(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

Political instability and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

The researcher investigated relationship between political instability and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to examine relationship between civil unrest and government- oppositional group conflicts, and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed correlation research design. The study sample size was 331 respondents comprising 52 teachers and 279 learners selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques respectively. The data collection tools were questionnaires for both learners and teachers. Researcher ascertained research tools validity by getting relevant information on specific tools from experts and professionals in ministry of education. The reliability of tools was determined by cronbanch alpha co-efficient; which computed to 0.73. The descriptive statistics was presented in frequencies and percentages; while inferential statistics was analyzed using regression statistic technique. The study reviewed that civil unrest has significant relationship with academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The ggovernment-oppositional group conflict has significant relationship with academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. Following study findings, the researcher concluded that there was significant relationship between political instability and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The researcher therefore recommended that ministry of education should actively involve ministry of defense to counter civil unrest in the country to minimize cases of poor academic achievements. Government should collaborate with opposition party to reduce cases of government-opposition group conflicts. The study may form bases for further studies in related field.

Keywords: Political instability; Civil unrest; Completion rate; School performance; Internal conflicts; Government-opposition group conflict

1. Introduction

Political instability refers to the destabilization of governments through armed conflicts, and terrorist attacks. Compared with other sub-Saharan African countries, East African countries have been characterized over the last several decades by an intensification of internal armed conflicts, manifested in terrorist acts perpetrated by armed gangs, rebel groups, religious extremists and tribal conflicts. A study by Manzoor (2020) on implications of armed conflict on academic achievements of adolescent argued that various crises are responsible for the loss of human lives, the destruction of numerous socio-economic investments and the forced displacement of populations both within and outside a given country. Political instability has greatly influenced knowledge of production through the effect it has on the factors of knowledge production. Political instability through internal conflict results to the physical destruction of the educational facilities and equipment necessary for knowledge production. Many of the educational infrastructures and equipment that are not destroyed are used by the belligerents to set up logistical bases or shelters for civilians. Political instability is reduces the construction and equipping of new infrastructure, not only because part of public social spending is being redirected towards security spending.

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According to Adeyanju (2013) on political upheaval and inconsistent policies as predictors of poor academic performance in Ogun state public secondary school, Nigeria claimed that intellectual capital involves human capital, relational capital and structural capital that affect many university qualities. Political stability affects university quality in many countries. The organization may be of high quality if it utilizes intellectual capital such as human capital. Environmental uncertainties due to political stability correlate the quality of education. Reviewing works in educational improvements. Shemyakina (2011) suggested that the effect of armed conflict on accumulation of schooling identified basic contextual factors in the immediate environment that challenge educational structures that affect the functioning of educational systems and reforms. Factors such as cultural-social aspects of national culture and economic aspects regarding financial ability of the state and the population shifts and aspects of political culture are destabilized by corruption in the political system. States with enough political stability may adapt to economic pressures coming from a global market; so their national educational systems go through relevant adjustments in a simpler way. Some states enforce more strictly the rights to free education. Some have more meticulous at performing detailed strategic procedures like developing infrastructures, appointing better teacher and training them with high-level standards and trust in the government.

A study by Poirier (2012) on the effects of armed conflict on schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa pinpointed that political unrest continues to exist and is expected to worsen in near future. The unrest has spread far beyond the political arena, penetrating the educational system. Many students' academic aims are impacted as psychological well-being. Political parties sometimes announce nationwide blockades. The peace processions take place anything peaceful and challenges of vandalism in public transportation. An increase in corruption reduces educational enrollment by hundred percent. Political stability plays a more significant role in improving educational quality than a country's per capita. Political instability is often characterized by repeated government changes, civil unrest and widespread corruption. It is a barrier to social progress and one of its most challenging affects the education sector.

According to Mulkeen (2006) on teachers for rural schools reviewed that association for the development of education in Africa political instability can lead to disruption of educational infrastructure and facilities. Schools and universities may be damaged during periods of unrest. For example, the prolonged conflict in Kenya resulted in the devastation of numerous educational institutions, forcing learners to abandon studies. Unpredictability in government leadership can results in abrupt changes in education policy, leading to inconsistency and confusion within the education system. Collier (2009) study on the economic consequences of civil war claimed that political instability typically diverts government attention and funding away from education. When a country is grappling with civil strife, frequent regime changes, limited fiscal resources are often reallocated to military expenditures, depriving the education sector of necessary investments. Underfunding manifests in various forms, like shortage of quality teaching/ learning materials, poorly trained educators and inadequate educational facilities.

