Introduction

Teachers have a tremendous impact on students’ academic achievement, and they vary greatly in their effectiveness (Rockoff, 2004; Weisenberger, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). There is no doubt that most teachers in schools are effective and are committed to their students and profession, and are trying their best to meet students’ needs every day. Research has shown that effective teachers can lead all students to learn, even those from poor families or who have uninvolved parents (Stronge, 2010). But, the key question is, “If most teachers are effective, does it matter that a small percentage of them are ineffective?” The answer to this question is that yes, it matters a lot because one ineffective teacher inhibits the learning of a large number of students over time. Teachers are responsible for anywhere from 20 to 200 students each year depending on the school size, class size, and school level (whether primary or secondary). From these estimates it is plausible that an ineffective teacher can depress the achievement and inhibit the learning of many students during the course of his or her career (Chait, 2010).

The problems posed by ineffective teachers to students are numerous, and some of the most vivid and influential memories that students have come from devastating incidents with ineffective teachers in a hostile learning environment (Walls, Nardi, von Minden, & Hoffman, 2002). An ineffective teacher makes it difficult for students to learn or decreases their desire to learn by a lack of enthusiasm for the subject, by a hostile or inappropriate behavior toward the students, by a failure to maintain discipline in the class, or by unfairly preferring some students to others. Research findings based on value-added scores of students in schools in the United States indicates that three straight years of the most ineffective teachers produce children who average the 45th percentile nationally. By comparison, three straight years of the most effective teachers produce children that average the 95th percentile. Furthermore, research shows that students do not “make it up” the next year. The damage of an ineffective teacher lingers, even if the student has more effective teachers in the following years (Lasagna, Laine, & Behrstock-Sherrat, 2011; Shearon, 2001).
There is evidence in the literature that governmental and nongovernmental organizations all over the world are groping for solutions to ineffective teaching. For example, the U.S. government is hoping to solve the problem by identifying ineffective teachers for assessment, assistance, and support, and then dismissing them if they do not improve (Jerald, 2009). However, research shows that it is difficult to accurately identify ineffective teachers, that teachers are rarely dismissed from employment for ineffective teaching, and that dismissal of ineffective teachers as a means of improving students’ academic performance has received least attention and mixed reactions. Teacher unions in particular are against dismissal of ineffective teachers because they believe that poor academic performance among students is a complex problem that cannot be attributed to ineffective teaching only. They also argue that there are no proper measures in place to identify ineffective teachers (Coggshall, 2009).

The proper documentation of the characteristics of ineffective teachers is a significant step toward identification of teachers who possess the characteristics so that they can be assisted to improve or advised to discontinue discharging their teaching duties. The identification of ineffective teachers is a worthwhile exercise because poor academic performance is common among secondary school students in many countries including Kenya. For instance, in the year 2010, a total of 307,171 candidates sat for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination. A small number of this candidates—97,134 (32%)—performed well and obtained grade C+ and above, and therefore qualified to pursue university education. A large number of the candidates—201,037 (68%)—performed poorly, got grades C and below, and did not meet the minimum university entry requirement (Siringi, 2011). There is no doubt that ineffective teaching is one of the key factors contributing to this poor academic performance among secondary school students in Kenya.

One of the things educators know for sure about education is that there is nothing anyone can do to improve student achievement that is as important as providing effective teachers (Chance, 2008). They also agree that every student has a right to highly effective teachers and there is no justification whatsoever for retaining ineffective teachers in schools who are doing more harm than good to innocent students (Acikgoz, 2005). The qualities of effective teachers have been investigated by several scholars and are fairly well known. For instance, Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (2004) reported that effective teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects, caring toward their students, fair and respectful to students; have positive attitudes toward teaching as a profession; are sociable in class; and are motivating to learners. Okpala and Ellis (2005) reported that effective teachers are caring, encouraging, approachable, enthusiastic, respectful, knowledgeable, empathetic, passionate, and having a sense of humor. Walls et al. (2002) conducted a qualitative study in which they examined the qualities of effective teachers and the characteristics of ineffective teachers. Their findings on the qualities of effective teachers agree with those reported by Okpala and Ellis, and by Stronge et al. They reported that there are five characteristics of ineffective teachers, which are as follows: partial in treating students, disorganized, less resourceful, discourage students from asking questions, and authoritarian in class.

