

How Teachers' Planning Influences Pupils' Academic Performance in Government Aided Primary Schools in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District in Uganda

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Abstract

This research examined the influence of teacher planning on pupils' academic performance in government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town council, Namutumba District in Uganda.

The center of the educational system is viewed as being academic achievement. Mahmood (2015) defined academic performance as a student's measurable and observable behavior during a certain time period. Relevant stakeholders, including parents, pupils, school administrators, and researchers, have shown interest in studies of how Teachers' Planning Influences Pupils' Academic Performance. A lesson plan is a schedule for teaching a lesson or lessons that an instructor creates based on the curriculum to achieve particular curricular goals. It results from a study of the scheme of work. Consequently, the lesson topics that result from breaking down the schemes of work into smaller subtopics can be utilized to create lessons (Sabetra & Aziz, 2021). Sabetra & Aziz, (2021) explains that Lesson plans are helpful because they ensure that the teacher follows proper teaching techniques, that the topic of the day's lesson is covered in one lesson and that instructional materials are properly chosen and utilized.

A scheme of work divides an often-multiyear curriculum into deliverable work units that are each much shorter in length (for example, two or three weeks) hence making it manageable in delivery. The way each topic will be taught in class and how pupils' understanding of the information connected to each topic, unit, and the scheme of work as a whole will be assessed are all clearly mapped out in the schemes of work beforehand.

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A scheme of work outlines the subject matter and educational opportunities that must be covered each term of the academic year (Okai, 2010). The instructor needs this scheme of work since it directs him in structuring the instructional unit and, in turn, the daily lessons, taking into account the amount of time allotted for each topic over the term.

Keywords: Teacher planning; Lesson Plans; Schemes of work; pupils' academic performance; government aided primary schools.

1. Introduction

An important part of curriculum implementation is to conduct planned teaching-learning activities. Effective lesson plan is one of the tools to manage this teaching-learning activity. Lesson plan is a deliberate, continuous process of smoothly executing classroom activities; classroom management can be easier through a quality lesson plan.

If the lesson plan is maintained, the teachers become proficient through reflection about their strengths and weaknesses in teaching, it can help to improve their success rate in the future. Teachers design appropriate learning activities and develop strategies to obtain feedback on student learning. The lesson plan correlates with the teacher's philosophy of education, which is what the teacher feels is the purpose of educating the pupils.

A lesson plan can be considered as the description of the various things that need to be taught to reach the goal and acquire learning outcomes within the specified activities and time in the classroom. A daily lesson plan is developed by a teacher to guide class learning. Details will vary depending on the preference of the teacher, subject being covered, and the needs of the pupils. This practice gives the teacher greater assurance and greater freedom in teaching, provides for adequate lesson summaries, ensures a definite assignment for class, and availability of materials for lesson when needed, helps a teacher in sequencing of activities and tasks in teaching, helps to determine appropriate instruction aids, methods and references, stimulating the teacher to introduce pivotal questions and illustrations, establishing proper connections between different lessons or units of study, providing and encourages continuity in the teaching and learning process.

Lesson plan enables the teacher to know the most desirable type of teaching procedures and to prepare tests of progress and checks for judging the outcomes of instruction, preventing waste because it helps the teacher to be systematic and orderly, saving a teacher from haphazard teaching, helping a teacher to determine evaluation or assessment process i.e., how the learner shall be deemed to have acquired the desired chance of behaviour or mastery of content, /or skills and academic performance

2. Review Of Related Studies

Planning is done continuously in order to make a productive decision systematically while having prediction of it in future, organizing the required effort and resources needed in carrying out these decisions and measuring the result of these decision against the expectations [22].

The authors stated that the findings of the study revealed that a lesson plan can be considered as the description of the various things that need to be taught to reach the goal and acquire learning outcomes within the specified activities and time in the classroom [18].

The authors stated that in this way, the study concurred with the details that would vary depending on the preference of the teacher, subject covered, and the needs of the pupils, thereby gave the teacher greater assurance and greater freedom in teaching, provided for adequate lesson summaries, ensured a definite assignment for class, and availability of materials for lesson when needed, helped a teacher in sequencing of activities and tasks in teaching, helped to determine appropriate instruction aids, methods and references, stimulating the teacher to introduce pivotal questions and illustrations, establishing proper connections between different lessons or units of study, providing and encouraged continuity in the teaching and learning process [15].