A study by O'Malley (2007) on education under attack argued that the psychological impact from political instability on students and teachers cannot be underestimated. Fear can create an environment that is not conducive to learning. Learners may suffer from anxiety and depression; which may affect their academic performance and overall well-being. Teaching staff often face threats to safety, leading to high turnover rates and a lack of experienced educators. For example, in regions where political unrest is rampant, teacher absenteeism rates are significantly higher, directly impacting the quality of education delivered. However, it is important to acknowledge that in some rare cases, political instability may prompt positive changes in education. For example, mass uprisings may lead to educational reforms aimed at addressing systemic inequities. Akresh (2008) study on armed conflict and schooling reviewed that political instability has a profound detrimental effect on the quality of education. From disrupting school infrastructure and reallocating crucial teaching/learning resources to causing psychological strain on learners and teachers, the adverse impacts are substantial and far reaching. It is good for governments to strive for political stability to safeguard and facilitate educational systems worldwide.

According to Justino (2011) on violent conflict and human capital accumulation pinpointed that some educational institutions underestimate the current political climate and opt to keep basic schools and universities open, despite the significant risk that it poses to learners commuting to and from campus. The continual blockades have transformed typical commute to school into a nightmare, fraught with concern for their personal safety. The political instability situation not only interferes with academic course completion and the duration of the academic calendar, but also has broader implications. Maury (2019) study on school libraries, digital and innovation disclosed that some learners often view the return of online learning and exams as a blessing in disguise, the uncertainty and last-minute changes to class schedules have caused disruptions for many students. The more of distractions of their living places may enable learners find the online learning experience to be mediocre at best. The current political instability in Kenya is a challenge that jeopardizes educational pursuits. It is unacceptable that learners find themselves trapped in the crossfire yet again in

another election year. The political leaders are responsible for managing the situation and prioritize the safety and education of the learners.

A study by Irshadullah (2016) on effects of terrorism on secondary school students in argued that armed conflicts have a negative influence on school results through the demotivation they cause among students and the increase in dropouts from education systems. Many students are withdrawn from schools and forcibly recruited by rebel groups, where they are used as fighters, cooks, messengers or sexual objects. The phenomenon exists to reduce school enrolment rates and increase drop-out and failure rates in conflict zones. There have also been a number of deaths of pupils during attacks on schools by belligerents. Armed conflict also creates an atmosphere of fear and terror that prevents many children from continuing to attend school. Parents are forced to keep them at home or move them to safe areas where there are often no schools. Poirier (2012) on the effects of armed conflict on schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa found that the exposure of students to armed conflict also causes serious psychological effects and trauma that persist after the war and affect their performance at school. Many learners whose parents have died in the attacks are unable to attend school due to a lack of financial resources. Several students are forced by certain households to stop studies to work to replace parents who have died, been injured, or become unfit for work.

According Collier (2009) on the economic consequences of civil war suggested that political instability can leads to looting, burning, bombing and even anarchic occupation of schools by belligerents. Teachers are channeled through political instability which affects school performance. The demotivation of teachers is be acerbated by abuses committed against teaching staff, including torture, rape, and even murder. The resulting loss of human life is a loss of human capital, especially as the incidence of casualties in armed conflict seems to have shifted from combatants to civilians. Roubini (2008) study on political instability and economy growth concluded that wars lead to a substantial reduction in investment spending in social sectors such as education in favor of military spending, thus reducing the accumulation of human capital by individuals. The reduction in educational spending in times of conflict is attributable to the difficulty of collecting budget revenues in a given country. Armed conflict may increase economic risk and destroys production tools, leading to closure of many existing businesses and discouraging potential investors. Many parents find themselves unemployed, unable to cover the costs of children's education.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Political unrest continues to persist and situation expected to worsen in near future. The political conflict has spread far beyond the political arena, penetrating deep into roots of education in Kenya. Therefore, the researcher intended to investigate the relationship between political instability and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.2. General objective

To determine relationship between political instability and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

1.2.1. Specific objectives

- To examine relationship between civil unrest and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya
- To determine relationship between Government- oppositional group conflict and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

1.3. Study hypothesis

- H_0^1 Civil unrest has no statistical significant relationship with academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya.
- $H0^2$ Government- oppositional group conflict has no statistical significant relationship with academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.4. Conceptual Framework