The researchers of this study felt that the five characteristics of ineffective teachers as reported by Walls et al. (2002) and the four characteristics of ineffective teachers (yelling at students, giving empty threats, failing to give prompt feedback, and giving too much work to students) reported by Horton (2009) were not exhaustive perhaps because they involved university students as the participants in their studies. The purpose of this study therefore was to reexamine the characteristics of ineffective teachers at the secondary school level of education. The study sought to identify all aspects of ineffective teaching that persist in individuals even after they have been trained and qualified as teachers. The ineffective teachers whose characteristics were described by the participants in this study were all trained and qualified as secondary school teachers in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The single objective of this study was to identify the salient characteristics of trained ineffective secondary school teachers in Kenya. From this objective, one research question was posed and answered:

Research Question: What do secondary school students believe are the salient characteristics of trained ineffective teachers?

This question was answered by investigating the perception of secondary school students on the characteristics of their ineffective (worst) teachers. The method used in this study is explained in the following section.

Method

A qualitative research method was used in this study because it was most appropriate in the generation of rich narrative data from students on the characteristics of trained ineffective teachers in secondary schools in Kenya. This method involved collection and analysis of nonquantitative data. Qualitative data collection methods often include open-ended interviews, direct observations, focus group discussions, and written documents such as open-ended questionnaires (Bowen, 2005). In our study, the participants wrote their descriptions of the characteristics of ineffective teachers on blank sheets of paper that were provided. The data-gathering method was chosen to be a written document because open-ended, face-to-face interviews carry the potential of the participants feeling pressured, intimidated, or in some way stressed due to the presence of the interviewer (Jahangiri &
Mucciolo, 2008). The participants of this study were adolescent secondary school students who could have been intimidated if they were asked by an interviewer to identify a worst teacher and verbally describe his or her characteristics. Moreover, this study was conducted during school hours when involving students in time-consuming open-ended interviews was considered prohibitive by the researchers.

Within the qualitative research method, the study adopted phenomenological design because the researchers were interested in the perceptions of participants to understand ineffective teaching as a phenomenon. According to Brumfield (2006), perceptions of individuals on a phenomenon can be best investigated through phenomenological studies. Miller and Salkind (2002) described phenomenology as a method that seeks to describe the experiences of individuals who are intimately involved or confronted with a concept or a phenomenon. The participants of this study were secondary school students who were intimately involved with ineffective teachers in class. The students have had firsthand experiences with ineffective teachers, and they could vividly describe the conduct of these teachers. They were therefore chosen for participation in this study because they were in the best position to describe the characteristics of these teachers. In short, the design enabled the researchers to capture how secondary school students perceive, describe, and judge ineffective teaching in their classrooms.

**Population and Setting**

The research population comprised Form 3 secondary school students drawn from four provinces (Nyanza, Western, Rift Valley, and Nairobi) out of the eight provinces in Kenya. Nyanza, Western, and Rift Valley are provinces in the western part of Kenya, whereas Nairobi, which is the capital city, is a cosmopolitan province in the central part of the country. The dominant ethnic group living in Nyanza is Luo, in Rift Valley is Kalenjin, in Western province is Luhy, and the most populous ethnic group in Nairobi is Kikuyu. Participants from different ethnic backgrounds were considered suitable in this study because research has shown that ethnicity influences people’s perception (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996). The researchers believed that ineffective teaching as a phenomenon could be perceived differently by participants from different provinces in the country. Thus, conducting this study in many provinces enabled the researchers to accurately capture the perceptions of secondary school students on the characteristics of ineffective teachers in Kenya.

Form 3 students were considered suitable for this study because they had been in secondary school for 3 years and had therefore interacted with ineffective teachers for a long time. Their inclusion based on length of stay in school was supported by Patton’s (2002) report that a phenomenological research is to address issues that pertain to experience whereby responses are obtained from participants who have lived through the particular experience for a long time. Form 3 students have longtime experience with ineffective teachers and therefore were believed to have a better grasp of the characteristics of these teachers. Thus, they were involved in this study because of their expertise regarding their own experiences on ineffective teaching. Forms 1 and 2 students were not involved in this study because they had learned in secondary schools for a short time and were considered unsuitable to provide well-informed descriptions of the characteristics of ineffective secondary school teachers. Form 4 students who had stayed longest in secondary schools were also not involved in the study because they were busy preparing for their final-national secondary school examination (KCSE) at the time of data collection.