The author stated that as such, the study established that although teachers in Government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District had participated in planning for their pupils, they had not done so in ways that were similar to those enumerated by [5].

The authors stated that this emphasized volunteering at school, communicating with teachers and other school personnel, assisting in academic activities at home and attending school events, with which they associated reciprocal benefits for the schools and for the teachers and, ultimately, good academic performance [11].

This means that, in discussing teachers' involvement in planning in Government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District and the pupils' academic performance, focus should be shifted from asking whether teachers have been participating in supporting school activities to asking as to how they have been involved and, ultimately, why they have not been participating in the planning [28].

The authors stated that specifically, on top of affirming relationship between the involvement of teachers in planning and the pupils' academic performance, the findings of the study are moving the foci of the discussion from sheer involvement to giving attention to the ways in which teachers are involved and why. Looked at broadly, and in the context of the study, which was concerned with the teachers' planning in Government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District and its relationship with pupils' academic performance, the findings of the study introduced a new dimension to the debate on teachers' involvement in Government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District. Hitherto, the focus was on the teachers and why they didn't fully participate in planning the fact that such involvement could enhance school effectiveness and, subsequently, academic performance [3]. The author stated that nevertheless, the study has highlighted the need for the school managers to also examine itself, specifically looking at what they could do to enhance teacher involvement in their planning.

Moreover, in settings where many teachers may not have undergone formal education themselves like in Namutumba district, the teachers may need special encouragement to be able to take up explicit roles in school management [19].

The authors stated that in particular, the findings show that those teachers in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District, are playing some roles in support of pupils' academic performance but are not as active in the planning to be given chance that they are willing but unable to participate when it comes to the planning. This means that rather than castigate teachers for non-involvement in planning of pupils' academic performance, it should be understood as to why the teachers do not participate in school planning [24].

The authors stated that therefore, teachers should be motivated and supported to plan for pupils in time thus improving their delivery of lessons. This will improve the performance of pupils because teachers will deploy relevant methods, give relevant content to the pupils. Then, pupils will be able to develop relevant competences thus good performance [35].

The authors stated that in this study, synthesized the findings of numerous studies and identified various factors that influence pupil achievement. Among these factors, effective instructional planning and teacher clarity emerged as influential components that positively impact pupil learning outcomes. [34].

The authors stated that a good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teachers Our Children Deserve. This report emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation and planning in promoting pupil achievement [8].

It highlights the need for teachers to have a deep understanding of the subject matter, use research-based instructional strategies, and engage in effective lesson planning to enhance pupil learning [12].

The authors stated that this emphasizes the significance of instructional planning and highlights strategies such as setting learning goals, designing coherent lessons, and employing formative assessment techniques to improve pupil achievement. It identified effective instructional planning as a key factor associated with high levels of pupil learning. [37].

The authors stated that the study also found that teachers who engage in effective instructional planning, including setting clear objectives and using varied instructional strategies, have a positive impact on pupil achievement. [1].

The authors stated that while these studies and reviews may not exclusively focus on the relationship between teachers' planning and pupils' academic performance, they collectively highlight the crucial role of instructional planning in promoting positive learning outcomes [10].

The authors stated that Effective planning involves setting clear learning goals, designing coherent lessons, selecting appropriate instructional strategies, and aligning assessments with instructional objectives.

3. Limitations

When conducting a study on teachers' planning and pupils' academic performance, the researcher considered the limitations below;

The number of teachers and pupils included in the study affected the generalizability of the findings. Being a small sample size, it didn't accurately represent the entire population, leading to limited applicability of the results.

There was a sampling bias because the selection of respondents was not random. For example, only government aided primary schools were included, the findings were not representative of the larger population. Assessing teachers' planning was challenging because it was a complex process that involved multiple variables. The researcher relied on self-report measures, observation, or documentation, but these methods did not capture the full extent of planning quality. Pupils' academic performance was influenced by various external factors, such as socioeconomic status, parental involvement, or school resources. It was challenging to isolate the influence of teachers' planning alone on academic outcomes, as other factors confounded the results. Conducting a study on teachers' planning and pupils' academic performance typically required a specific timeframe. However, academic outcomes developed over a more extended period, and a short study duration did not capture the full effects of teachers' planning on pupils' performance. Establishing a causal relationship between teachers' planning and pupils' academic performance was challenging.