The emergence of political instability as indicated by civil unrest and government- oppositional group conflict seemed to have a direct relationship with academic achievement indicated by learners' drop out and poor transition from primary to secondary. The relationship between independent variable and dependent variable are extraneously influenced by government influence.
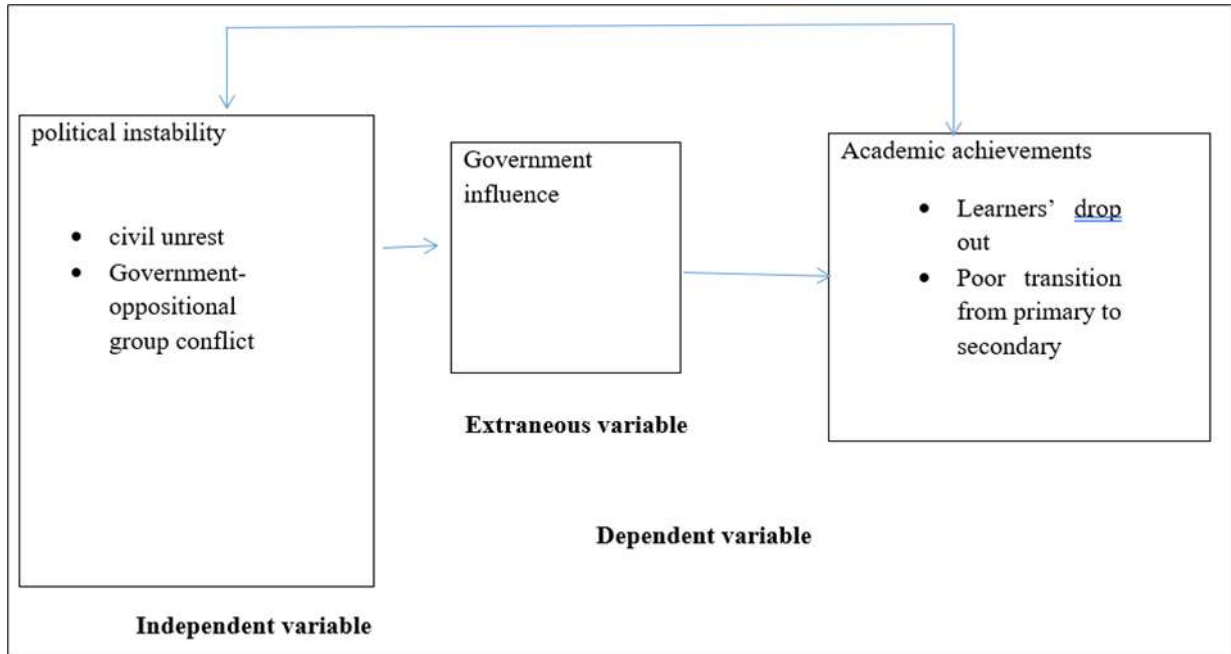
Figure 1 Relationship between political instability and academic achievement

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research design

The study utilised correlational research design. Correlational design provides insight into complex real world of relationship; by helping researcher develop theories and makes predictions on causal relationship.

2.2. Study population procedure and sample size

2.2.1. Sample size

The researcher utilised Krejcie and Morgan table for determining sample size (1970) to establish sample sizes. According to Krejcie and Morgan table, the sample size of 331 respondents was appropriate to represent a study population of 2400 individuals. Therefore the sample size of the study was 331 respondents comprising 52 teachers and 279 learners selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques respectively.

2.3. Research instruments

2.3.1. Questionnaires

The researcher employed questionnaires to both teachers and learners. Researcher made questionnaire was most efficient since it is a standardized measuring tool where questions are phrased exactly the same way for all respondents.

2.4. Data Collection Procedure

First researcher conducted pilot study in Mombasa County. Then, researcher employed research assistors. The researcher conducted actual study in Nairobi County; by collecting data starting with learners and teachers; using researcher made questionnaires.

2.5. Validity and Reliability of the Study

Researcher ascertained research tools validity by getting relevant information on specific tools from experts and professionals in ministry of education. The respondents were given questions with similar characteristics; basing on specific objectives of the study. The reliability of tools was determined by cronbanch alpha co-efficient; which computed to 0.73.

2.6. Ethical Considerations of Study

The researcher maintained ethical issues by adhering to assured confidentiality, non-discrimination, anonymity to maintain privacy of participation in the study.

2.7. Data Analysis

The researcher quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed data. Regression technique was used to estimate relationship between variables. Qualitative data was analyzed in frequencies and percentages. Data processing adopted statistical package for social sciences software version 26.

3. Results and Discussion

The researcher presented responses from respondents in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4. The responses were rated as: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD).

