

Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect of School Ranking In Trans Nzoia West Sub County, Kenya

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Abstract: According to World Bank, the pressure of examinations and ranking of schools according to performance are blamed for lack of depth in learning and the teaching process worldwide. Focusing on examination results ignores many other important outcomes of schooling like physical wellbeing, life skills, integrity, confidence and deportment. Despite attempts to do away with ranking, it has defied the test of time. The purpose of this study was to establish teachers' perceptions of the effect of ranking public secondary schools based on national examinations in Trans Nzoia West Sub County. Specifically, the study undertook to establish teachers' perception of the effect of ranking on teachers' self-esteem, teaching practices, career progression, and students' performance in examinations. The study was anchored on expectancy theory by Vroom. The study used descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of 91 secondary school principals and 910 teachers from 91 public secondary schools in Trans Nzoia Sub County. A sample of 27 principals and 108 teachers were selected for the study. Data was collected using a semi structured teachers/principals questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Pilot testing and expert judgment were used to ascertain content validity of the research instrument. Using the split half technique, the questionnaire was found reliable ($\alpha = 0.79$). Both teachers and principals affirmed that teachers from low rank schools appear to have less self-confidence when interacting with other teachers due to low self-esteem. It was also found that teachers in low ranked schools tend to develop apathy on improvement in their subjects. Majority of teachers affirmed that teachers from low ranked schools are disadvantaged during promotion interviews due to students' low mean marks. However principals disagreed with that notion. Both teachers and principals affirmed that ranking enhances team spirit as students uplift each other to improve the overall school grade. A two tailed t-test at 95% confidence level showed that there was a statistical significant difference between teachers and principals perception on the effect of ranking on career progression ($t(114) = 3.913, p < 0.05$). The study recommends and supports remarks from some respondents that school ranking should also consider other crucial factors such as completion rate, extra curriculum activities, and students' entry behaviour.

Keywords: Ranking of schools, Teachers' perceptions, Self-esteem, Career progression

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I. INTRODUCTION

In many countries, the overall vision of education service provision is to provide a globally competitive quality education to its citizens. The accomplishment of such an endeavour, requires quality monitoring and improvement system. School ranking and frequent inspection are some of the mechanisms that governments use to ensure accountability and justification of investing colossal amounts of taxpayers' money in the education systems (Koning & Wiel, 2010; Macharia & Kiruma, 2014). Reis, Seabra and Nunes (2015) observes that accountability policies vary from the low-stakes policies where information regarding the performance of schools is disclosed to high-stakes or consequential systems, whereby the financing conditions of the schools and/or the payments to teachers are made dependent on the outcomes of students. Reis et al., (2015) further note that the effectiveness of these accountability systems on education quality and also their influences on equity in society remains controversial among scholars.

In Portugal, newspapers publish rankings of every high school (public and private) based on the average scores obtained by students on national exams. These rankings are based on data furnished by the Portugal Ministry of Education, but are the responsibility of the newspapers, which work the raw data (Reis et al., 2015). According to Reis et al., study, families react strongly to published rankings of high schools and that published rankings do in fact reinforce stratification by income. In a study to establish how ranking affects school choice in the Netherlands, Koning and Wiel (2010) found that negative school quality scores decrease the

number of students choosing such schools, while positive quality scores significantly increase the inflow of students.

In spite of the positive effect of increased accountability reported in several countries, ranking can be misleading since higher rankings exhibited by private schools are mostly derived exclusively from the more favorable background of their students, and not from the better quality of private schools (Hastings & Weinstein, 2013). Further, the public disclosure of bad outcomes might reinforce the negative performance of those already disadvantaged schools.

In the United States, principals, teachers and teachers' unions tend to oppose policies linking assessment to accountability on the grounds of perverse effects such as prompting teachers to cheat and narrowing the curriculum to the practice of teaching to the test (Cox & Roden, 2012). In support of this view Grewal (2013) postulates that some schools and colleges alter the timing of their actions and engage in cream-skimming in response to specific performance measures. They accomplish this by excluding weak students from sitting for examinations, misreporting of school dropout rates and engaging in cream-skimming at the point of admission.

In New South Wales, combination of school based assessments is used to determine a student's final mark in each subject (Board of Studies NSW, 2008). In Chile, schools are evaluated and ranked on the basis of their improvement in several factors such as cleanliness, physical structures, student assessment scores, retention rates, teachers' working conditions, teachers-parents integration, promotion on merit practices, and gender or disability consideration (McMakin, 2013). In order to arrive at a final school entitlement score, the considered factors are weighted and adjusted so that the competition is roughly between schools that are comparable in terms of economic status of the community and student population. Further, by ranking schools within each group in accordance to score index, teachers are awarded (McMakin, 2013).

Up to 2015, there have been several categories of ranking Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) namely: the overall, National schools, Provincial schools, District schools, Private schools, most improved schools and Students' categories. Mwangi and Nyagah (2013) observes that the ranking was entirely based on students' academic performance in KCSE and it therefore failed to take into consideration the obvious disparities in students' intake marks in form one and facilities among other factors. They further argue that focusing on examination results failed to put in consideration many other important crucial outcomes such as integrity, physical wellbeing, confidence and deportment. In addition it leads to narrowing of the curriculum due to the neglect of non-examined subjects. It was in cognizance of this limitation the report on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training recommended that school ranking system be abolished (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

The ministry of education imposed a ban on ranking of schools in the national examinations (Nation Newspaper, 18th March 2015). Following this ban, secondary schools were not ranked in the (2014) KCSE. This brought uproar from different education stakeholders and the general public with some in favour of and others opposed to the policy change, (Standard Newspapers, 7th January 2015). Different education stakeholders hold different views on ranking (KESSHA, 2014). The then cabinet secretary for education argued that the demerits of ranking far outweighs its merits as it led to many vices including cheating in examinations among others (Standard Newspaper, 7th January 2015). Kenya Private Schools Association (KEPSHA) and Kenya National Union of Teachers for example opposed the ban with fear that it will lead to decline in standards of education (Daily Nation, 30th November 2014). Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association (KESSHA) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) hailed the ban with the view that ranking has never been objective because the entry requirements in schools and parameters available are not similar, (Standard Newspaper, 30th November 2014).

