

THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM) IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN BIHERAWI CLUSTER, SHASHEMENE TOWN

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ABSTRACT

The study was about cluster performance program and performance of primary school pupils in Shashemene Catholic Hebrat school. The general objective of the study is to find impact of Biherawi cluster program on the performance of primary school pupils in Shashemene Catholic Hebrat school. The study was guided by three specific objectives namely; to examine how Biherawi cluster has contributed to enrolment of pupils in Primary schools in Catholic Hebrat School; to establish the factors responsible for poor performance of primary school pupils in in Biherawi cluster and to suggest the possible solution to address problems under Biherawi cluster. It used data collected using a questionnaire and Interview guide, and during data collection cross-sectional research design was used. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze data and a sample of 80 respondents was used.

It was found out that Biherawi cluster has contributed to the high enrolment of pupils in primary schools. Ways how the performance of Biherawi cluster schools can be improved were; curbing corruption, others (like role of parents), regular Biherawi cluster division of teachers, building more classes, teachers motivation, equip schools with books and increasing number of teachers.

It was recommended that the government should construct more classrooms so as to meet the requirements of forty-five pupils in one classroom ratio (45:1). The government should recruit more teachers in the schools so as to reduce the teacher load. Parents must provide enough food to their children, pack for them a snack for lunch Teachers should avoid cases of absenteeism and dodging classes this will also improve performance of Biherawi cluster schools. Last but not least the stakeholders and government ought to prevent school drop outs since it was realized that amidst free education there have been cases of failure to complete the full course of primary education, things like eradicating child labor and improving incomes of parents are crucial.

Keywords: PLE - Primary Leaving Examination, TQM - Total Quality Management, UNICEF - United Nations Children Emergency Fund

1. Introduction

Background of the study

An educated person refers to a person that has access to optimal states of mind regardless of the situation they are in (Schofield, K. 1999). In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another. Education can also be defined as the process of becoming an educated effectively to achieve self-selected goals and aspirations (Tremblay, Eric, 2010). A right to education has been created and recognized by some jurisdictions: Since 1952, Article two of the first Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights obliges all signatory parties to guarantee the right to education. At the global level, the United Nations' International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 guarantees this right under its Article 13 (Tremblay, Eric, 2010).

It has been argued that high rates of education are essential for countries to be able to achieve high levels of economic growth. Empirical analyses tend to support the theoretical prediction that poor countries should grow faster than rich countries because they can adopt cutting edge technologies already tried and tested by rich countries (Kate Bird and Kate Higgins, 2009).

The system of education in Ethiopia has a structure utilizes a 6-2-4 structure in its education system. With the first years eight years covering primary education, the next four years covering secondary education and the last four years covering tertiary education. Tertiary education options range from the Teacher's Certificate (one year of study at a teacher training college), to Diploma/Advanced Diploma (Diploma/Advanced Diploma - 2 or 3 years of study offered by engineering and technological institutes, health and commercial institutions, agricultural colleges), to the three year Diploma from teacher training colleges.

The first university degree, or bachelor's degree, ranges from four years for arts/science/education, to five years for pharmacy/engineering/architecture/law, to six years for medical/veterinary medicine programs. The second university degree offers master's degrees, which last for two years after the bachelor's degree, along with certificates of specialization / specialization diplomas, which are three years beyond medical programs. The doctoral degree requires three to five years of study post-master.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education is important for a successful post-conflict transition in Ethiopia, as it helps develop peoples' abilities to break free of circles of violence and suffering. Ethiopia's Universal Primary Education (UPE) has resulted in high enrolment rates in Ethiopia, but education tends to be of a low quality and few pupils actually complete primary school. There are inadequate facilities; for example out of 238 primary schools in Shashemene, 47 are still under trees, limited teacher accommodation is causing high rates of teacher absenteeism and in some areas the average primary school teacher to student ratio is 1:200 (Kate Bird and Kate Higgins, 2012):

And this decrease in grade has been puzzling the researcher to why this is happening as he is attaching it to the coming of UPE program in the area. In addition, the education profile (2010) indicate that the schools seem to have continued to deteriorating in Shashemene town as most of the primary schools are performing poorly in their Primary Living Examination results. Therefore, this situation prompted the researcher to establish the impact of UPE program on the performance of primary school pupils in Biherawi Cluster, Shashemene town.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study was to find out the impact of UPE program on the performance of primary school pupils in Biherawi Cluster, Shashemene town.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i.To examine how UPE has contributed to enrolment of pupils in Primary schools in Biherawi Cluster - Shashemene town
- ii.To establish the factors responsible for poor performance of primary school pupils in UPE schools in Biherawi Cluster - Shashemene town
- iii.To suggest the possible solution to address problems under UPE program in Biherawi Cluster- Shashemene town