Table 1 Teachers responses on civil unrest and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Internal learning disrupts learners progress in schools	16	30.8	21	40.4	7	13.5	2	3.8	6	1.5
Political tribal conflicts discourages learning in schools	23	44.5	13	25.2	7	13.5	4	7.7	5	9.6
Political civil crises responsible for death of teaching staff.	27	51.9	12	23.1	6	11.5	4	7.7	3	5.8
Political armed conflicts lead to destruction of learning institutions	15	28.5	19	36.5	10	19.2	5	9.6	3	5.8
Civil conflicts affects Quality of university education	17	32.7	24	46.2	5	9.6	3	5.8	3	3.8

The information shown in table 1, majority of the teachers (40.4%) agreed that internal armed conflicts disrupt learners' progress in schools. Several teachers (44.2%) strongly agreed that political tribal conflicts discourage learning in schools. A good number of teachers (51.9%) strongly agreed that political civil crises are responsible for death of teaching staff. The findings concurred with concepts of Manzoor (2020) who noted that various crises were responsible for the loss of human lives, the destruction of numerous socio-economic investments and the forced displacement of populations both within and outside a given country. Majority of teachers (36.5%) agreed that political armed conflicts lead to destruction of learning institutions. The findings concurred with concepts of Mulkeen (2006) who noted that association for the development of education in Africa political instability can lead to disruption of educational infrastructure and facilities. Schools and universities may be damaged during periods of unrest. Several teachers (46.2%) agreed that civil conflicts affects quality of quality of university education.

Table 2 Learners' responses on government - opposition body conflicts and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Anti-government conflicts bars educational progress.	112	401	90	32.3	36	12.9	21	7.5	20	7.2
Government-opposition group conflicts disrupt educational infrastructure	39	14.0	52	18.6	86	30.8	59	21.1	43	15.4
Anti-government crisis lead to shortage of quality teaching/ learning resources.	61	21.9	79	28.3	59	21.1	44	15.8	36	12.9
Government-opposition group conflicts create un-conducive environment for learning	89	31.9	73	26.2	40	14.3	30	1.8	47	16.8
Teaching staff feels insecure from government-opposition group conflicts	52	18.6	86	3.08	71	24.4	47	16.8	23	8.2
Anti-government conflicts increases learners drop out from school	85	30.5	55	19.7	62	22.2	49	17.6	28	10.0

The information shown in table 2, majority of the learners (40.1%) agreed that anti-government conflicts bars educational progress. Several learners (30.8%) remained neutral on idea that government-opposition group conflicts disrupt educational infrastructure. A good number of learners (28.3%) agreed that anti-government crisis lead to shortage of quality teaching/ learning resources. Several learners (31.9%) strongly agreed that government-opposition group conflicts create un-conducive environment for learning. Majority of learners (30.8%) agreed that teaching staff feels insecure from government-opposition group conflicts. A good number of learners (30.5%) strongly agreed that anti-government conflicts increases learners drop out from school. The findings concurred with concepts of Irshadullah (2016) who noted that armed conflicts have a negative influence on school results through the demotivation they cause among students and the increase in dropouts from education systems.

Table 3 Relationship between civil unrest and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
0.113a	0.015	0.012	0.015	3.137	1	330	0.041
F (1, 330) = 3.137, P< 0.05 (Hypothesis Rejected).							

a Predictors: (Constant), Civil unrest

From table 3, since p-value (0.041) is less than critical value (0.05); the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and therefore went for alternative hypothesis that stated that there is significant relationship between civil unrest and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study findings supported ideas of Poirier (2012 who reviewed that the unrest has spread far beyond the political arena, penetrating the educational system. Many students' academic aims are impacted as psychological well-being.

Table 4 Relationship between government - opposition body conflicts and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya

R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
0.113a	0.013	0.010	0.013	4.142	1	330	0.044
F (1, 330) = 4.142, P< 0.0 5(Hypothesis Rejected).							

a Predictors: (Constant) Government- oppositional group conflict

From table 4, since p-value (0.044) is less than critical value (0.05); research rejected the null hypothesis and therefore went for alternative hypothesis that stated that there is significant relationship between government- oppositional group conflict and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study findings supported ideas of O'Malley (2007) on education under attack argued that the psychological impact from political instability on students and teachers cannot be underestimated. Fear can create an environment that is not conducive to learning. Learners may suffer from anxiety and depression; which may affect their academic performance and overall well-being.

3. Conclusions

Following study findings, the researcher concluded that:

- Civil unrest has significant relationship with academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya.
- Government- oppositional group conflict has significant relationship with academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Therefore, there was significant relationship between political instability and academic achievement in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that:

- Ministry of education should actively involve ministry of defense to counter civil unrest in the country to minimize cases of poor academic achievements.

- Government should collaborate with opposition party to reduce cases of government-opposition group conflicts.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of ethical approval

The was ethically approved by national council of science, technology and innovation-Kenya

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participant included in the study.

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