With the varied views from different stakeholders and the general public, it is clear that the effects of school ranking on different stakeholders warrant thorough investigation. However, while the issue of school ranking has converged focus on the student performance and the inequity arising from the practice, little attention has been paid to specifically how it affects teachers in course of their teaching career. It was against this background that the researcher embarked on establishing the teachers' perceptions on the effect of school ranking on not only students' performance in examinations but also effect on teachers' self-esteem, teaching practices, and career progression in Trans Nzoia West Sub County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The various misgivings about school ranking culminated in banning of national ranking of schools in Kenya in 2014. However, the practice of ranking has remained rife at county and other lower levels demonstrating that many education stakeholders feel a great need to know the relative performance and position of their schools of interest. Some stakeholders contend that the decision to ban ranking was not consultative and there was a need to gather comprehensive data on views of students, teachers and principals among others. In addition, the effects of ranking are not confined to students but also do influence teachers and parents in certain ways. This study therefore set out to establish the teachers' perception of the effect of ranking on teachers' self-

esteem, teaching practices, career progression and students performance in examination in Trans Nzoia West Sub County.

1.2 Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- a) To establish teachers' perception of the effect of school ranking on their self-esteem
- b) To determine teachers' perception of the effect of school ranking on their teaching practices
- c) To examine teachers' perception of the effect of school ranking on their career progression

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Effect of Ranking on Self Esteem

According to Orth, Robins and Widaman, (2012), self-esteem, sometimes referred to as self-regard or self-worth or confused with self-concept, is something that every human being has and is developed and shaped over the lifespan. Self-esteem is the self-evaluation of oneself with regard to the feelings about oneself ("I like myself"), whereas self-concept is the knowledge, judgment, or thoughts about oneself ("I am good at math"); while the two can be related, self-esteem adds the evaluative thoughts about oneself about the traits known (self-esteem holds the value of the trait – "I think I'm a good person [esteem] because I am good at math [concept]") as well as an overall "global" self-esteem that summarizes evaluation of oneself (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008).

Several studies have indicated that positively evaluated self-esteem (generally termed as "high" self-esteem or optimal self-esteem) leads to happiness, school and workplace achievement, less criminal activity, and physical health (Kuster, Orth, & Meier, 2013; Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2011). Other studies have found that outside factors shape and affect self-esteem, including workplace and home environment, experiences, relationships, and achievement (Scott, 1999; Twigg, 2008). While there has been a definitive link between student self-esteem and the school climate, as well as student self-esteem and teachers' attitudes; there has been little study of teacher's self-esteem and its relationship to the school climate. Self-esteem has also been found to be influenced and shaped by feedback from others (Kuster, Orth, & Meier, 2013).

Other studies have found that teacher's self-esteem correlated with overall competency in teaching, higher student achievement, and stronger relationships with students (Sprit, Koomen, Thijs, 2011). A significant concern is that lack of self-esteem in teachers is highly correlated to depression, which is related to behaviors or actions such as poor concentration, poor attendance, and hopelessness. Low self-esteem in teachers has also been linked to teacher bullying of students, as well as negative attitudes displayed in classroom and school activities (Zembar & Gursoy, 2012). Overall, teachers' self-esteem is impactful and impacted by a variety of known factors unique to the school system. Students' performance in major examinations and subsequent ranking has therefore been one of the school factors that affect teachers' self-esteem. When a teacher subject is consistently performed poorly and the performance made public through ranking, the teacher's self-esteem is bound to suffer. The opposite is true for a subject well performed.

An empirical study by Amunga, Amadalo & Maiyo (2010) investigated the teachers' and students' perception of the effect of schools ranking on their self-esteem, their progression in terms of promotions for the teachers and promotion to the next level of education for the students and inter-school relationship. In addition, the respondents were expected to state whether they approved or disapproved of ranking and if this practice had improved results. By employing a descriptive survey design and a sample of 252 respondents, the study found that of 57 (22.6%), most of who were students said their school rank made them feel superior; 44 (17.5%) said it made them feel inferior while the majority 151 (59.9%); most of who were head teachers and teachers said it made them feel neither superior nor inferior. The students who felt superior might have been members of the high rank schools showing that they were proud of being associated with good results. On the other hand, majority of head teachers and teachers felt that the school rank had no effect on their self-esteem possibly because they regarded their role in these schools as a duty. A smaller percentage of 44 (17.5%) felt inferior showing that they did not regard teaching or enabling students to perform well as being good enough.

However, Amunga et al., (2010) investigation on perceptions of effect of school ranking on self-esteem was shallow. The reaction to a statement that required students to state whether they felt superior or not as a result of school ranking was used for analysis. Such analysis cannot be conclusive taking into account that self-esteem is a psychological construct which cannot be measured by considering one statement. The current study endeavored to ascertain teachers' perception of the effect of ranking on their self-esteem in more comprehensive approach.

2.2 Effect of Ranking on Teaching Practices

Education is about enrichment in the process and outcome of learning experience. It should produce all-round individuals who can fit in society (Wanzala, 2013). According to Amadalo, Maiyo & Amunga (2009)

ranking of schools and students is meant to disseminate information on students' performance and thus create impetus for healthy schools competition and motivate teachers to improve their instructional practices. However, ranking has inadvertently led to change of content to which students are exposed and where teachers put emphasis on short-term or superficial strategies like memorization, rote-learning and rehearsing. Further, teachers devote considerable amount of time to test preparation activities while focusing more on students who are more likely to succeed at the expense of the weak (Amadalo et al., 2009).

