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RESEARCH ARTICLE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFETY STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GARISSA TOWNSHIP SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess factors influencing the implementation of safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa Township Sub- County. This study examined School safety Sub-committee and physical Infrastructure on the implementation of safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Sub- County. Survey research design was used in this study with 10 principals and 320 teachers in Garissa Township Sub- County as the target population. The sample comprised of 106 respondents with 10 principals and 96 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers while interviews were used to collect data from Principals. Data from questionnaires was analyzed using pearson r while that from interview guide was analyzed using verbatim. The results were presented using tables with help of statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 25. Using the Pearson correlation, the study found out that the Safety Sub-committee ($r= 0.280, p<0.01$) was statistically significant and thus showed positive relationship with the implementation of safety standards and guidelines. The research also found out that 60 % of the principals interviewed revealed that school safety sub-committee was instituted but not active while 40% of safety sub-committee did not exist in the schools. Using the Pearson correlation school physical infrastructure ($r=0.405, p<0.01$),] The study showed a significant relationship between school physical infrastructure and the implementation of safety standards in Garissa Township Sub-County. In the interview conducted 80% of principals agreed that the existing infrastructure are regularly maintained and refurbished through the government funds in every financial year through the maintenance and improvement funds. The study recommends that the Public Secondary Schools in Garissa Township Sub-County should review the implementation of School Safety standards and guidelines by ensuring that safety sub-committee is enhanced and ensure that there is sufficient and effective physical infrastructure in schools to promote conducive learning environment. The study would be beneficial to parents, schools and ministry of education officials in Kenya at large.

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Introduction:-

Safety standards are prescribed measures which are purposely designed to ensure safety of learning institutions are guaranteed. These measures may neutralize incidences which are detrimental and may result to bodily injury and psychological trauma (Republic of Kenya,2009). It is the ambition of every parent to enroll his or her child in a school that is conducive and free from any hazards soon as he or she reaches the age of going to school. If students' safety and security issues are not adequately addressed, reception of education is likely to suffer. Quality education can only be achieved in an environment that is conducive (Udali, 2020). Since school safety is a cornerstone to quality education, every government has introduced a strategy for the implementation of basic safety in the learning institutions (Koskey & Inyega,2018).

Background to the Study:-

Quality education cannot be attained without creating conducive environment for teaching and learning for both the teachers, learners and staff. The physical surroundings which include classes, dormitories, play grounds should be free from any hazard or threat that may directly or indirectly endanger the lives of learners (Nyabuti, 2018). The occasioned numbers of death incidences are as a result of fatalities in fires psychological distress, road traffic accidents, and interpersonal fights among other incidences. Schools are avenues to impart important skills and attitudes that allow learners to realize their potential and foster community development hence needs to be safe and secure (MOE,2008).Unsafe schools are associated with truancy, rise of indiscipline cases, escaping of learning activities and other immoral behaviors whereas the safe schools inculcate the learners good values and enhances quality education.

In the United States, the education policies framework guides the schools structural designs on its premises to ensure safety. The reinforcement of its policies are strictly adhered to with mechanisms which embodies evacuation procedures, fire precautions and provision of guidance and counseling in order to help the institutions of learning to predict and assess risk factors in the schools(KenaEt al., 2015). However, incidences of violence such as victimization of teachers, student bullying, institutional accidents, infernos, and drugs abuse and alcohol were underscored as being prevalent crimes in secondary schools in U.S.A(McFarland et al, 2019).