4. Methodology

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design because the researcher intended to study a specific subset of the study population, collect and analyze data on involvement of teachers in the academic performance of pupils in government aided primary schools. This design was appropriate because it involved collecting data from a relatively large number of respondents in its natural setting (government aided primary schools), cheaply and in a short time (Creswell, 2003).

This survey design was chosen because of its flexibility in data collection as it allowed collection of both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time (Ahuja,2005). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted as a means of triangulation with the intention of getting quality and un-biased findings.

According to Barifaijo, Basheka & Oonyon (2010), triangulation is the process of mixing up methodologies to exploit the synergies offered by the different methodologies. Being academic research therefore, it was suitable to apply the mixed methods approach because it minimizes on the inadequacies of single methods in as the two methods complement and verify each other thus reducing biasness and provide more comprehensive information. The quantitative approach however took center stage in the study.

The target population for the area of study was attained from the government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District. This is because they were the only government aided primary schools in the area of study which were viable for data collection. The target population consisted of 8073 respondents among which were; head teachers, deputies, inspector of schools, heads of departments, parents and pupils. Head teachers were the overall managers of school affairs, deputies play supervisory role, Inspectors of schools had information regarding teachers and schools, heads of departments conduct direct interaction with teachers, and parents provided scholastic materials for their children while pupils were the beneficiaries.

The sample size constituted 367 respondents and it was determined using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table and it included employees in the categories of, 6 Head teachers, 6 Deputies, 1 inspector of schools, 24 Heads of departments, 165 parents and 165 Pupils.

The samples were selected via the following sampling techniques: Census Inquiry and Purposive Sampling

There were different methods used for data collection which were; survey, interview, publications etc. The studies made use of secondary data in collecting the required data from the sources. Secondary data was achieved through the use of structured survey questionnaires. Therefore, the survey questionnaires were given to respondents from the government aided primary schools and later were picked up by the researcher. Furthermore, Quantitative research procedure was used for the completion of this study in order to provide in-depth data analysis of the research problem from various sources.

Interview guides and questionnaires were the instruments used to collect and gather data.

5. Results

The study focused on the relevant background information about the respondents that participated in the study, relates to their gender; jurisdiction; level of educational attainment; and duration of teaching service experience, since they could influence the extent to which the respondents are knowledgeable about the variables that were involved in the study and the extent to which the data that they provided can be generalized to the population. Subsequently, information pertaining to these variables was elicited and the findings are summarized in table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents that participated in the study by Gender and Position.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	141	41.22%
	Female	201	58.78%
	Total	342	100%
Position	Head teachers	06	1.75%
	Deputies	06	1.75%
	Heads of Departments	24	7.02%
	Inspector of schools	01	0.3%
	Parents	140	40.94%
	Pupils	165	48.24%
	Total	342	100%

Source: Primary data (2023)