Teaching and assessment play critical roles in assisting students develop an understanding of why they study different subjects in schools, but it is feared that high-stakes testing (ranking) does not only control the content but also the mode of instruction applied (Hunkins&Ornest, 2013). High-stakes examination could have a bearing on the values of students since though grades in tests provide a practical system for communicating information about student's performance they fail to convey rich details about a student's content achievement. Instructors should therefore embrace strategies that assess the overall knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of students (Reynolds et al., 2010). In Kenya, examinations have a lot of value in the school system and particularly to the teachers. Although examination results are theoretically aimed at enabling teachers become reflective about their teaching in order to improve learning, it indicates that the results in such high stakes environment inhibits creativity and encourages routine (Kiruthi, Githua&Mboroki, 2009).

Schools ranking has also been associated with a situation where the teacher's main role is to transmit knowledge while learners passively listen and take notes. This is opposed to the discovery teaching strategy where the teacher's role is to facilitate learning and guide learners' activities (Kiruhi et al., 2009). Burden and Byrd (2013), advocates the use of a variety of teaching strategies in order to put consideration the nature of students and the available facilities. According to Boit et al., (2012), strategies like discussion cum narration method of teaching provide dual benefits to students. It provides adequate scope for students' participation in the selection of topics or problem presenting ideas, analyzing ideas through exchange of ideas and taking decision with suitable support material.

The use of examination based learning does not provide for discussions and narration which are thought to consume more time. It is therefore clear that teaching to the test does not only affect content organization but also the delivery of subject knowledge, principles and concepts altogether. Teachers abandon their best teaching routines in order to comply with standards-based education and be judged accountable (Boit et al., 2012). This implies that the teaching strategies used by teachers can either deliver the intended subject content or on the basis of pressure to excel in the examinations and high ranking.

2.3 Effect of Ranking on Teachers' Career Progression

The need for good results in education sector is a crucial issue to every stake-holder. In order to ensure high performance and high ranking, many schools resulted to increasing contact hours between the teacher and learner, holiday tuition, remedial teaching during weekends, and intensive testing policies (Sichambo, Maragia&Simiyu, 2012). Thus, though a school may improve in ranking, teachers are exposed to prolonged stress which may eventually culminate into burnout. The previously committed teachers become detached from their jobs, loose commitment and enthusiasm and just do their job mechanically because they have no other option otherwise. Lack of commitment and enthusiasm are detrimental to a teacher's career progression and some opt to move to other careers.

School ranking heightens unrealistic expectations in regard to pupils' progress resulting to teachers' perceived lack of success. Some teachers frequently place upon themselves unrealistic expectations and when they are unable to meet such expectations, they blame themselves for lack of sufficient pupil progress; they consider themselves failures, leading to low esteem and possibly burnout (Gitonga, 2012). Papalia and Olds (1995) as cited in Nwikina and Nwanekezi (2010) consider the term burnout as, a reaction to work-related stress involving emotional exhaustion, and a sense of helplessness and loss of control and a feeling of being unable to accomplish anything on the job. According to Quattlebaum (2012), overloaded school programmes are a threat to teachers' professional development, a critical component in teachers' career progression.

An individual's reaction to work is basic and that one's attitude toward work can very well determine success or failure. Gitonga (2012) observes that high ranking of a school in national examinations bring about teachers' intrinsic motivation. A teacher is influenced by factors relating to tasks such as achievement, recognition, advancement and possibility of growth as proposed by Herzberg (1968) cited in Gitonga (2012). Ogonda, Orwa, Wambua and Muli (2015) argue that the teacher in high rank school is highly motivated due to the achievement and resulting recognition and boost in self-esteem. They further contend that teachers in high rank schools are more likely to assume leadership not only in education sector but in other sectors including politics. An intrinsically motivated individual will be committed to his work to the extent to which the job inherently contains tasks that are rewarding to him or her. Ogonda et al., point out that for an individual to be motivated in a work situation, there must be a need, which an individual would have to perceive a possibility of satisfying.

The reviewed literature, to a large extent brought forth the pros and cons of school ranking as experienced World over. It is evident that school ranking continues to elicit mixed reactions to not only people at individual level but also governments. In Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda are some of the countries where school ranking has now been banned. The banning of school ranking based on national examinations notwithstanding, ranking has continued at County and other lower administrative levels unabated in Kenya. This is a manifestation of the fact that the need for ranking is still shared by education stake holders, albeit varied motivation. In addition most of the reviewed studies were explicit that ranking has a direct effect to both students and teachers in varying proportions. However, while there exists many studies dwelling on parameters that should be factored in fair ranking, there is a paucity of studies on the perception of teachers towards the effect of ranking on their self-esteem, teaching practices and career progression

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design aims at establishing conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail, processes that are ongoing, attitudes that are held or trends that are developing (Babbie, 2014). This design was found appropriate for this study since the study aimed at gathering information on teachers' perceptions on school ranking effects. The study was conducted in Trans-Nzoia West Sub County, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. Trans-Nzoia County is a county in the former Rift Valley Province, Kenya, located between the Nzoia River and Mount Elgon with its centre at the town of Kitale which is the capital and largest town of the county, and 380 km North West of Nairobi.