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents review of the literature on the UPE Programme and performance of primary school in Biherawi Cluster. The presentation follows the order of the objectives, which are; to examine how UPE has contributed to enrolment of pupils in Primary schools in Biherawi Cluster; to establish the factors responsible for poor performance of primary school pupils in UPE in Biherawi Cluster and to suggest the possible solution in Biherawi Cluster to address problems under UPE program

2.1 Objective one: to examine how UPE has contributed to enrolment of pupils in primary schools

Mission schools were established in Ethiopia in the 1890s, and in 1924 the government established the first secondary school for Africans. By 1950, however, the government operated only three of the fifty-three secondary schools for Africans. Three others were privately funded, and forty-seven were operated by religious organizations. Education was eagerly sought by rural farmers as well as urban elites, and after independence many villages, especially in the south, built schools, hired teachers, and appealed for and received government assistance to operate their own village schools (Ruhweza et al, 2000:1). Most subjects were taught according to the British syllabus until 1974, and British examinations measured a student's progress through primary and secondary school. In 1975 the government implemented a local curriculum, and for a short time most

school materials were published in Ethiopia. School enrollments continued to climb throughout most of the 1970s and 1980s, but as the economy deteriorated and violence increased, local publishing almost ceased, and examination results deteriorated (G O U, 2001).

To increase the number of schools at this level, Government has been taking over Community schools, staffing them with teachers and paying their salaries. Between the year 1990 to 2000 over 4000 schools were Grant-Aided. A total of 767 primary schools were grant aided in the FY 1999/00, raising the number of primary schools to a total of 10,597, of which 9,060 are Government and 1,481 private, while the rest are considered community schools.

2.2 .Objective Two: The factors responsible for poor performance of primary school pupils in UPE schools

Agyeman (1993) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and the professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. However, he further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavorable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his work and thus be less productive than a teacher who is unqualified but works under favorable conditions of service. Neagley and Evans (1970) were of the view that effective supervision of instruction can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Class sizes have also been identified as determinants of academic performance. Studies have indicated that schools with smaller class sizes perform better academically than schools with larger class sizes. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on effective teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on students' achievement. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) indicated that since children have differences in motivation, interests and abilities and that they also differ in health, personal and social adjustment and creativity generally good teaching is best done in classes with smaller numbers that allow for individual attention.

The Education Review Policy Commission (1992) clearly spells out discipline as one of the aims and objectives of education at all levels of the education system in Ethiopia. Non compliance to this can be detrimental to many schools in terms of instability and poor academic performance. Herbst, Juergen (2006), also supports the idea that discipline is the underlying factor in the teaching leaning process which cannot be pursued without discipline of students and their teachers. In absence of discipline there is anarchy, a situation that makes it impossible for the school goals and objective to be achieved. Discipline he describes as the action by management to enforce organizational standards. When this is observed then performance can be achieved.

2.3 Objective Three: Strategies to improve performance of pupils in primary schools

Community develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision, develop values required for long success, and implement these through appropriate action and behaviors, and are personally involved in ensuring that the organizations' management system is developed and implemented. It is also contended that it is prerequisite in TQM that there is change of attitude on the part of an organization's management and staff where all workers are encouraged, empowered and committed to seek out improvements in process, products and services and to accept responsibility for solving problems as they arise. Interdisciplinary teams of workers who must work collaboratively to achieve common objectives requires backing of management as evidenced by allocation of time for team meetings and identification of areas for staff development (Lankard, 1992).

Firestone and Pennell (1993) argue that evaluation can undermine the intrinsic rewards for teachers, as the "feedback in the form of performance evaluation undermines intrinsic motivation, even when the evaluation is positive" (emphasis in original). It is argued that non-monetary rewards may be better motivators, such as extra holidays. This has been observed in Canada, where many teachers take up the opportunity for unpaid leave. This raises the question of whether the current models of performance-based rewards are flawed because they fail to recognize actual teacher motivations (Chamberlin, et al, 2002).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Selection of schools

Schools in Biherawi Cluster were grouped into two strata; government-aided and privately owned. From each stratum, a sample of 4 schools will be selected using simple taken to be random sampling following a table of random numbers. However, the sampling process was based on the size of the school in terms of number of staff, enrolment, location and academic performance at national examinations. All schools were equally important in order to generate reliable results.