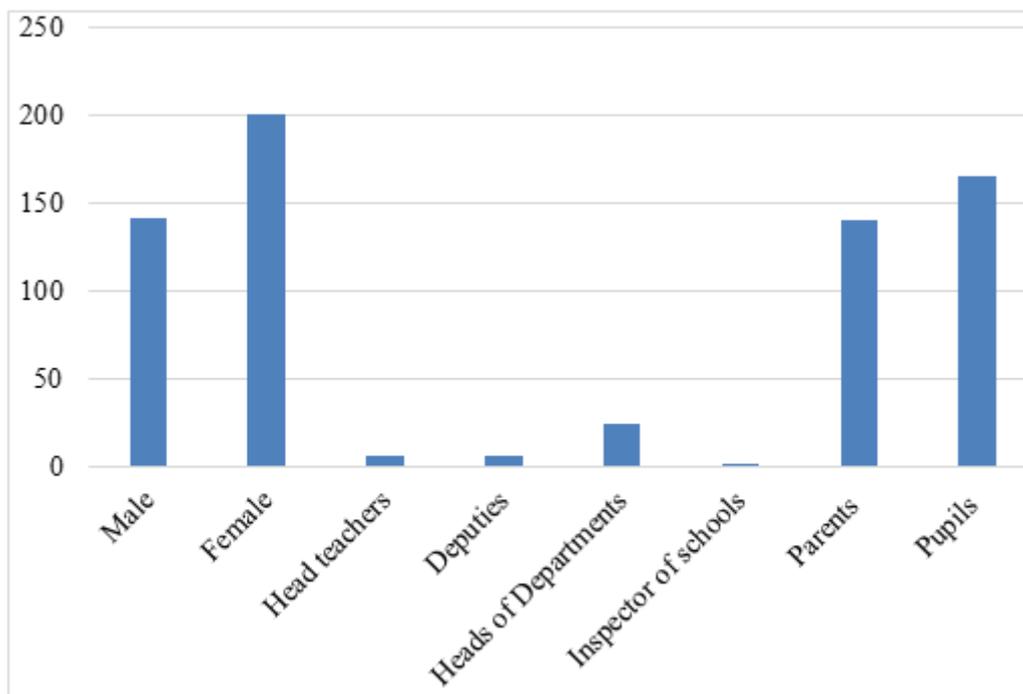


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by gender and position.

Table 2: Distribution of Teachers by Level of Education and Duration of Teaching Experience.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	%
Level of educational attainment	Diploma/certificate	25	67.56%
	Degree	10	27.02%
	Masters/postgraduate	02	5.42%
	Total	37	100%
Duration of education service experience	One to two years	00	00
	Two to three years	00	00
	Over three years	37	100%
	Total	37	100%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

The pupils’ interview guide also elicited information on their class and age groups because these variables could influence the pupils’ ability to supply credible information about the variables that were involved in the study.

In regards to the gender of respondents, 141 (41.22%) were male while 201 (58.78%) were female. This indicates that males were less in number than females. Results from studies show that females avail time for research as compared to males over untold factors.

In regards to the position of respondents that participated in the study indicate that 06 (1.75%) are head teachers, 06 (1.75%) are deputy head teachers, 24 (7.02%) are heads of department, 01 (0.3%) inspector of schools, 140 (40.94%) are parents, and 165 (48.24%) are pupils. Findings show that most respondents that participated to

ascertain the results are pupils who had a large percentage as compared to that of the parents, heads of department, head teachers, deputies and inspector of schools respectively.

In regard to the level of education attained, 25 respondents which is 67.56% have diplomas and certificates, 10 respondents which is 27.02% have degrees, 02 respondents which is 5.42% have masters/postgraduate. This totals to 37 respondents making 100% of education attainment. Findings also show that number of diploma/certificate holders is much bigger as compared to that of degree and masters/postgraduate respectively. This implies that the level of most respondents is still minimal as per the government policy of having all teaching staff have degrees. However, statistics indicate that respondents have greatly and positively impacted the academic performance of the pupils despite their level of education.

About the duration of education service experience, all respondents (37) (100%) have more than three years in the education service. This implies that their experience in education service was binding to give us conclusive research results more especially on involvement of teachers and their influence on the academic performance of pupils.

Questionnaires were distributed to heads of departments while interviews were conducted with the Head teachers, Deputies, Inspector of schools, Parents and Pupils. From the sample size of 367 there was a response of 100% and a non-response of 00% thus giving a response rate of 100% and a non-response rate of 15.15%

Table 3: Response rate for Respondents.

Category	Sample size	Tool used	Responses	%
Head teachers	06	Interview guide	06	100%
Deputies	06	Interview guide	06	100%
Heads of Departments	24	Questionnaire guide	24	100%
Inspector of schools	01	Interview guide	01	100%
Parents	165	Interview guide	140	84.85%
Pupils	165	Interview guide	165	100%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

The research also investigated the role played by teachers in conducting planned teaching-learning activities and how this influenced pupils’ academic performance. This is because it was necessary to investigate the ways through which the teachers’ planning influences pupils’ academic performance. Subsequently, the teachers and the academic staff that were involved in the study were asked to specify the various ways through which teachers’ planning influenced pupils’ academic performance. In the next subsections, the responses supplied are summarized according to the category of respondents.

In the questionnaires that were administered to the heads of departments, the latter were asked to specify teachers’ planning. In response, one of the heads of departments said,

“We do Sequencing of activities and tasks in teaching and this helps to determine appropriate instruction aids,

methods and references, stimulating the teacher to introduce pivotal questions and illustrations, establishing proper connections between different lessons or units of study, providing and encouraging continuity in the teaching and learning process.”

However, this respondent was hesitant to show whether the contribution would be submitted in time always. Another respondent said that,

“A lesson plan enabled the teacher to know the most desirable type of teaching procedures and to prepare tests of progress and checks for judging the outcomes of instruction, preventing waste.”