Australia has ratified legislations with detailed review regarding schools organizational policies regarding to health school feeding program, child abuse and improvement and maintenance of school important infrastructures (O'Halloran, 2017)).In the Spanish context, in recent years government attention has been directed on status of compliance on school safety to prevent risk at work environment. In this regard it adopted a comprehensive school safety program which is on course to its implementation process through safety Sub-committees which inculcates tradition of safety in institution of learning through creation of awareness among the children and school community (Wanderi,2018). However, according to Nthenya's (2011) analysis of secondary school management involvement on school safety and their execution of safety regulations, only 23% of schools have formed safety school sub-committees, and school safety is listed last among the concerns . According to Hirano (2009), the government of Rwanda established and enacted laws to protect the learners against abuses. Through the Ministry of Education safety sub-committee was introduced to ensure regulations are complied with in respect to provisions of important school infrastructure to protect teachers and learners from incidences of violence and sexual harassment. In Kenya,The Ministry of Education's guidebook for implementing school safety and regulations was published in 2008. This is because, as stated in the safety standards handbook, poorly built infrastructures such as classrooms, dormitories, washrooms, playgrounds, insufficient safety items, Poor safety facilities and incorrect positioning of desks and other equipment may cause damage to students (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the concerted effort of the government to arrest the situations of schools' spate, violence has continuously disrupted the learning, lives are lost and important schools infrastructure are damaged Kenya, school safety has become a problem that concerns the governments,parents,students and society.Reports from Garissa Township Sub-county on planning and school safety shows that many schools have safety sub-committee but they are not active and that they need to be sensitized and work on safety issues in school. Physical Infrastructure in most of the schools in Garissa Township Sub-county do not comply with the safety standard as recommended by the ministry of education.

Objectives of the Study:-

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the influence of safety Sub-committee on the implementation safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa township Sub- County.
2. To establish the influence of physical infrastructure on implementation of school safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa township Sub- County.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between school safety sub-committee and the implementation of the school Safety Standards and Guidelines in public secondary schools Garissa Township Sub- County

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between the physical infrastructure and the implementation of the school Safety Standards and Guidelines in secondary schools in Garissa Township sub-county.

Literature Review:-

School safety is a highly documented topic by governments and scholars in many parts of the world. The school safety sub-committee has an integral function to ensure school safety standards are implemented through strategies laid down on the safety manual (2008). The safety standard manual places the roles of ensuring school safety on a specified Safety sub-committee whose members are principals, deputy principals, Board of management chairperson, the teacher in-charge of safety, guiding and counseling teacher, and a teacher union representative. The school administration consists of board of management (BOM) who are obligated for the smooth running of the school programs. The school administration forms safety sub-committee as an avenue to deal with issues relating safety in the school, the sub-committee cordially work hand in hand with the school administration to ensure safety of the child is guaranteed (Migiro, 2012). Safety standard manual is instrumental to reinforcement of general safety of institutions of learning. They are however, mandated to efficient mobilization and utilization of the resource through budgetary plan as clearly stipulated in the M.O.E guidelines(MOE,2008). Safety sub-committees are tasked with the advisory on the situation of school safety from time to time through cordial engagement with school management and other stakeholders. Safety sub-committee ensures members are well conversant with safety procedures in the school with help of the school administration should provide the training such as fire drills, evacuation procedures and disaster preparedness skills (Gathoni,2013). The overall responsibility of school safety sub-committee includes supervision of schools safety and improve safety situation by giving out advisory on the lapses of safety that may arise in the event of emergency (Kirui, 2010).

The physical infrastructure is a determinant factor of whether or not a student receives a good education (Nyabuti,2018). The physical infrastructure in the school plays a vital role in provision of quality education because teaching and learning happens when the learners freely interact with school surroundings (Akande,1985). The success of the students is highly determined by the existence of good school infrastructure. However with constraints in the budget allocation, some of the schools' physical infrastructures remain wanting. Several studies exhibited that school infrastructure has a direct bearing to the learner's enrolment in the school. Most parents prefer schools which are conducive with the required facilities to motivate their children to continue with education therefore good school infrastructures enhances positively the status of education to a notch higher.

The dormitories and other important school physical infrastructures should be spacious and favourable enough to accommodate the existing school population without any unnecessary overcrowding (Wanderi,2018). Refurbishment and renovation of the school infrastructures depends on availability of funds from the ministry of education. School infrastructure should strictly adhere to the parameters of the safety standards manual which provides that any construction be approved by the public works (MoE, 2008). The school principals should adopt a strict policy to ensure reinforcement of safety in schools. The safety standards implementation requires competent teachers who are ready to provide technical and advisory assistance to the administration regularly (Muthiani,2016). The ministry of education has further instructions to all the educations officials to ensure holistic approach in the implementation of safety advisories to ensure the school management safeguards safety of learners through a regular routine visit to schools to assess the situations of safety (Otieno,2010).