3.2 Selection of respondents

Respondents were grouped into three strata; Head-teachers, teachers, and pupils in the study area. Teachers and pupils were randomly selected. Simple random sampling was preferred because it was non-biased. One Head-teacher from each school was selected as study respondents. Head teachers were utilized as key informants. In all, 80 respondents were selected from the study.

Table 1: Sample size and technique

No.	Category of respondent	Sample size	Sampling technique
1	Head teachers	04	Purposive
2	Teachers	16	Simple random
3	Pupils	60	Simple random
	Total	80	

3.3 Data collection method

The study made use of both primary and secondary data and this was done through utilization of quantitative methods of data collection. In quantitative research, the design were developed at the beginning of the research and deviation of any kind of deviation were not permitted as such deviation is thought to cause problems; communication and interaction objectively define the fashion, data analysis took place only when the process of data collection were completed, the data collection methods was standardized and fixed leaving no options for correction and adjustment.

4. DATA ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions that answer the objectives. It presents the results of the study in form of Tables and graphs. Test of the hypothesis was also carried out and conclusions on whether to reject or to accept the null hypothesis were made.

4.1 Background information of the respondents

Background information of the respondents was also considered by the study. Under the respondents background, different variables were considered which included was gender, age, marital status and education level of the respondents as well.

4.1.1 Gender of respondent

The study had both male and female respondents and male persons were more than female ones interacted with.

Table 2: Showing gender distributions of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	63
Female	30	37
Total	80	100

Source: Primary

Data 2024

4.2 OBJECTIVE ONE: CONTRIBUTIONS OF UPE PROGRAM ON THE ENROLMENT OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BIHERAWI CLUSTER

As the first objective of the study, it looked at the contribution of UPE program on the enrolment of pupils in primary schools in Biherawi Cluster, under the objective statistics revealing the enrolment rates before and after UPE program was revealed as well as responses on whether UPE program has contributed to enrolment of pupils in primary schools established.

4.2.1 Whether UPE has contributed to high enrolment of pupils in primary schools

The study investigated whether UPE program had contributed to the enrolment of pupils in primary schools and a yes or no close ended response question was administered to respondents as indicated in table 5 below.

Table 3: Showing whether UPE has contributed to high enrolment of pupils in primary schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	94
No	05	06
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

According to findings, 75(94%) of the persons interacted with while in the field admitted that UPE program had contributed to high enrolment in primary schools, presented in they revealed statistics as proceeding paragraphs, also found out was that 05(06%) of the respondents disagreed with the view that UPE has contributed on the high enrolment of pupils in primary schools .They pointed out that there has been a surge of private schools in the sub-county and they too were having significant enrolments.

4.2.3 OBJECTIVE TWO: FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR POOR PERFORMANCE OF UPE SCHOOL PUPILS IN BIHERAWI CLUSTER

According to the study objectives, the study was set to identify the causes of poor performance of pupils in UPE schools and the section first rates the academic performance of the school as presented in the table below.

Table 4: Showing how respondents rated the academic performance of UPE schools

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Fairly good	06	08
Fair	66	82
Poor	08	10
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data, 2024

From findings, it was put to respondents to rate the performance of the schools under study on the scale of poor to very good performance. It was found out that no respondent rated the performance on the scale as very good and good respectively this was because, “the schools”, they informed the study had not progressed to such a level since they still faced challenges like low motivation, lack of adequate scholastic among others. A good number of respondents argued that the performance was fair hence 66(82%) of them informed the study that the performance was fair and they were seeing room for improvement in the nearby future.

The table further shows that 06(08%) of respondents believed the performance was fairly good and not scaring that improvements were needed for the schools to take off while 08(10%) respondents believed the performance was poor and a lot was still needed to be done so as to elevate the status and general performance of UPE schools from poor to good. The study revealed that poor performance of pupils was due to congestion of pupils as some of the pupils could not attend classes that could them not grasp the teachers’ teachings.

Table 5: Showing responses on if there are factors affect performance of pupils in UPE schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	100
No	00	00
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The study learnt that 80(100%) respondents argued yes, that the performance was being affected very many factors. It was revealed that factors such as negligence on the side of parents, inability to feed the children well, pupils to teacher ratio, inadequate scholastics, poor motivation of teachers among others were factors that affect the performance of UPE schools the study investigated. It was also showed that no respondent responded no or disagreed with the fact that there are factors affect performance UPE schools. The study got informed that good performance was a collective responsibility and that every party like government, schools and parents needed to play their role to the maximum so as to realize high performance of UPE schools.

