pupils are too many in a class and lesson periods are short, there is no in depth preparation and grasping of the concepts since the subjects are many to be prepared and in any given responsibility the teacher may tend to be reluctant to carry out his duties as expected. Instead he/she will rather give more time to classwork because of the workload. Hence, the teacher will be termed as a non-performer. All these have a negative impact on the performance of the learners within the school and the whole division since the general performance was only rated to be fair (a mean of 3.33) as the research findings indicated.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher overload in primary schools is a real problem especially since the introduction of the free primary school education which led to over enrollment and it continues to be an impediment to attainment of education goals and objectives. Though often ignored by the TSC, it has a negative impact to both teacher and student performance. However, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the TSC can rectify this and reduce overload related stresses through budget allocation for more teacher recruitment and also coming up with probable strategies for enhancing teacher and learner performance and in general, the internal efficiency of the schools.

## 7. Recommendations

- 1) The Ministry of Education in collaboration with TSC should employ more teachers so as to reduce the workloads hence lessen overload related stresses among teachers and its negative impacts to teacher/learner performance.
- 2) The ministry of education should review the syllabus so as only the relevant content to be taught hence lessen the workload and enhance effective syllabus coverage.



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