The foregoing transcriptions indicate that a dominant view among the teachers was that they generally do participate in planning. As such, the results indicate that, generally speaking, teachers do actively participate in the planning and this influenced academic performance of pupils.

The pupils were asked to specify the extent to which they would agree that their teachers participate in school meetings and cooperate with their teachers when they are called upon to do so. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Heads of Departments Responses on Planning and Pupils’ Academic Performance.

Responses	Ratings									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
I always begin a term with a complete scheme of work	03	12.5	14	58.33	00	00	07	29.17	00	00
I always make lesson plans before conducting a lesson	02	8.33	15	62.5	01	4.17	06	25	00	00
I always make detailed lesson notes	06	25	15	62.5	03	12.5	00	00	00	00
I always prepare instructional materials before conducting a lesson	02	8.33	17	70.83	04	16.67	01	4.17	00	00

Source: Primary Data (2023)

The results in Table 4 show that most of the heads of departments strongly agreed and agreed and expressed the view that they always begin a term with a complete scheme of work (70.83%) and that they participated in improving academic performance. 70.83% of the responses show that heads of departments strongly agree and agree that they are involved in making lesson plans before conducting a lesson. We can also see that the vast minority said that they are not sure (12.5%) that teachers always make detailed lesson notes and 4.17% disagreed that teachers did not prepare instructional materials before conducting a lesson.

During the interview process between the researcher and the area Inspector of Schools in- charge administration in Namutumba Town Council, he was asked “according to your inspection reports do teachers begin the term with a complete scheme of work?”

According to the area Inspector of Schools' response was that "no", minority of the teachers begin the term with complete schemes of work due to failure of head teachers to provide them with preparation materials in time (in the end of term meeting), this could give time to teachers who are not under holiday upgrading program.

He also noted that 8 out of 38 teachers which is 21.05% begin their term with a complete scheme of work. This was observed in school B. However, 23.36% of teachers in the remaining schools began the term with a complete scheme of work. He further responded that most of the teachers in these primary schools did not prepare lesson plans for all subjects that they teach but rather prepared at least lesson plans for two subjects out of the total subjects indicated on the time table that they teach.

In the interview that was done with the inspector of schools, he was asked whether teachers began the term with a complete scheme of work. In response to the research question, he said,

"No, few teachers begin the term with a complete scheme of work due to delayed provision of preparation materials by the head teachers in time and some of them during the time of preparing the scheme of work they are busy at school upgrading".

When asked whether teachers prepared lesson plans and notes before handling lessons;

"Teachers make lesson plans and notes", he noted.

However, he further said that;

"Some teachers only make lesson plans and notes for one out of the two subjects they teach for that particular day and some of them make lesson plans and notes covering 50% of what they teach for that particular day".

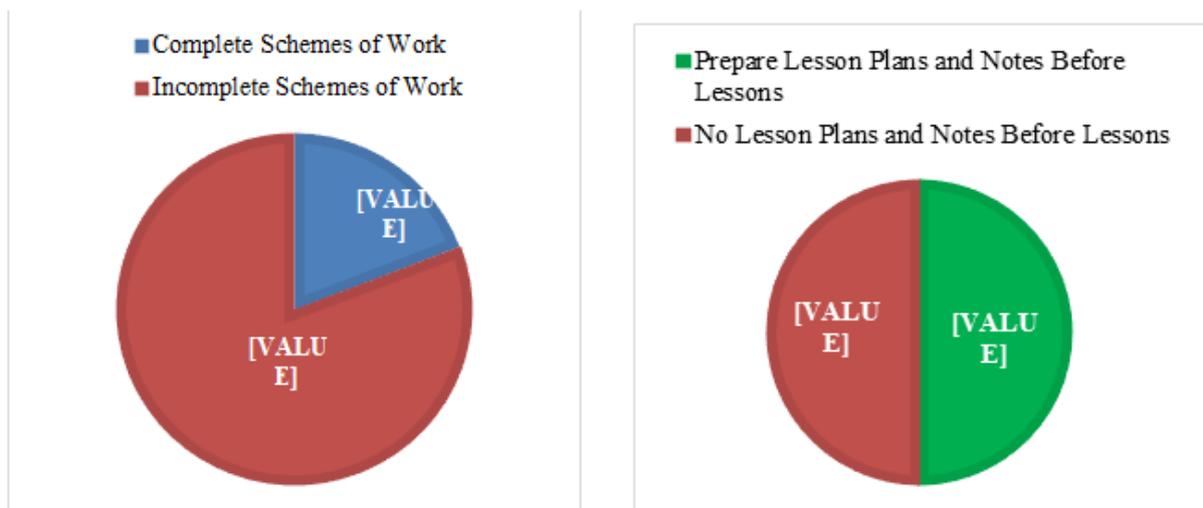


Figure 2-3: A summary of head teacher responses on teachers' planning and its influence on pupils' academic performance.