4.4 OBJECTIVE THREE: HOW UPE PROGRAM CAN BE IMPROVED

The study established the ways how UPE program can be improved so as to increase on the performance of pupils. According to the same issue, respondents revealed a number of issues as in Table 10.

Table 6: Showing how UPE program can be improved

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Curbing corruption	15	18
Increase in number of teachers	12	15
Regular supervision of teachers	06	07
Building of more classes	20	25
Teachers motivation	22	27
Equip schools with books	03	04
Others (like role of parents)	02	03
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The study found out that ways to curb corruption are important in as far as improving performance of UPE schools is concerned. Measures like punishment of culprits, forcing them to return the funds among others were cited by 15(18%) as ways how the performance of schools and pupils can be improved since resources well spent can increase learning materials and motivation of teachers.

Secondly, motivation of teachers also was cited by 22(27%) of respondents. It was illustrated that motivation in its different kinds could put a smile on teacher's faces and induce them to do all it takes to produce good results. Government can motivate teachers by increasing salaries, allowances, overtime allowances, weekend allowances, meals at school, housing allowances would be enough to create a change in the performance of schools and children at large in UPE schools. In relation, Firestone and Pennell (1993) argue that non-monetary rewards may be better motivators, such as extra holidays.

More so, reducing the work load on teachers would relieve the stress and burden and be a good inducement to work hard. Work load can be relieved by increasing the number of teachers such that there could be some specialization in the school. In addition, 12(15%) of respondents confirmed to recruitment of more teachers as a super measures of improving performance of UPE schools and pupils in schools.

Equipping schools with enough learning materials and instructions of learning was suggested as another way of improving performance UPE schools. It was added that government should provide current text books that are in conformity with the curriculum, provide enough chalk, charts, desks to mention but a few. That if such things are provided, pupils can easily instruct themselves even during their free time and the in the process it enhances their understanding which later could lead to better performance of these schools. To this, 03(04%) responses explained the measure. Similarly Puffer and McCarthy (1996) recognize the crucial role management plays in driving the school wide quality management efforts as a major factor for achieving successful performance, and that it is the role of top management to formalize the school quality values and vision and project them in a clear visible and consistent manner.

5. FINDING, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.0 Introduction

The general objective of the study was to find impact of UPE program on the performance of primary school pupils in Biherawi Cluster, Shashemene town. To achieve the above objective, the study followed three specific objectives namely; to find out how UPE has contributed to enrolment of pupils in Primary schools in Biherawi Cluster, Shashemene town, to establish the factors responsible for poor performance of primary school pupils in UPE in Biherawi Cluster, Shashemene town, and to find out what should be done in Biharwe Sub-County to address problems under UPE program as well.

In this regards, the chapter contains conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies as these were mostly done according to major study themes in relation to the study objectives.

5.1. Discussion of the major findings

5.1.1. OBJECTIVE ONE: To find out how UPE has contributed to enrolment of pupils in Primary schools in Biherawi Cluster

The study findings revealed, UPE has contributed to the high enrolment of pupils in primary schools within Biherawi Cluster however the high rate of enrolment has not been matched with the supportive infrastructures available in primary schools this has seen overcrowding in UPE schools.

In addition, the performance of pupils in UPE schools has not been good in Mbarara this is due to various impediments like high numbers of pupils per class and shortage of scholastics as well as incentives to teachers.

This study found out that, many school age-going children were not attending school before Universal Primary Education was introduced with the practical inception of Universal Primary Education in 1997, enrolment in primary schools increased likewise the teacher population increased, to-date, numbers are still on the increase as each year more join the cycle however, despite the introduction of Universal Primary Education many more potential pupils are still seated at home while other continue to drop.

The level of knowledge amongst teachers and head teachers about the aims of Universal Primary Education is profoundly positive as they are much aware that Universal Primary Education is meant to eradicate illiteracy and empower the young generation with knowledge and skills that will enable them continue studying and even if they drop they will live as responsible citizens of this land.

5.1.2. OBJECTIVE TWO: To establish the factors responsible for poor performance of primary school pupils in UPE in Biherawi Cluster, Shashemene town.

Findings indicated that the Under funding of Universal Primary Education remains a major setback because despite the little money allocated to each pupil per month, it delays to come and there are many strings attached which inhibit proper planning as individual schools have particular needs.

