

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

Principals' Instructional Strategies and Students' Academic Performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya

By

¹Mulwa Leonard Ndambuki, ²Elizabeth Nduku, ³Celestine Mwaniki
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa-Nairobi
Corresponding author: ndambukileonard@yahoo.com

Abstract

The performance of students in many schools in Kenya has been declining though some have maintained good academic performance. This study focused on strategies principals can use to enhance students' performance in public school in Machakos Sub-County-Kenya. The study employed concurrent mixed method approach where survey and phenomenology research designs were used. Role theory was applied in the study. The target population was 43 public schools, principals and heads of departments and student leaders. The sample size composed 15 principals, 75 heads of departments and 105 students' leaders. The study employed probability and non- probability sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was used to select samples from different categories of schools. Purposive sampling was used to sample heads of departments and student leaders. Questionnaires, interview guides, and document analysis guides were used to collect data. Quantitative data was analysed by use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22 and reported using percentages, bar graphs, and frequency distribution tables. Qualitative data was transcribed, coded, categorised to derive interrelated themes, interpreted, and reported in the form of direct quotes and narratives. The study observed ethical issues. The study findings showed that provision of guidance and counselling, setting mean scores, involvement of teachers in decision making and delegation of administrative duties by principals enhances students' performance. The study recommended principals to devise applicable and adaptive strategies in teaching and learning process. The study concluded that when principals apply adaptive and receptive strategies in instructional supervision, students' academic performance can be enhanced.

Keywords: Principal, instructional strategies, students, academic performance, Kenya certificate of secondary education, Machakos, sub-County, Kenya

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

Principals' Instructional Strategies and Students' Academic Performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya

By

¹Mulwa Leonard Ndambuki, ²Elizabeth Nduku, ³Celestine Mwaniki

Introduction

The desire to enhance improved academic performance of students dictates the ability of principals to demonstrate or use certain administrative strategies to ensure a complete well-round education and production of quality students from secondary school system (Babatola, Olabisi & Michael, 2016). Different educational stakeholders ranging from the government, parents, students among others expect principals to work effectively for the enhancement of students' academic performance. The realisation of improved academic performance calls for principals to have effective instructional supervision strategies. These strategies that could be employed by principals to have a grip of the whole school and enable the school to perform well range from the monitoring teachers' activities, participatory decision making, having committee system in schools, performance appraisal, delegation of duties and regular staff meeting (Stoop, 2011).

Principals as crucial and essential player in the management of schools, they are encouraged to devise means and strategies which can be applied to achieve set goals and objectives. Teachers effective in classroom management been a cardinal strategy involves teaching learning new ideas to be conversant with new paradigms. According to UNICEF (2010), teachers' development has direct impact on student achievement as it improves on teachers' professionalism, expertise and mode of teaching and handling of students. It is the role of principals to ensure that teachers undergo in-service training to improve their teaching and students' control abilities. Development of teachers' foster skills in instructional methods, evaluation and assessment practices which when applied enhances students' performance. It is the responsibility of principals to set goals and targets for each subject as a strategy to improve student performance and heighten their achievement by allocating attention, activating their effort, increasing their persistence in learning and motivating them which in turn leads to the development of self-regulation skills (Clarke, 2013). Setting targets in terms of mean scores cultivates a feeling of self-control and commitment on students hence a good strategy to motivate students to concentrate on their studies.

Sharing and delegation of administrative functions to deputies, senior teachers, discipline masters and heads of departments is a positive attribute that enables principals to collectively craft ways of initiating and maintaining productive relationships and partnerships with teachers, parents and the local community which could lead to quality grades. Collegiality in decision making and delegation of responsibilities promotes positive values such as studiousness, perseverance, positive rivalry and commitment in ensuring students have performed well (Mugambi, 2017). When principals delegate some of their functions, they create time for classroom teaching and observation. Proper time management by principals enables them to

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

know what is taking place in class, how teachers are teaching, availability and utility of learning resources and means of attaining set targets. Parental involvement in matters education for their children facilitates harmony on what is taking place at school and home. According to Orodho (2014), the impact of family background and practices play central role in helping parents improve the quality of their children's education. It is the responsibility of parents to participate in assessment of their children's progress, to offer clear and regular non-threatening communication pertaining students' welfare in learning process (Waweru & Orodho, 2014).

Varying teaching methods as a strategy makes teaching lively, interactive and interesting. It is through differentiated teaching methods teachers know best method to apply when teaching students (Abdulrasheed, 2016). Varied teaching methodologies enables students grasp stereotyped difficulty subjects since teachers utilise new skills making such topics easily comprehensible. According to Eroegbu and Eyo (2016), effective instructional strategies are viewed as a change in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers, students and parents towards performance. It is principals' disposition to ensure that effective and applicable strategies are put in place to enhance students' academic performance. According to Nyogosia, Waweru, and Njuguna (2013), a decline in candidates' performance in Kenya national examinations is as a result of principal failing to devise proper and adaptive strategies that can be applied in teaching and learning process to bring quality grades. The research therefore sought to study how strategies inclusive of provision of teachers' professional development, sharing of administrative function, initiating income generating projects, use of varied methods, parental involvement, provision of guidance and counselling enhance students' performance.