**Sample**

The participants of this study were 80 adolescents within the 15 to 17 age bracket. Although Polkinghorne (1989) recommended that a phenomenological study should have between 5 and 25 participants, this study involved a large sample size of 80 participants (20 from each of the four provinces) because Kenya is a multiethnic society and ethnicity is known to influence people’s perception. The participants (40 males and 40 females) were selected from eight provincial secondary schools (four boys’ and four girls’ schools) using criterion sampling technique. According to Green and Christensen (2006), criterion is the most appropriate sampling technique to use in a phenomenological research because it ensures that all participants are purposefully selected based on the fact that they have experienced a similar phenomenon, in this case, ineffective teaching in schools. Provincial secondary schools were involved in the study because they are well-established government schools and all teachers in these schools are trained and qualified. The researchers wanted to find out the characteristics of trained ineffective teachers in secondary schools in Kenya.

**Instrumentation and Procedures**

Two research instruments were used in data collection: a biographical form and a blank sheet of paper. A biographical form developed by the researchers was used to collect data on the participants’ profiles. On this form, the participants were asked to indicate their unique characteristics such as age, gender, class, ethnic background, geographical location (province), whether they volunteered to participate in the study, and whether they knew an ineffective teacher in their class/school whose characteristics they were willing to describe. They were also asked to state on this form that the teacher they described was trained and qualified, and to indicate the duration they have known the ineffective teacher.

The other instrument used in data collection was a blank sheet of paper on which the participants were individually instructed to identify the most ineffective (worst) teacher who
was teaching their class and to describe the characteristics of that teacher on the paper. The instructions were typed at the top of the blank sheets of paper issued to the participants. The participants were also instructed orally and on the informed consent letter not to write the name of the teacher they were describing, and not to write their own names and admission numbers on the paper. This step was taken to ensure that the participants were protected and that they remained anonymous throughout the duration of the study.

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Ministry of Education and from the head teachers of the schools involved. The research instruments were administered to the participants by the researchers. The participants were given 1 hr to complete the biographical form and to describe the characteristics of their ineffective teachers on the papers provided. They were instructed not to discuss their experiences during this period because the researchers were interested in tapping their own unique experiences. All participants were proficient in English. At the end of the data collection exercise, the papers were serially coded from 1 to 80 for ease of reference and for data analysis purposes.

**Ethical Considerations**

The researchers explained the objectives of the study to head teachers, class teachers, and to the participants involved in the study. The participants were requested to read and sign the informed consent letter before participating in the study. They were informed that there were no physical or psychological risks involved and that their participation in this study was voluntary. The respondents had the freedom to decline or withdraw from it at any time they deemed fit. They were also assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and that they were not required to write their names on any of the research instruments used in the data collection. Finally, they were instructed not to write anywhere, the names of the ineffective teachers whose characteristics they described.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Content analysis method was used in analyzing the written data on sheets of paper collected from the participants. Content analysis is a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation particularly of written documents in an effort to identify patterns, themes, and meanings (Berg, 2009). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), content analysis provides a method of obtaining good access to the words of participants in text or written documents. This method was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researchers to analyze, synthesize, and interpret the words written by the participants about the characteristics of trained ineffective teachers in secondary schools. Under this method, the researchers undertook gist and verbatim analyses. According to Yin (2011), gist analysis should be undertaken in qualitative research to capture the meaning of the statements made by the participants about the phenomenon under investigation, whereas verbatim analysis is done to report the direct quotations from the statements made by participants to capture their feelings about the phenomenon. Through gist analysis, the researchers identified and named the characteristics of ineffective teachers, and through verbatim analysis, they reported the strong feelings the participants had about ineffective teaching in schools.

The data analysis process started with participants’ handwritten responses on the blank sheets of paper that were coded from 1 to 80, photocopied for each of the three researchers involved in data analysis to receive a copy. Each paper was independently analyzed by the researchers after thorough discussion and agreement on the procedures and rules to follow. It was agreed that the data analysis would begin with an exploration of the descriptions made on papers by the participants on the characteristics of ineffective teachers. This exploration was an attempt to grasp participants’ expressions and meanings in the broadest context (Reisetter et al., 2004). Each paper was then read a number of times to identify the significant statements as verb-referent phrases on the characteristics of ineffective teachers. The significant statements made by the participants were annotated on the right-hand margin of the paper (e.g., late to class, rigid in class, boring in class, rude to students).

The researchers then identified and eliminated the overlapping or redundant significant statements as they read the participants’ descriptions. The nonredundant significant statements were written on sheets of paper and were counted. The order of the statements provided was based on the serial coding of the papers on which the descriptions were made by the participants. The statements that emerged from Participant Serial Number 1 came first and those that emerged from Participant Serial Number 80 came last on the list. In total, 102, 98, and 96 statements emerged from the data analyses of the three researchers.