There is generally lack of competent and adequate manpower in terms of teachers' qualifications and numbers to effectively implement Universal Primary Education.

Teachers' performance under Universal Primary Education programme has been put in doubt because the ever-increasing number of pupils have made the teachers' work difficult rendering them ineffective.

Pupils' academic performance has continuously declined over the years. There is no single factor that can explain this negative and unfortunate phenomenon, however, automatic promotion, under funding; understaffing and lack of cohesion in Universal Primary Education policies have hindered the effective implementation of Universal Primary Education.

5.1.2. OBJECTIVE THREE: To suggest the possible solution to address problems under UPE program in Biherawi Cluster.

Furthermore, efforts towards improved performance of pupils in UPE schools is a collective responsibility and calls for determination and attitude from various stakeholders, supporting pupils can begin from home up to the government support physically and mentally. To increase the provision of adequate material resources for the teaching of all subjects is much

recommended. It is opined that human, physical and financial resources do not necessarily make much difference in terms of pupils' learning outcome. It is the efficient use of these resources and not just the availability that matters. It is therefore recommended that the resources made available to the primary schools should be efficiently utilized and the school environment should be made conducive for learning in order to improve pupils' learning outcome.

The study findings established a relationship between teacher quality and pupils' academic achievement in Gasabo and this finding relate with a wide range of findings on the relationship between teacher quality in and student outcomes. Hanushek (1986) found that fewer than half of the 109 previous studies on the estimated effects of teacher quality showed that quality had any statistically significant effect on student achievement; of those, 33 studies found that other factors were also had a significant positive effect, but seven found that more experience actually had a negative impact on student achievement. Other studies show a stronger positive relationship between teacher quality and student outcomes in some, but not all, cases they reviewed (e.g., Greenwald et al., 1996). Murnane (1995) suggests that the typical teaching learning curve peaks in a teacher's first few years (estimated at year two for reading and year three for math). It is also plausible that a positive finding on quality actually results from the tendency of more senior teachers to select higher-level classes with higher achieving students (Hanushek, 1986). Thus we might reasonably infer that the magnitude of the quality effect, should it exist, is not terribly large

5.2 Conclusions

The pupils of private primary schools of Biherawi Cluster perform better than their counterparts of public primary schools in PLE. This doesn't come randomly, as they are well prepared from the early first classes. Though having the teachers of almost the same qualification, and pupils of almost the same background, private primary schools motivate more their teachers and their pupils than public primary schools do through various ways: good pay to teachers, small classes, good working environment, conducive environment for learning (availability and adequacy of school resources), regular evaluations, good collaboration between school and parents/guardians, guidance and counseling services made operational, excursions etc.

Educational resources (human, physical, material, and financial) are more available and adequate in private primary schools than in public ones; while these resources should be made available to the school to create conducive climate to produce desirable outcomes. (Heneveld 1994; Heneveld & Craig 1995). The lack of some necessary facilities in public primary schools is justified by the financial resources which are very few due to the lack of variety of funding sources. These schools are only funded by the government through the annual budget (but for the case of private subsidized schools, there may be another funding source, though irregular that is the founder of the school e.g. a church) while private primary schools have alternative sources of funding. They can raise tuition, and they also can raise significant amounts of money from a variety of development activities, including annual appeals, cultivation of alumni and alumnae, and solicitation of grants from foundations and corporations. The strong allegiance to private schools by their alumni makes the chances of fund-raising success a real possibility in most cases. And this allows them to supply themselves with required facilities at any cost.

5.3 Recommendations

The government should continue to construct more classrooms so as to meet the requirements of forty-five pupils in one classroom ratio (45:1). This will reduce on the congestion in classrooms as a result of large numbers. This will also create conducive environment for all pupils in government schools to study.

The government through the ministry of education and sports should recruit more teachers in the schools so as to reduce the teacher load. This will cater for the large numbers of pupils and meet the pupil-teacher ratio of 45:1.

Also parents and schools with UPE ought to play their role efficiently. Parents must provide enough food to their children, pack for them a snack for lunch since pupils stay hungry and fail to concentrate in comparison with private schools where food is provided at school. Teachers should develop a good attitude towards UPE schools and avoid cases of absenteeism and dodging classes his will also improve performance of UPE schools.

The researcher recommended that for the Ministry of Education and Sports to improve its communication mechanisms so as to reach all the stakeholders it should develop a division of communication within the Ministry of Primary Education to provide information to all stakeholders, collect and translate all data in all the different languages, publish findings, and communicate to the public about the policies objectives of UPE.

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