Methodology:-

The study was carried out in Garissa Township Sub- County which is approximately 350km from Nairobi the capital city of Kenya. Survey research design was used in this study with the use of questionnaires and interviews for gathering information from members of the target group (Mugenda & Mugenda,1999). The target population comprised of 10 public secondary schools' principals and 320 teachers. The researcher used 30% of the target population to arrive at the sample. NinetySix (96) teachers were given the questionnaire and 10 principals were interviewed accordingly. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha index to test the reliability of questionnaires. The test gave an alpha index of 0.926 which showed high consistency (Kothari,2012). The data from the questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson r while that from interviews were analyzed using verbatim. The study variables, Means, standard deviations df and r critical were used in the analysis with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Results were presented using tables

The hypotheses were tested at an alpha index of 0.5 while r value was used to determine the relationships between variables (Gall,Gall& Borg, 2003).

Validity and Reliability of The Research Instruments

The validity of the instruments was done by guidance from experts in the area of educational management. The study used Cronbach 's alpha index to test reliability of the questionnaires. The data for reliability testing was collected from (12) teachers and from 2 schools from Tana River a neighbouring county which shares similar characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda,2008).The items analysis yielded a value of 0.971 which showed a strong internal consistency thus the instruments were used according to Orodho (2005) and Kothari (2012) a correlation coefficient (r) of about 0.7 is considered threshold for reliability.

Results and Discussions:-

The response rate was 10(100%) of the principals that were interviewed while 86(89.58%) teachers responded by returning the filled questionnaires.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between School Safety Sub-committee and the implementation of the school Safety Standards and Guidelines in public secondary schools Garissa Township Sub-county.

The researchers computed the correlation analysis to evaluate the relationship between safety sub-committee (Mean= 2.49; SD =0.94) and the implementation of safety standards and guidelines (Mean =2.51; SD=0.96). The computation showed that r of 0.280 and P-Value of 0.009.This therefore depicts that there was a significant relationship between the two variables, $r = (86) = 0.280, P < 0.5$ as illustrated in table 1. With a P-Value lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05 based on the result therefore, null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is significant relationship between the safety Sub-committee and implementation of school safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa township Sub- County. This is in line with Migiro (2012) who found out that safety Sub-committee coordinates safety issues and provide the technical support in the execution of safety standards guidelines. The safety sub-committee will always involve the staff members in the preparations of safety plan and approval of the budgetary allocation (Kirui,2010). Kitheka (2010) however, maintains that, constituted safety sub-committee whose functions and mandates clearly spelt out specially their roles should include inspections, assessments and evaluation of the risk factors may prevent occurrence of disasters in the school

Table 1:- Pearson's Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between the Safety Sub-committee and Implementation of School Safety Standards and Guidelines in Public Secondary Schools in Garissa Township Sub-County.

Correlations			
		Implementation of safety standards & guidelines	school safety sub-committee
Implementation of safety standards & guidelines	Pearson Correlation	1	0.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.009
	N	86	86
school safety sub-committee	Pearson	0.280**	1

	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	
	N	86	86
P < 0.5 ; df = 84; α = 0.5			

Interviews from 6 principals who represented 60% of total interviewed established that Safety sub-committee was instituted in the school but they remained dysfunctional. The principals noted that safety sub-committees were rarely involved in safety situations in the school, despite the requirement of the ministry of education. They further indicated that little is done to ensure the safety sub-committee performs its mandate effectively and efficiently. Principals are the only people who make decisions on safety matters. Four (4) out of 10 principals which represent 40% of the schools indicated that safety sub-committee do not exist which means there is an existing gap on the implementation of safety standards in those schools. In those schools which have not formed Safety sub-committee the principals have taken the roles of the safety matters in the school with little consideration on the formation of safety sub-committee which contravenes safety standards manual (2008). On the other hand, 6 out of 10 which represent the majority of the schools reported that safety sub-committee does not meet to deliberate safety concern in the schools meeting. Safety sub-committee need to meet to strategize and forge a head resolutions on safety preparedness which informs the school administration on the where to prioritize on the course of action as far as safety is concerned. The school safety sub-committee within the schools should discuss certain pertinent issues including the security guards, training of teachers on safety preparedness, procurement of safety equipment.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between physical infrastructure and implementation of school safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa township Sub- County.