In the next stage of data analysis, the researchers individually and critically examined the significant statements in search of the connections among them. In this examination, the meaning and not the frequency of the statements was central to the researchers. The statements that were related or had connections with others were grouped together into “meaning units,” which were extracted into meaningful analyzable units called emergent themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This was an analytical and theoretical process that led to clustering of the statements. Some of the statements clustered together and some did not. The statements that did not connect with others were considered here as solitary themes. The numbers of emergent themes that were generated from the data analyses done independently by the three researchers were 22, 20, and 18.
In the final stage of the analysis, the researchers worked together to negotiate and compare their emergent themes. The process involved one of the researchers selecting an emergent theme considered to be representative of ineffective teacher characteristic (e.g., wastage of students’ time, poor mastery of the subject taught, immoral in behavior) and asking whether the other researchers had a similar emergent theme. When all researchers agreed that the emergent theme and the significant statements under it were correct, the theme was noted down and the researchers moved to the next emergent theme. This process continued until all researchers had exhausted all of their emergent themes. Disagreement among the researchers occurred on three themes. These themes were as follows: (a) “nondialogical in class”—one researcher recorded this theme as “nonparticipatory in class,” (b) “injurious to students in class,” and (c) “poor psychological health”—one researcher referred to this theme as “having mood disorder.” These differences were resolved through discussion and agreement on the title of the emergent theme. Overall, all the three researchers agreed on 96% of the emergent themes, an indicator that the interrater reliability was higher than .90.

Results
At the end of the discussion and negotiation among the three researchers, 20 emergent and 4 solitary themes were agreed on. This large number of emergent themes that resulted from the data analyses reflects the richness of the descriptions the participants had about the characteristics of ineffective teachers in secondary schools in Kenya. The emergent themes captured what the participants collectively perceived as the characteristics of trained ineffective teachers. The 20 emergent themes were named and accepted by the researchers as accurate reflection of the characteristics of ineffective teachers in Kenya. However, the 4 solitary themes retained their initial names and were treated as isolated cases atypical of the characteristics of ineffective teachers. They were discarded and not included among the characteristics of ineffective teachers. The 20 emergent themes, which were regarded in this study as the characteristics of ineffective teachers, and the 4 solitary themes, which were discarded, are presented in Table 1. Under each emergent theme, the significant statements are reported to clearly show how the 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers were arrived at by the researchers of this study.

The result of verbatim analysis is reported here in the form of excerpts of the descriptions made by the participants about their ineffective teachers. They are reported as direct quotations, which capture vividly the strong feelings of the students about their ineffective teachers. In other words, they tap the “voices” of the participants involved in the study. The excerpts are reported under the 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers identified in this study:

| Table 1. Emergent and Solitary Themes |
|--------------------------------------|
| **Emergent themes**                  |
| 1. Wastage of students’ time          |
| Lateness to class                     |
| Absenteeism from class                |
| Shortens class time                   |
| Truants—misses classes                |
| 2. Poor mastery of the subject        |
| Dictation of notes in class           |
| Unprepared to teach                   |
| Lacks mastery of the subject          |
| Incompetent in the subject            |
| Unable to explain concepts            |
| Delegates teaching to students        |
| 3. Source of boredom to students     |
| Boring in class                       |
| Lacks sense of humor                  |
| Dull in class                         |
| Lacks in enthusiasm in class          |
| Gloomy in class                       |
| Demotivates students in class         |
| 4. Partial in treatment of students   |
| Discriminatory in class               |
| Offers preferential treatment         |
| Tribalistic in class                  |
| 5. Lack of respect for students       |
| Disrespectful to students             |
| Impolite to students                  |
| Abusive in class                      |
| Arrogant to students                  |
| Quarrelsome in class                  |
| Harasses students in class            |
| Ridicules students                    |
| Irritates students                    |
| Mocks students in class               |
| Demoralize students                   |
| Rude to students                      |
| 6. Low level of self-confidence       |
| Lacks self-belief                     |
| Low self-esteem                       |
| 7. Poor mastery of teaching skills    |
| Inexperienced in teaching             |
| Lack of teaching skills               |
| 8. Emotional immaturity               |
| Temperamental in class                |
| Cries in class                        |
| Hot tempered                          |
| Anxious and nervous in class          |
| Emotionally unstable                  |
| Unpredictable in class                |
| 9. Inappropriate dressing             |
| Unkempt and ill-groomed               |
| Wears transparent dress               |
| Dresses in a provocative manner       |