According to Trans Nzoia County schools census report 2014, Trans Nzoia West Sub County has both some of the best performing and the worst performing secondary schools in the county (MOEST, 2014). In Kenya, a mean score of 7 points (C+) is normally considered the cut off grade where a student is eligible for quality university courses. For the purpose of this study, schools were divided into two categories: high (schools with mean score of 6.5 and above) and low rank (schools with score of 6.4 and below). Thus, since Trans Nzoia West Sub County had a considerable number of schools in both high and low rank categories it was considered the appropriate site to gather teachers' perceptions in regard to ranking.

The study target population comprised of 1080 teachers and 91 principals from the 91 public secondary schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County. This study sampled 30% of 91 schools to get 27 schools. The schools were further categorized as high (6.5 and above) or low rank (6.4 and below) depending on the average of mean performance in KCSE from 2013 to 2015. There were 48 low rank and 43 high rank schools. From the high rank schools, 13 schools were selected while 14 schools from low rank were selected. Ten percent of 1080 teachers were sampled to give 108 teachers while all the head teachers from the 27 schools were selected to take part in the study. Therefore, 108 teachers and 27 head teachers comprising 13.5% of population were sampled. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from both teachers and head teachers. To determine the reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) the split-half method was applied and a correlation of 0.79 was obtained and according to Creswell (2012) a correlation of above 0.6 is deemed reliable.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Objective One

The study's first objective was to establish the teachers' perception of the effect of ranking secondary schools based on KCSE on their self-esteem. To achieve this, a set of statements in form of a likert scale were posed to the respondents on the effect of ranking on their self-esteem. They were to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The questionnaire responses were coded such that strongly disagree was rated number 1 while strongly agree was rated number 5. The responses mean summary for principals and teachers were computed such that: 1 to 2.5 was considered as 'Disagree', 2.6 to 3.4 was considered as 'Undecided', 3.5 to 5 was considered as 'Agree'. The analyzed data was summarized in means and standard deviations as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of the Effect of Ranking on Self Esteem

| Statement on Self Esteem | Teachers Mean (S.D.) | Principals Mean (S.D.) |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Teachers in high rank schools tend to be more confident in their subject areas than those in low rank schools | 3.6(0.5) | 2.5(1.2) |
| Teachers in high rank schools in the sub county appear confident when presenting their work in seminars | 3.8 (0.9) | 3.5(1.1) |
| Ranking demoralizes teachers from low rank schools | 3.7 (1.0) | 2.5(0.9) |
| Teachers from low rank schools appear to have less self-confidence when interacting with other teachers | 3.2(0.8) | 3.4(1.1) |
| Most of the teachers' in high rank schools perceive themselves as | 2.8(1.3) | 3.9(1.2) |

| | | |
|---|------------------|-----------------|
| superior than their counterparts though trained equally | | |
| Teachers' from high rank schools tend to dominate in sub county leadership positions such as games and drama leadership | 4.1(0.7) | 3.5 (0.8) |
| Ranking brings about team work where every teachers' is appreciated in order to improve the school grade | 4.2(0.8) | 4.4(1.4) |
| Aggregate Score | 3.6 (0.9) | 3.5(1.1) |
| n = 25 for Principals, n = 91 for Teachers: t (114) = 0.987, p > 0.05 | | |

Findings in Table 1 show that majority of teachers perceived that teachers in high rank schools tend to be more confident in their subject areas than those in low rank schools (mean = 3.6) while principals generally disagreed with that notion albeit a relatively higher variation (mean = 2.5, S.D. = 1.2). This implied that teachers had noted that the schools at high rank due to better grades had the effect of boosting individual teachers resulting to high self-esteem and more confidence in a particular subject area.

In response to a related statement that teachers in high rank schools in the sub county appear confident when presenting their work in seminars, both teachers and principals affirmed with means of 3.8 and 3.5 respectively. This finding supports the teachers' opinion that teachers in high rank schools exude confidence in teaching their subject areas. Further, teachers agreed that ranking demoralizes teachers from low rank schools (mean = 3.7). However, most of the principals did not share the same sentiment (mean = 2.5).

The statement that teachers from low rank schools appear to have less self-confidence when interacting with other teachers did not elicit a clear cut decision by respondents since both teachers and principals were undecided with means of 3.2 and 3.4 respectively. In addition it can also be deduced that since principals had a larger standard deviation of 1.1, some of them agreed that some teachers from low rank schools do have low self-esteem.

Concerning the statement that most of the teachers' in high rank schools perceive themselves as superior than their counterparts though trained equally, the aggregate mean (2.8) for teachers showed that most teachers were undecided, while principals agreed. Continuous high achievement by some schools can lead to a teachers' perception that they are better than their counterparts who in turn get intimidated and gradually acquire low esteem. This perception gains credence from the fact that teachers overwhelmingly agreed that teachers' from high rank schools tend to dominate in sub county leadership positions such as games and drama leadership (mean = 4.1) This implied that teachers in high rank schools believe more in themselves and are more aggressive in positioning themselves in leadership.

The statement that ranking brings about team work where every teacher is appreciated in order to improve the school grade was overwhelmingly affirmed by both teachers and principals. Overall, the perception of both teachers (mean = 3.6) and principals (3.5) was that ranking affects teachers self-esteem. In order to establish whether the noted differences between teachers and principals mean responses was significant or was just due to sampling error, a student's t-test of independence at 95% confidence level was done. The result showed that there was no statistical significant difference between teachers and head teachers mean responses, $t(114) = 0.987, p = 0.237 > 0.05$. Therefore, both teachers and principals were of the opinion that ranking of secondary schools does affect teachers' self-esteem in Trans Nzoia West Sub County.