In the interview with the head teachers in these government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town council in response to “whether teachers began the term with a complete scheme of work?”. The responses are presented in the figure 2 – 3.

Findings demonstrated that 19.17% of teachers began a term with a complete scheme of work and 50% conducted lessons with prepared lesson plans and notes. Figure 2-3 indicates that a total of 28 (19.17%) teachers in these government aided primary schools began the term with a complete scheme of work and 118 (80.83%) teachers did not have complete scheme of work at the beginning of the term. However, the figure also indicates that 73 (50%) of the teachers prepared lesson plans and notes before handling lessons. This is reported by the head teachers in these government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town council, Namutumba District.

In the interview that was done with the head teachers, they were asked whether teachers began a term with a complete scheme of work. In response to the research question, one of the head teachers said;

“Few teachers begin a term with a complete scheme of work. This is because of the laziness and being occupied with upgrading courses program”.

When asked whether teachers prepared lesson plans and notes?

“Teachers prepare them but not for all the subjects they teach”, he answered.

According to the findings of the study, Deputy Head teachers’ responses where few teachers began the term with complete scheme of work and prepared lesson plans and notes before handling lessons as presented in the figure

1-3.

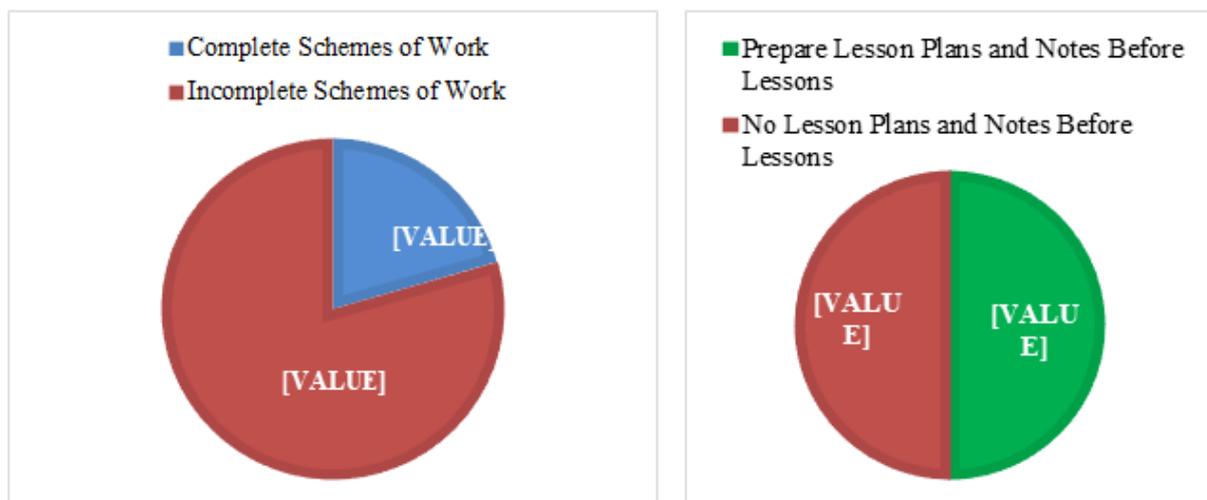


Figure 4-5: A summary of deputy head teachers’ responses on teachers' planning and its influence on pupils' academic performance.

Figure 4-5 indicates that a total of 30 (20.54%) teachers in the government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town Council began the term with a complete scheme of work. However, the figure also indicates that 73 (50%) of the teachers prepared lesson plans and notes before handling lessons according to the 6 deputy head teachers in these government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town council, Namutumba District.

During the interview with the deputy head teachers in these government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town council in response to whether teachers began the term with a complete scheme of work; One of the deputy head teachers said;

“A few of them begin a term with a complete scheme of work if provided with necessary materials”.