(continued)
Table 1. (continued)

| Characteristics | Examples |
|-----------------|----------|
| Wear revealing dress | Untidy and poorly dressed |
| 10. Injurious to students | Punitive to students |
|                | Beats/canes students |
|                | Inflict pain on students |
|                | Kicks students |
| 11. Fond of frivolous talk | Gossips in class |
|                | Pokes her nose into people’s affairs |
|                | Gossip about kinsmen |
|                | Back bites students with staff |
| 12. Miscommunicate in class | Inaudible in class |
|                | Teaches at a fast pace |
|                | Hurried to complete syllabus |
|                | Teaches in “sheng” |
|                | Lectures instead of teaching |
| 13. Poor in providing feedback | Subjective in marking |
|                | No feedback to students |
|                | No reinforcement to responses |
| 14. Nondialogical in class | Failure to involve students in class |
|                | Disallow questions in class |
|                | Does not answer questions |
| 15. Poor in maintaining discipline | Unable to maintain discipline |
|                | Misunderstands dot.com age |
|                | Laissez-faire in class |
| 16. Immoral in behavior | Sexually relate to students |
|                | Sexually harass students |
|                | Always drunk in school |
|                | Engages in drug abuse |
| 17. Unapproachable to students | Not sociable with students |
|                | Detached and cold in class |
|                | Unfriendly to students |
|                | Does not greet students |
| 18. Poor in guidance and counseling | Offer no guidance and counseling |
|                | Breach of confidentiality |
|                | Mindless about students |
|                | Reports students to administrators |
|                | Harbor grudges with students |
|                | Insensitive to students needs |
|                | Does not know students’ names |
|                | Does not trust students |
| 19. Poor psychological health | Selfish and hypocritical |
|                | Suffer from self-righteousness |
|                | Sadistic in class |
|                | Proud and boastful to students |

Table 1. (continued)

| Characteristics | Examples |
|-----------------|----------|
| Suffers from superiority complex | Negative in attitude |
| 20. Autocratic in class | Dictatorial in class |
|                | Ejects students from class |
|                | Reprimands students |
|                | Strict and uncompromising |
|                | Inflexible in dealing with students |
|                | Cruel and ruthless in class |
|                | Rigid in class |
|                | No freedom of expression |

Solitary themes
1. Overworks students in class
2. No use of current technology
3. Animal like in behavior
4. Chews gum in class

Wastage of Students’ Time

Time wastage featured prominently as one of the characteristics of ineffective teachers. For instance, Participant Serial Number 1 wrote that

My worst teacher comes to class very late without any particular reason. She lies to us whenever we ask her why she came late to class.

Participant Serial Number 3 wrote that

My ineffective teacher is one who never keeps time—comes to class late and is too lazy to teach for 40 minutes as provided for in the school timetable. The teacher leaves class before the bell which marks the end of the lesson is rang.

Poor Mastery of the Subject

A large number of participants felt that ineffective teachers are poor in the subjects they teach. For example, Participant Serial Number 11 wrote that

My worst teacher does not know the subject he is teaching us and he is not ready to answer any questions from students. When a student asks him a question he gets annoyed and refuses to answer the question because he does not know the answer.

Participant Serial Number 76 wrote,

My ineffective teacher comes to class only to introduce a new topic and teaches nothing about that topic. He tells students to make notes on what they do not
understand. I always feel like walking out of class when he comes to class because I don’t gain anything from him.

**Source of Boredom to Students**

The participants were unanimous that ineffective teachers were boring in class. For instance, Participant Serial Number 15 wrote,

My biology teacher is so boring that I have developed a bad attitude towards the subject. My request to God is that she will change before I get to Form 4 so that I will not fail in this subject in my KCSE exam. The teacher cannot even make a silly joke to enable me be attentive and alert. To me she looks as if she just died and came back to life.

Participant Serial Number 36 wrote,

My worst teacher is boring and not lively in class. The teacher will not care about how much you score in his subject. When you fail he will tell you “you are not fit for this subject and I think you are in the wrong place”. I always feel pissed off when he is in class.

**Partial in Treating Students**

The participants in this study identified discrimination against students based on their ethnicity, ability, or gender as one of the characteristics of ineffective teachers. For instance, Participant Serial Number 19 wrote,

My worst teacher is the one who is tribalistic and always praises students from his own tribe and condemns students from other tribes for no good reason at all. He also favours brilliant students hence demoralizes the weak students.