4.2 Objective Two

The second objective of the study was to assess the teachers' perception of the effect of ranking on their teaching practices. To achieve this, a set of questions on perceived effect of ranking on teaching practices were provided. The analyzed data was summarized in means and standard deviations as depicted in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, most of teachers were certain that high ranking of school motivates teachers to finish form four syllabus early (mean = 4.2). This implies that teachers are aware or have experienced that ranking provokes some inner drive towards a certain direction depending on whether is high or low. Likewise, principals affirmed that high ranking of a school does motivate teachers to work towards accomplishing their subjects' syllabus in time. The need to finish the syllabus comes about as teachers strive to maintain the upward trend. The statement that teachers in high ranked school tend to have better time management in order to improve or maintain their school position elicited varied opinions from respondents. The mean response for teachers was 2.4, implying that majority disagreed, though a relatively high standard deviation of 1.9 meant that there was a considerable variation in regard to that statement. Teachers from low rank schools may have felt indicted of improper time management and thus naturally disagreed to that statement. However principals affirmed to the statement though not strongly (mean = 3.5).

Table 2: Teachers' Perception of the Effect of Ranking on Teaching Practices

| Statement on Teachers' Teaching Practices | Teachers Mean (S.D.) | Principals Mean (S.D.) |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| High ranking of school motivates teachers to finish form four syllabus early | 4.2(0.8) | 3.6(1.2) |
| Teachers in high ranked school tend to have better time management in order to improve or maintain their school position | 2.4 (1.9) | 3.5(1.1) |
| Teachers in low ranked schools tend to develop apathy on improvement in their subjects | 3.7 (1.0) | 3.9(0.9) |
| Teachers in low ranked schools are not keen in finishing the syllabus | 3.0(0.8) | 3.1(1.1) |
| Teachers in high ranked tend to apply exam based techniques in order to maintain their level | 4.2(1.3) | 3.1(1.2) |
| Ranking motivates teachers to pre-empt confidential materials to the students especially in KCSE science subjects practicals | 2.9(1.7) | 3.1 (1.8) |
| Aggregate Score | 3.4 (1.3) | 3.38 (1.2) |

n = 25 for Principals, n = 91 for Teachers

Both teachers (mean =3.7) and principals (mean = 3.9) were of opinion that teachers in low ranked schools tend to develop apathy on improvement in their subjects. Successive low performance resulting low ranking of a school can negatively influence teachers and students. They can acquire a notion that no matter how hard they work they are always destined to fail. In order to fight the feeling of low esteem teachers can develop apathy as a defense mechanism.

However, a statement that teachers in low ranked schools are not keen in finishing the syllabus was neither supported nor rejected by respondents. The mean response indicated that both teachers (mean = 3.0) and principals (mean = 3.1) were undecided. This was a rather sensitive statement taking into account that the government is now very keen on syllabus completion.

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that teachers in high ranked tend to apply exam based techniques in order to maintain their level (mean = 4.2, S.D. = 1.3). It implied that both teachers from low and high rank agreed that they resulted to apply the exam oriented techniques in order to attain high grades in examinations. However, principals were non-committal on the same issue. Exam based teaching has been much criticized and attributed to students' lack of conceptualization of basic facts. It has also been blamed for fostering a culture of shallow teaching creating a serious mismatch between needs in job market and job seekers characteristics.

Both teachers (mean = 2.9, SD = 1.7) and principals (mean =3.1, SD =1.8) were non-committal regarding the issue that ranking motivates teachers to pre-empt confidential materials to the students especially in KCSE science subjects' practicals. The relatively high standard deviations however, indicated that there was considerable number of respondents whose opinion was in both extremes, in other words, there was heterogeneous response. Being a sensitive issue, it was no surprise that the mean response was that of undecided.

Overall the teachers and principals perception of the effect of ranking on teaching practices was ambivalent (mean = 3.4). Thus, though the respondents were categorical that teaching practices changed depending on whether the school was high or low ranked in some instances, they remained non-committal in several issues.

4.3 Objective Three

The third objective of the study was to examine teachers' perception of the effect of ranking secondary schools based on KCSE on their career progression in Trans Nzoia West Sub County. To achieve this, a set of questions on perceived effect of ranking on teachers' career progression were administered. Table 3 depicts the summary of analyzed data in means and standard deviations.

Table 3: Teachers' Perception of the Effect of Ranking on Career Progression

| Statements on Teachers' Career Progression | Teachers Mean (S.D.) | Principals Mean (S.D.) |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Teachers in high ranked schools get more promotions to levels of leadership such as HOD, deputy principal or principal | 3.3 (1.3) | 4.0(1.2) |
| Teachers from high ranked schools are often appointed to facilitate professional development in teachers seminars and workshops | 3.8 (0.9) | 3.7(1.1) |
| Teachers from high rank schools progress through the job groups faster | 3.1 (1.0) | 3.4(0.9) |
| Teachers from low ranked schools are disadvantaged during promotion interviews due to students' low mean marks | 4.3 (0.8) | 2.4 (1.1) |

| | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Head teachers in high ranked schools send their teachers more frequently to seminars and workshops | 3.8(1.3) | 3.5(1.2) |
| Teachers from high ranked schools are frequently invited to other school as resource persons | 4.1(0.7) | 2.5 (0.8) |
| Teachers in high ranked schools are normally considered for higher training abroad by international organizations such as SMASSE | 2.8 (0.8) | 3.4(1.4) |
| Aggregate Score | 3.6 (1.0) | 3.27 (1.1) |

n = 25 for Principals, n = 91 for Teachers: t (114) = 3.913, p < 0.05

As evident from Table 3, while the mean response for principals was that teachers in high rank schools get more promotions to levels of leadership such as HOD, deputyprincipal or principal, teachers were undecided. It was possible that most of head teachers got promoted to headship from high rank schools and thus were inclined to believe the same is bound to happen to other teachers. This implied that ranking of a school could impede or boost chances of promotions.