The researcher tested a relationship between the physical infrastructure (Mean = 2.96; SD = 1.03) and the implementation of safety standards and regulations in public secondary schools (Mean = 2.51; SD = 0.96). The analysis gave an r of 0.405 and P - value of 0.00, as illustrated in table 2. With a $df=86$ the analysis yielded an r of 0.405 and a P -value of 0.00 at an alpha level 0.5. This therefore indicated that with P – value < 0.05 of the chosen alpha, the Null hypothesis was rejected thus there is significant relationship between physical infrastructure and the implementation of safety standards and regulations in public secondary schools in Garissa Township Sub-County. The finding is in concurrence with Akande (1985) who argued that physical infrastructure in schools play a vital role in the provision of quality education because teaching and learning take place when the learners freely interact with their environment.

Table 2:- Pearson's Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between the Physical infrastructure and Implementation of School Safety Standards and Guidelines in Public Secondary Schools in Garissa Township Sub-County.

Correlations			
		Implementation of safety standards & guidelines	physical infrastructure
Implementation of safety standards & guidelines	Pearson Correlation	1	.405**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	86	86
physical infrastructure	Pearson Correlation	.405**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	86	86
P < 0.5 ; df = 84; α = 0.5			

The physical infrastructure being an important component in teaching and learning 80% of the principals agreed that existing infrastructure are regularly maintained and refurbished through a government funds in every financial year. According to principals, the ministry of education introduced funds in 2018 which totals to Kenya shillings 5000 per learner. Two (2) (20%) out of 10 (100%) school's principals reported that classes had some cracks, dusty floor and rusted roof tops which need refurbishment. However, 2(20%) out 10(100%) principals reported that there existed semi-infrastructure in the school that were used as stores and school bakeries. 80% of the schools had permanent infrastructures. Six (6) (60%) out 10(100%) school principals responded that the classes which is the

academic areas lacked fire extinguishers and those that existed were not repaired. Four (4) (40%) out of 10(100%) principals indicated that some had fixed fire extinguishers in the administration block and the school laboratory.

Conclusion:-

The objectives of this study were to find out the relationship between safety sub-committee and physical infrastructure and implementation of safe standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Garissa Township sub-county. To assess these phenomena questionnaires and interview were used to collect data from 96 teachers and 10 school principals. The analysis of data was done using the Pearson correlation with the help of statistical package for the social science (SPSS) software and the interviews were analyzed verbatim. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between safety sub-committee and physical infrastructure and the implementation of safety standards and guidelines. However, the study further reveals that the school safety sub-committee whose roles are clearly spelt out and coordinates with various levels of school safety enhances the implementation of safety standards and guidelines. On the other hand, the school infrastructure should adhere to the Ministry of Education guidelines (2008) which stipulates the structures and building specifications.

Recommendations:-

School safety sub-committee and physical infrastructure and their relationship to the implementation to safety standards and guidelines in Garissa Township sub-county was established in this study and these recommendations were made; -Firstly, it was recommended that the safety sub-committee be empowered in terms of resources by the school board of management and the principals to ensure efficient and effective implementation of safety standards. Secondly the role of school safety sub-committee should be clear to avoid conflicts of roles. Thirdly the study recommends that the public schools in Garissa sub-county should ensure that there is enough physical infrastructure to enable the implementation of safety standards and guidelines and lastly the schools should always refurbish and renovate the schools' important infrastructures to enhance safety in both learners and staff.

Suggestions for Further Research:-

To enhance the scope of the study similar findings can be carried out in the private secondary schools to ascertain the implementation of safety standards and guidelines. The same study can be replicated in other counties to get different perspectives on safety standards and regulations. Study can be carried out on the influence of the following on the implementation of safety standards and guidelines in regard to Safety sub-committee and school physical infrastructure.

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