Participant Serial Number 45 wrote,

My ineffective teacher has inadequate teaching skills, as such might have graduated not long ago and is still in the process of learning how to teach.

**Lack of Respect for Students**

The participants perceived respect for students as an integral part of teaching, and they believed that teachers who underrated their students were ineffective. For instance, Participant Serial Number 71 wrote,

My bad teacher always abuses students in class. He once told me to “scan my brain” because I did not answer a question correctly. This actually makes a student develop hatred towards the teacher until he cannot understand what the teacher is teaching.

Participant Serial Number 64 wrote,

My worst teacher does not respect students and to him students are nothing but fools who are struggling to learn his subject.

**Low Level of Self-Confidence**

A number of participants perceived self-confidence as important in teaching, and those who lacked it were seen as ineffective. For instance, Participant Serial Number 51 wrote that

My worst teacher has low self-confidence e.g. if you laugh in class he thinks that you are laughing at him. He does not like jokes and he is always stone faced.

Participant Serial Number 4 wrote that

My ineffective teacher is not confident in class. He lacks a defined plan for the lesson and he is aloof and does not mingle with students. His subject is the worst performed in the entire school.

**Poor Mastery of Teaching Skills**

Some participants view ineffective teachers as those who lacked teaching skills. For example, Participant Serial Number 45 wrote,

My ineffective teacher has inadequate teaching skills, as such might have graduated not long ago and is still in the process of learning how to teach.

Participant Serial Number 58 wrote,

My worst teacher appears to know the subject, but does not know how to teach it. He looks at the chalkboard instead of looking at the students when he is teaching.

**Emotional Immaturity**

Teachers perceived as emotionally immature were described as ineffective. For instance, Participant Serial Number 24 wrote,

My worst teacher behaves like a child, she cries in class when disturbed by students. In fact, some students laugh at her when she is crying which makes her to cry more.
Participant Serial Number 58 wrote,

My worst teacher is short tempered and gets annoyed due to small mistakes made by students in class. She is actually temperamental and abusive in class.

**Inappropriate Dressing in Class**

The participants considered dressing as an important attribute in their male and female teachers. For example, Participant Serial Number 49 wrote,

My worst teacher comes to school dressed in a manner likely to suggest otherwise. She leaves her cleavage open which is provocative and she wears clothes that “start too late and end too early”.

Participant Serial Number 63 wrote,

My ineffective teacher is dressed as if his salary is paid to somebody else. When he is in class you imagine that you are being taught by an insane person dressed in rugs or by an old dirty man in the village.

**Injurious to Students in Class**

The teachers who caused physical injury to students were seen as ineffective in their duty. For example, Participant Serial Number 51 wrote that

My worst teacher canes students in class for no good reason at all. He does not take time to advice students. This has created a tense atmosphere in class and students find it hard to concentrate during his lessons.

Participant Serial Number 75 wrote in small and capital letters that

My worst teacher punishes me by caning me whenever I fail his exam. I hate the teacher because punishment CANNOT MAKE ME PASS and I have a BAD ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIM.

**Fond of Frivolous Talk in Class**

The participants of this study perceive teachers who engage them in chit chat in class as ineffective. For instance, Participant Serial Number 5 wrote,

My worst teacher wastes a lot of time talking about irrelevant things in class e.g. her house, husband, children and the number of cars she owns.

Participant Serial Number 41 wrote,

My worst teacher comes to class only to back bite students and staff. Sometimes I just feel like telling him to stop because it is a waste of our learning time.

**Miscommunicate in Class**

Teaching requires good communication, and teachers who are poor in it were regarded as ineffective. For example, Participant Serial Number 55 observed that

My bad teacher is keen on completing the syllabus and not on teaching us to understand the subject. This attitude makes the teacher to rush and hence we do not understand what is being taught.

Participant Serial Number 44 wrote,

My worst teachers just enters the class, greets students with a serious face and starts giving his lectures as if the students are in a university.

**Poor in Providing Feedback**

Students wanted to know their performance in the subjects they learned and so perceived a teacher who did not give them feedback as ineffective. For example, Participant Serial Number 61 wrote,

My worst teacher gives assignments but does not mark them. He is also very poor in marking students’ exams. When a question requires three points, if the first response is wrong, he marks all of them wrong.

Participant Serial Number 52 wrote,

My ineffective teacher does not give exercises to students in order to know whether or not the students are following what she is teaching. I feel she hates to mark students’ work.