Both teachers (mean = 3.8) and principals (mean = 3.7) agreed that teachers from high ranked schools are often appointed to facilitate professional development in teachers' seminars and workshops. However the relatively bigger standard deviation for principals signifies their views were more varied.

Respondents also remained ambivalent in regard to the statement that teachers from high rank schools progress through the job groups faster. The indecision might have arose from the fact that there are some teachers who might worked and stagnated in one job group over many years in high rank schools. In a related statement that teachers from low ranked schools are disadvantaged during promotion interviews due to students' low mean marks, there was a strong affirmation from teachers(mean = 4.3). However principals disagreed (mean = 2.4). Most principals having attained the highest position may not be so much bothered with interviews. Teachers on the hand are occasionally involved as they try mobility upwards.

The statement that head teachers in high ranked schools send their teachers more frequently to seminars and workshops was affirmed by both teachers (mean = 3.8) and principals (mean = 3.5). High rank schools become symbols of hope to all stakeholders, and as such attract more students and above all most parents are also keen in payment of school fees. Being relatively stable in finance, principals can easily sponsor teachers to seminars and workshops. Regular attendance of seminars, workshops and other in-service trainings is very crucial in career progression.

Most principals (mean = 2.5) disagreed that teachers from high ranked schools are frequently invited to other school as resource persons. However, the high mean score for teachers (mean = 4.1) implied that they strongly affirmed that the high rank schools produced resource persons. Teachers who extend students capacity building services in other schools become experts in their areas besides being noted by education stakeholders who in turn recommend them for promotions. For instance science and mathematics teachers who are reputable in their fields are often invited to demystify and guide students on how to tackle examination questions.

The statement that teachers in high ranked schools are normally considered for higher training abroad by international organizations such as SMASSE was not enthusiastically supported by both teachers and principals. Their mean response was in the region of indecision. Though there might be such teachers who occasionally get sponsored, the number may be too low to be noticed.

Overall teachers perceived that school ranking affected the teachers' career progression in such a way that teachers in high rank schools were destined for more opportunities and growth in teaching career (mean = 3.6). On the other hand principals perception was not as explicit (mean = 3.2) and for instance most did not consider being in a low rank school where students achieve low grades can be a disadvantage during interviews for promotion. In order to ascertain whether the difference in overall mean responses between teachers and principals was significant or was just due to chance, a t-test of independence was carried out. A two tailed t-test at 95% confidence level showed that there was a statistical significant difference between teachers and principals perception on the effect of ranking on career progression (t (114) = 3.913, p < 0.05).

4.4 Other Factors that should be considered in Ranking of Schools

In an open ended question respondents were required to suggest other factors to be put in consideration when ranking schools in national examinations. Some of the predominant emerging themes included; students' entry behaviour and value added, extracurricular activities, discipline, teaching and learning resources, adequacy of teachers, number of candidates and completion rate. Figure 1 displays the frequency distribution of respondents in accordance to their responses (n = 116).

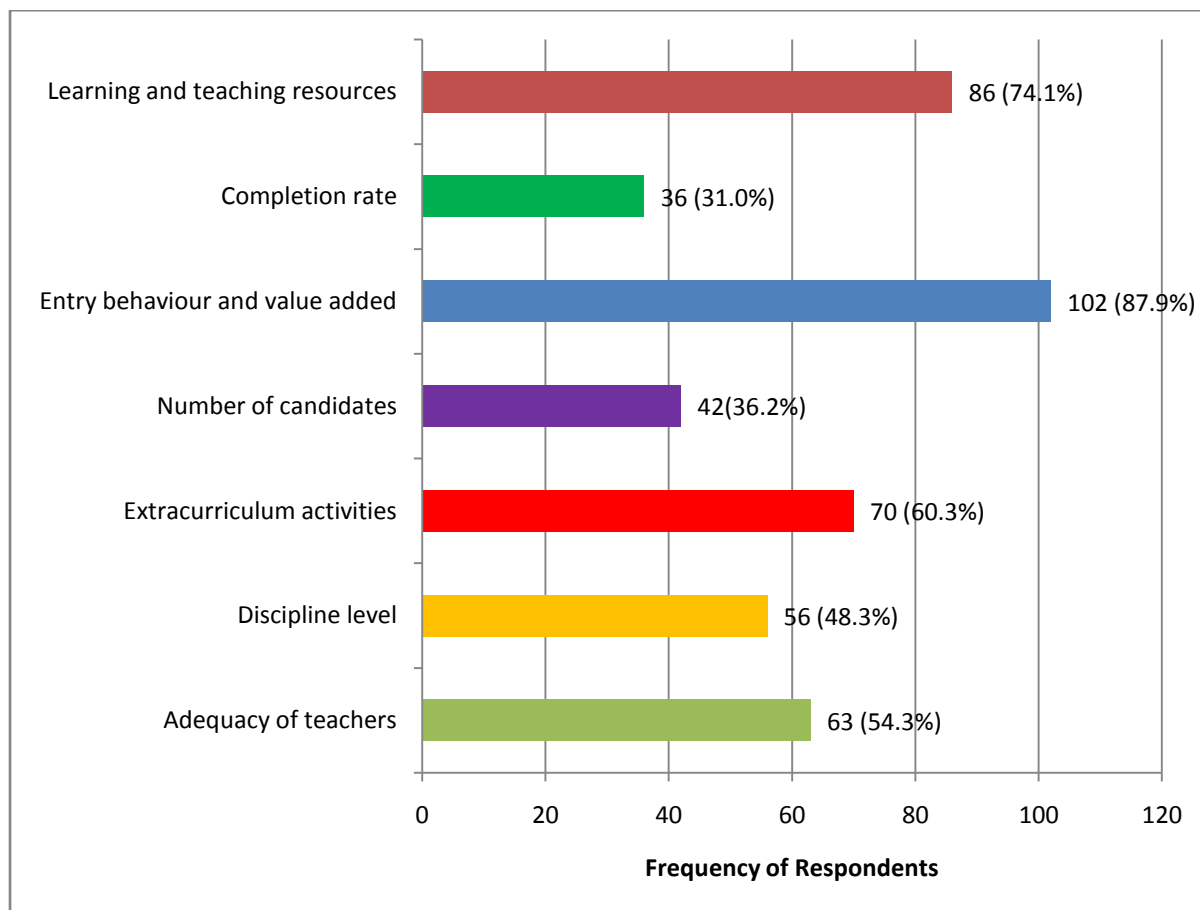


Figure 1: Respondents Response on Other Factors that ought to be considered in Ranking