And when asked whether teachers prepared lesson plans and notes before handling lessons; One of the deputy head teachers said;

“They prepare lesson plans and notes but not consistently for everyday”.

In the interview with parents in regards to teachers' planning and pupils' academic performance most of them responded that most teachers cared for their pupils by helping their pupils plan for the weak subjects, parents also responded that these teachers also planned extra lessons at no cost that they taught their pupils, this also helped in the improvement of these pupils' academic performance and their ability to conceptualize what was taught in classrooms by their teachers.

During the interview between the parents and the researcher in response to who was their best performing teacher in the school? And why he/ she was their best teacher; One of the parents said;

“English teacher. She is approachable and gives respect to others, she also helps her weak learners a lot, she acts like a real parent, has good communication skills, she has mercy, and she is also caring.”

Another parent said;

“The mathematics teacher because he gives enough examples for my child, gives him enough homework questions that keep him busy, and he is committed and hardworking. However, other teachers also do well.

Parents also said that teachers in these schools acted wonderfully and also planned towards improvising on how to impact the improvement of their pupils' ability to master what was being taught in classroom and their academic performance in general there by citing that these teachers also provided scholastic materials to their pupils as a way to improve their performance and also planned for better teaching methods that could enable the pupils understand better and meet the teachers' expectations of better performance which positively impacted on the general academic performance of the pupils in these government aided primary schools in Namutumba Town council, Namutumba District.

During the interview between the pupils and the researcher in response to who was their best performing teacher in the school? And why he/ she was their best teacher? One of the pupils said;

“The teacher who teaches mathematics and he is my best teacher because he teaches fairly well, offers elaborate understandable examples in mathematics for me and my fellow pupils to understand and this has totally helped me and other pupils to keep the grades high, making us perform well in class and improving our general academic performance.”

Another pupil in her response said;

“The teacher who teaches social studies and he is my best teacher because he teaches well, he is not aggressive, he repeats what he has said and taught, he gives positive feedback and he encourages discussions.”

However, she also said;

“Other teachers are also good because they teach well, handle a lot of responsibility, handle pupils with care, they are humble with pupils and they are understanding.”

Most pupils said that teachers always planned how to improve their performance in the subjects they taught.

This was planned by twisting the teaching style from being a more serious way which always created fear among pupils and discouraged them from associating with what the teachers were teaching them to a more joking style of teaching.

This helped teachers to explain well the content that they taught these pupils, they also did plan guidance and counselling sessions for pupils to have them acquire self-esteem if they were to attain good results in class most especially in the weak subjects.

Teachers also planned and availed enough time for their pupils most especially for the poorly done subjects. This however helped them to create rapport with pupils promoting a good relationship between pupils and teachers. Teachers also advised pupils to have a planned agenda on how they revised books and how they could practice if they were to improve academically and if they were to also attain their general academic performance.

According to the above findings, only 20.54% of teachers began the term with complete schemes of work and only 50.00% of the teachers prepared complete lesson plans before lessons showing inadequate planning on the side of the teachers which negatively affected pupils' academic performance. That state of affairs where teachers fail to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans in advance has grossly led to poor performance in Namutumba Town Council. If academic performance is to improve in Namutumba Town Council, teachers should ensure that schemes are prepared in advance and lesson plans and notes are made on daily basis without pressure from the school administration.

6. Recommendations

- Government should make a policy directing teachers to participate in the planning and management of schools (on top of supporting the pupils in the ways that they were found to be supporting them).
- School managers should make it possible for them (teachers) to do so. This could be done through encouraging the teachers to take up specific roles in school management at classroom level.
- Each class should have parent representatives who will closely plan monitor and termly evaluate set programs with the guidance of teachers of the school.
- Administrators should clearly indicate the values of the teacher's involvement in school management and make it possible for them to participate in school managerial activities through conducting the managerial functions in which they are involved in ways and in modes of communication that the teachers comfortably understand.

7. Conclusion

While a study found a correlation between the two, it did not necessarily mean that planning directly caused academic success or failure. Other variables and factors were at play. The study's findings were influenced by the educational context, such as cultural or regional differences, curriculum variations, or teaching methods. These contextual factors limited the generalizability of the results to other settings.

However, the researcher used various research methodologies, employed diverse data collection methods, considered longitudinal studies to capture long-term effects, and account for confounding variables through statistical analysis or controlled experiments.

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