**Nondialogical in Class**

A number of participants perceived teachers who did not encourage dialogue in class as ineffective. For example, Participant Serial Number 36 wrote,

My worst teacher does not ask questions about what she has taught. She also does not answer any question posed by students in class. At the end of her lesson we learn nothing because she lectures us as if we were university students.

Participant Serial Number 47 wrote,
My English teacher is ineffective. She does not teach and the only thing she does is to tell us to turn to a certain page and answer the questions or to do the exercise in that page.

**Poor in Maintaining Discipline**

Inability to maintain discipline in classroom was perceived by the participants as a sign of ineffectiveness in teachers. For example, Participant Serial Number 77 wrote,

My ineffective teacher is not in control of the class, students have no respect for him and they can do anything they want when he is class.

Participant Serial Number 64 wrote,

My worst teacher is quite traditional, he does not understand the “Dot.com age”. He denies the boys opportunities to entertain themselves and to play football which is important for their physical health and development.

**Immoral in Behavior**

The participants involved in this study perceived teachers who displayed immoral behavior as ineffective. For example, Participant Serial Number 72 wrote,

My ineffective teacher brings boyfriends to students in school, so that they talk to the girls and the teacher himself grooves with the girls up to the extent of having sex with them. And when you refuse to be his friend, you will be abused for the rest of your life in school.

Participant Serial Number 65 wrote,

My ineffective teacher is a perpetual drunkard and there is no single time you would find him sober. After drinking he spends most of his time chasing students and giving them heavy punishment. He also fights students like his own age mates.

**Unapproachable to Students**

Participants perceived teachers who were unapproachable as ineffective. For example, Participant Serial Number 75 wrote,

My worst teacher is always in bad mood and not willing to talk to students inside and outside class. This makes students to fear answering his questions or asking him questions.

Participant Serial Number 49 wrote,

My worst teacher does not socialize with students and therefore you can’t consult him on any issue. I remember one day I went to consult him about what he had taught and he furiously told me to walk out of his office.

**Poor in Guidance and Counseling**

Counseling was perceived as being central to the teaching profession, and the teachers who did not offer it to students were considered ineffective. For instance, Participant Serial Number 56 wrote,

My worst teacher keeps on talking to other teachers and workers about my weaknesses instead of helping me to overcome the weaknesses.

Participant Serial Number 71 wrote,

My worst teacher only thinks of academic work. He does not take his time to address emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. This makes his lessons boring and monotonous.

**Poor Psychological Health**

The participants were concerned about the psychological health of their teachers, and they described ineffective teachers as having mood disorders. For instance, Participant Serial Number 80 wrote,

My worst class teacher is always moody and unpredictable and one cannot know the right time to approach her to solve a problem.

Participant Serial Number 54 wrote,

My worst teacher is a lady who is boastful and she likes showing off to students and staff. I am telling you she makes me sick and mad when I see her in school.

**Autocratic to Students in Class**

The participants perceived teachers who are dictatorial and domineering as ineffective in their work. Participant Serial Number 70 wrote,

We have a certain teacher in this school who is disliked by three quarters of the students. This teacher is a dictator and uses modes of dictatorship which are not used even by the government nowadays.
Participant Serial Number 59 wrote,

My worst teacher is harsh and dictatorial in class. She likes to punish students by ordering them to get out of the class. I really hate this teacher and wished she was never my teacher.

Discussion

The single objective of this study was to identify the characteristics of ineffective trained teachers in secondary schools in Kenya. This objective was achieved through gist analysis in which 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers were identified and named. Moreover, this study captured through verbatim analysis the strong feelings the participants had about each characteristic of ineffective teachers. But, it is important to note here that no single participant involved in this study produced a rich description that contained all these 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers. This was interpreted by the researchers to mean that no single ineffective teacher possessed all these characteristics. Indeed, an ineffective teacher must have some but not all of these characteristics. The study did not investigate the average number of these characteristics a teacher needs to have to be perceived as ineffective; this could be an objective for another study. Also, this study did not investigate whether the ineffective teachers described by the participants may have been effective in the past and lost their motivation to teach, or whether they may have always lacked the skills needed to be effective.

This study has provided perhaps one of the most comprehensive descriptions of characteristics of ineffective teachers in secondary schools. Other studies found in the literature reviewed have reported fewer characteristics of ineffective teachers. For instance, a study by Walls et al. (2002) generated only five characteristics of ineffective teachers, which were as follows: partial in treating students, disorganized, less resourceful, discourage students from asking questions, and authoritarian in class. Four of these characteristics match the ones we identified in our study. The only characteristic that they reported and does not directly correspond to the ones we identified is “disorganized.” Perhaps it does not match the characteristics we reported because it is not specific in meaning: for instance, a teacher who wastes time or has poor psychological health may be described by students as disorganized.