Figure 1 shows that the bulk of respondents constituting 87.9% felt that students' entry behaviour and value addition should be considered when ranking. Teachers argued that It was incumbent to consider the value added to a student using KCPE mark as the reference point. Teachers felt that some high rank schools put in little effort and add very little value yet they receive all the glory while others went unrecognized even after adding a lot of value to students who had scored very low marks in KCPE. The availability of teaching and learning resources was also mentioned by a large number of respondents constituting 74.1%. Thus the government should strive to avail equitable resources to all schools before ranking. Other factors that were frequently mentioned were extra curricula activities (60.3%) and adequacy of teachers (54.3%). Though Completion rate was mentioned by relatively fewer respondents (31%), the few commented passionately about it. They brought to the fore the fact that the students' transition rate from form two to three and from form three to four was very low in some schools. This is due to some unethical schemes where weak students are disfranchised from writing exams in these schools.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Teachers' perception of the Effects of Ranking on their Self Esteem

The first objective sought to establish the teachers' perception of the effect of ranking on their self-esteem. In reference to Table 1, majority of teachers perceived that teachers in high rank schools tend to be more confident in their subject areas than those in low rank schools (mean = 3.6) implying that they had noted high ranking of a school did recognize the work of those teachers thus boosting their morale and self-esteem. The finding was in line with Twigg (2008) cited in Stewart (2015) who posited that factors that shape and affect self-esteem, includes workplace and home environment, experiences, relationships, and achievement. Thus teachers who excelled in their subject areas and get recognized through ranking were more likely to be confident and become more reassured of their capability to pass the knowledge to students.

In response to a statement that teachers in high rank schools in the sub county appear confident when presenting their work in seminars, both teachers and principals affirmed with means of 3.5 and 3.8 respectively. This finding supports the teachers' opinion that teachers in high rank schools exude confidence in teaching their subject areas. Arguing from the premise that that self-esteem is influenced and shaped by feedback from others as advanced by Rosenberg(1965) cited in Stewart (2015), teachers from low rank schools would find it difficult

to lead others in seminars after the publicity of their 'deficiencies' through ranking. Thus it was no wonder that teachers further agreed that ranking demoralizes teachers from low rank schools (mean = 3.7). However, most of the principals did not share the same sentiment (mean = 2.5). The principals different perception can however be attributed to the fact that being the leaders of the pack; they are expected maintain the progress spirit and dissuade teachers from acquiring low esteem even when the ranking dictates otherwise. The finding was also found to concur with Spilt, Koomen and Thijs(2011) observation that teacher's self-esteem correlated with overall competency in teaching, higher student achievement, and stronger relationships with students. According to Zembat and Gursoy (2012), teachers with higher self-esteem had the ability to be more empathic, a skill necessary for effectively navigating relationships.

Principals mean response indicated that most of the teachers' in high rank schools perceive themselves as superior than their counterparts though trained equally. However, teachers were undecided in regard to the same issue (mean = 2.8). Continuous high achievement and high ranking is internalized by some teachers to perceive that they are better than their counterparts who in turn get intimidated and who gradually acquire low esteem. This perception was further affirmed by teachers mean response in the statement that teachers' from high rank schools tend to dominate in sub county leadership positions such as games and drama leadership (mean = 4.1). This implied that teachers in high rank schools believe more in themselves and are more aggressive in positioning themselves in leadership. The finding was in conformity with Vanderslice (2010) who found that teachers' personal satisfaction and feelings of efficacy are linked to psychological well-being and self-esteem; also related to the degree in which teachers feel they can excel in a position of responsibility.

5.2 Teachers' Perception of the Effect of Ranking on their Teaching Practices

The second objective of the study sought to assess the teachers' perception of the effect of ranking on teaching practices. In reference to Table 2, most of teachers were certain that high ranking of school motivates teachers to finish form four syllabus early (mean = 4.2). This implies that teachers are aware or have experienced that ranking provokes some inner drive towards a certain direction. Likewise, principals affirmed that high ranking of a school does motivate teachers to work towards accomplishing their subjects' syllabus in time. The need to finish the syllabus comes about as teachers strive to maintain the upward trend. Schonfeld, (2012) reported a similar finding, that ranking leads to a fight for survival where schools put in a fight to improve their performance and remain relevant.

However, as noted by Amadalo, Maiyo, and Amunga (2009) syllabus coverage obsession and achievement of high grades has been detrimental to provision of quality education. Education is about enrichment in the process and outcome of learning experience. It should produce all-round individuals who can fit in society. Amadalo et al., (2009) emphasizes that ranking of schools and students is meant to disseminate information on students' performance and thus create impetus for healthy schools competition and motivate teachers to improve their instructional practices. However, ranking has inadvertently led to change of content to which students are exposed and where teachers put emphasis on short-term or superficial strategies like memorization, rote-learning and rehearsing. Further, teachers devote considerable amount of time to test preparation activities while focusing more on students who are more likely to succeed at the expense of the weak (Amadalo et al., 2009).

Both teachers from low and high rank agreed that they resulted to apply the exam oriented techniques in order to attain high grades in examinations (mean = 4.2). However, principals were non-committal on the same issue. Exam based teaching (EBT) has been much criticized and attributed to students' lack of conceptualization of basic facts. It has also been blamed for fostering a culture of shallow teaching creating a serious mismatch between needs in job market and job seekers characteristics. The use of EBT is attributed to an examination oriented education system where all weight of the student's ability is thrown on grades; high grade achievers win affection from teachers while other students gawk in awe (Fang, 2014).

Through EBT Learners are taught content that is predicted to be examined while sometimes the same content is repeated several times for the students to memorize (Koskey et al., 2012). In this instructional method, many teachers in class incline towards objective information that cannot be disputed; information that emphasizes on memorization of facts. Teachers wind up teaching towards the examination, the examinations itself becomes the curriculum (Krumboltz and Yeh, 2005). In this situation however, Ornestein, & Hunkins, (2013) argues that educators should realize that there are aspects taught in schools that are not tested and hence not feature in ranking but which prepare learners for the world outside books

In a similar finding, Naliaka, Odera, and Poipoi (2015) found that emphasis in examination performance and subsequent ranking compelled teachers to teach to the test which was one of the factors blamed for examination malpractices. Naliaka et al., (2015), recommended that students' competences and values can be improved if standing teachers employed are dedicated and deliver the content in line with the objectives and serve as role models in matters of self-discipline, accountability, integrity and sound leadership.

5.2.3 Teachers' Perception of the Effect of Ranking on their Career Progression

The third objective of the study sought to examine teachers' perceptions of the effect of ranking on teachers' career progression. In reference to Table 4.5, principals indicated that teachers in high rank schools get more promotions to levels of leadership such as HOD, deputy principal or principal while teachers were undecided. It was possible that most of head teachers got promoted to headship from high rank schools and thus were inclined to believe the same is bound to happen to other teachers. This implied that ranking of a school could impede or boost chances of promotions. Cognate to this finding, Ogonda, Orwa, Wambua&Muli (2015) found that teachers whose subjects rank highly both nationally and at county level are not only rewarded with cash money but are also considered for promotion.

Thus, such rewards can be considered as some the positive effects of ranking. In addition, analysis from the open ended section of the teachers' questionnaire had some teachers who associated their promotion to leadership position with top ranking in sports and drama. Contrary to the findings Nyakundi (2014) cite corruption and nepotism as one of the major factors usurping promotion on merit. Lack of recognition of teachers' effort has been attributed to sharp decline of some schools from high rank to low rank category.

In a survey done in Nairobi County schools by UNESCO international institute for educational planning, Evers and Walberg (2013) noted a tendency of teachers from high rank schools getting more preference in promotions and transiting from teaching to other preferred engagements in large numbers. Thus, teachers from well-known performing schools and whose fame is a benefactor of ranking do stand a better chance of being absorbed into other government and non-governmental organizations. The promotion and transition to other preferred jobs is not confined to teachers but principals from high rank schools such as Alliance boys, Alliance girls and many others tend to be more elevated than principals from other less known schools. Thus ranking do affect teachers and society perception and above all do affect teachers' career progression.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the study findings and discussions the following conclusions can be made:

Ranking of schools do affect teachers self-esteem. In spite of receiving the same training, ranking demoralizes teachers from low rank schools and where a school has persistently performs dismally teachers tend to acquire low self-esteem. On the other hand, teachers from high rank schools were found to be more confident, dominate in county positions of responsibility and presentations in seminars and workshops. Teachers in high rank schools believe more in themselves and are more aggressive in positioning themselves in leadership.

Both principals and teachers affirmed that high school ranking does motivate teachers to work towards accomplishing their subjects' syllabus in time. This happens as teachers strive to maintain the upward trend. However, ranking has inadvertently led to change of content to which students are exposed and where teachers put emphasis on short-term or superficial strategies like memorization, rote-learning and rehearsing. Further, teachers devote considerable amount of time to test preparation activities while focusing more on students who are more likely to succeed at the expense of the weak.

Teachers whose subjects rank highly both nationally and at county level are not only rewarded with cash money but are also considered for promotion. Teachers in high rank schools get more promotions to levels of leadership such as HOD, deputy principal or principal. It also emerged that teachers from high rank schools are frequently sponsored by their schools to attend seminars and workshops. However, corruption and nepotism are vices that have jeopardized promotion on merit.

It has emerged from the study findings that effects of school ranking range from those that affect students directly and much publicized to those that affect teachers such as self-esteem and career progression but less publicized. Owing to the fact that ranking is still done at county and other levels unabated, it is therefore prudent for the government to reassess the decision to ban ranking with a view of in cooperating all stake holders views on ranking.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The government, through the Ministry of Education should diversify education offered such that different students talents are catered for as opposed to examination oriented education system. By doing so teachers are expected to conform to the best recommended teaching practices where the needs of learner become the focal point and ranking will be confined to schools in the same education system category. In addition the urge to narrow the syllabus in order to give examination oriented material might be replaced by the need to give the quality education.

It is imperative for all the teachers regardless of their school ranking to be engaged in professional development workshops and seminars. The knowledge and experience gained from such engagements can be used to uplift their schools and the general students' welfare. This calls for the Teachers Service Commission to make it mandatory for all teachers to attend and participate in these trainings.

In order to achieve fairness in ranking the government should first ensure that no school is so much disadvantaged in terms of physical and teaching facilities, and competent human resource. The government should set aside a special fund meant for uplifting disadvantaged schools to be at par with other well-endowed schools. It is only when students start at comparable conditions that ranking can make sense.

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