In another study, Horton (2009) identified 4 characteristics that make a teacher ineffective, which are as follows: yelling at students, giving empty threats, failing to give prompt feedback, and giving too much work to students. Again, all these characteristics reported by Horton are captured in the findings of our study except the last one. The participants involved in our study did not report “giving too much work to students” as a characteristic of ineffective teachers. It appeared that they did not mind being given a lot of work, but they did mind not being given feedback by teachers on the assignments they have done. One of the most comprehensive listing of the characteristics of ineffective teachers was made by Magar (2009). According to Magar, ineffective teachers have 9 characteristics, which were as follows: no smart goals, no self-control, motivated by their own desires, do not realize that they are boring, lack self-discipline, bribe students, threaten students, are empty shells, and do not know how to please students. A critical examination of this list reveals that only one of the characteristics mentioned does not correspond at all to any of the 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers we reported in our study. The characteristic is “bribe students.” Perhaps it did not feature in our study because bribery is so common in the Kenyan society that the participants failed to perceive it as one of the characteristics of ineffective teachers.

The literature reviewed indicated that most studies have been conducted on the qualities of effective teachers and that very few studies have been done on the characteristics of ineffective teachers. The assumption behind this disparity in research is that some researchers believe that by knowing the qualities of effective teachers the characteristics of ineffective teachers will be implicit (Marsh, 1991). According to Marsh (1991) this assumption is not right because the characteristics of ineffective teachers can only be best understood by studying the teachers who possess them. In fact, the findings of our study support Marsh’s position. For example, a study by Haydn (2007) investigated the views of secondary school pupils on the qualities of effective teachers. He reported the following eight qualities: talks to students normally, knows the subject well, explains things well, makes the subject interesting, good at stopping other pupils from spoiling the lesson, friendly, enthusiastic about their subject, and has a sense of humor. Attempt to make these statements negative and use them to describe ineffective teachers may be problematic. For instance, converting “talks to students normally” to “talks to students abnormally” does not make semantic sense. Moreover, a participant in our study reported that one characteristic of an ineffective teacher is “chewing gum in class.” If our study had investigated the qualities of effective teachers to understand the characteristics of ineffective teachers, it is unlikely that this participant or another participant would have reported that one quality of an effective teacher is “does not chew gum in class.”

A scrutiny of the 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers identified in our study shows that some of these characteristics can be eliminated administratively in schools, for instance, wastage of students’ time, injurious to students, and wearing inappropriate dress in class. The school administration can ensure that teachers do not report to class late, leave class early, or miss class without permission. Wastage of time is common in schools where there is laxity in administration and there is no vigilance on the conduct of teachers. In Kenya, corporal punishment is outlawed, and no class teacher is allowed to cane or kick a student in school. It is the responsibility of the school administration to ensure that any teacher
who causes physical injury to students is dealt with according to the law. It is also the duty of the school administration to ensure that teachers do not go to class poorly dressed. A teacher who is not well dressed should be advised by the school administration to mind his or her dressing.

Finally, the findings of our study challenge the assumption that qualified teachers are quality teachers (Rice, 2010). All teachers whose characteristics were described by participants involved in this study were trained and qualified, yet, numerous characteristics of ineffective teaching were identified, and excerpts reported strong feelings the participants had about ineffective teaching in schools. This assumption should be put aside, and concerted effort should be made to identify and help ineffective teachers improve their performance. The authors of this article are not aware of any effort made by stakeholders in education in Kenya to identify these teachers.

Conclusion

The findings of this study and other studies indicate that there are very many characteristics of ineffective teaching that remain in some individuals after they have been trained and qualified as teachers. There is no doubt that training improves effectiveness in teaching, but it does not necessarily eliminate all characteristics of ineffective teachers in secondary schools. There is therefore a need for trained secondary school teachers to undergo regular observations and participate in regular in-service training. These should be organized by the stakeholders in education as part of continuing professional development aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness. The 20 characteristics of ineffective teachers reported in this study may be used to develop an assessment instrument that can help identify ineffective teachers in secondary schools. Finally, some of the characteristics of ineffective teachers identified in our study can be addressed and eliminated by the school administration by being vigilant of the conduct of teachers in secondary schools.

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