Statement of the Problem

Principals are chief administrators of learning in schools and they are responsible for nurturing and ensuring that all educational strategies are geared to produce good results. In Kenya, there has been poor KCSE performance in some counties. Poor performance has increased for instance, in 2017 KCSE performance, only 70,073 out of 611,953 candidates (11.5%) managed the minimum university entry qualification of C+ as compared to 88,929 candidates of last year (Republic of Kenya, 2017). In Machakos Sub County, performance in KCSE has been going down continuously since 2015. This continuous drop in the performance in the KCSE in the last 4 years caused concern for principals to devise applicable and adaptable strategies that could be harnessed to improve students' academic performance. Therefore, this study sought to excaudate strategies principals could use to enhance students' academic performance in Machakos-Sub County.

Review of Related Literature

There is no doubt that students' achievement is crucial to the individual students, family, school and nation. Principals have responsibility of providing direction and exerting influence on educational stakeholders in order to achieve good academic performance. This call for principals to use different strategies to ensure students attain set goals. Studies have shown that proper formulated strategies and proper implementation of them improve student performance as they heighten student's achievement by allocating attention, activating their effort, increasing their

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

persistence in learning and motivate them leading to development of self-regulating study skills (Moracha, 2016). In Spain, Muelasa and Navarro (2015) did a study on learning strategies and academic achievement. The objective of the study was to see how the use of learning strategies in language and mathematics influences academic performance. The study used non-experimental and correlational research designs. The sample size was 30 male students chosen randomly in the social sciences itinerary. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Pearson correlation index was run to determine the correlation. The findings found a significant correlation between language and maths performance and coding strategies ($r = 0.45$; $P = 0.007$) and with classroom strategies ($r = 0.56$; $p = 0.000$). The study indicated four types of strategies that are crucial in enhancing students' performance; support strategies which include motivation, attitudes, and affection. Processing strategies which comprised selection, organization, and processing. Lastly, knowledge strategies made up of creativity, critical thinking, recovery and transfer. This implied that principals have to see how to apply these in leaning for effective learning to be realised.

In China, Cheng and Chiou (2010) did a study on how self- set goals affect performance in a higher education setting. The study investigated whether there was a correlation between goal setting and accounting achievement of college students. Data was collected from 124 fresh first-year students enrolled in three sections in an accounting course. Three standardized accounting tests were used to measure students' performance, at the beginning and end of the first semester and the end of the second semester. The findings indicated that goal setting scores and achievement test scores had a statistically significant positive correlation. These findings are in line with Kieti et al. (2017) who found that students who set targets in their subjects tend to have a self-regulated type of learning in which they strife to attain more information from teachers and learning resources in order to refine their knowledge and skills that can help them develop a higher level of learning. Study findings by Bayer (2016) and Ayodele et al. (2016) showed that goal-oriented students tend to develop self-competence and often contrast their present success with previous success and try to work hard to achieve a positive skewed performance. The study emphasised that good performance is gauged by setting a target which enables students to aim at it hence improving their performance scores and it is upon principals to know which is the competing scores so that it can be realistic.

Norviewu-Mortt (2012) did a study on principals' strategies for improving the academic achievement of students of disadvantaged rural junior high schools in Ghana. Qualitative research design and constructivism and interpretivism theories were used. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, direct observations, field notes, and document analysis. The findings showed that positive personal attributes enable principals to collectively skill school vision and mission by initiating and maintaining productive partnerships with teachers, parents, and the local community. Collegial strategies promote positive values such as punctuality, studiousness, perseverance, positive rivalry, and commitment among teachers and students. Principals' attributes like being good listeners, open-minded and caring, sympathetic towards the concerns of students and teachers and team players committed to school goals are positive strategies that could create conducive learning climate. This is tandem with Akinnibagbe (2002) who pointed out that effective managerial leadership by principals fosters coordination,

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L.; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

direction, controlling, provision, and maintenance of the school's physical and human resourcing. These findings are in line with Mugambi (2017) who points that effective principals should use their experience, skills and expertise to promote and consolidate instructional supervision which is geared towards good performance. According to Wachira et al. (2017) principals should use strategies which initiate partnerships with parents and the local community to recruit resources, revise teaching methodologies, motivate students and teaches to promote and enhance efficient teaching and learning leading to better academic outcomes.

In Kenya, Jepketer, Kombo and Ndunge (2015) did a study on teachers' classroom strategies for enhancing students' performance in public secondary schools in Nandi County. The study employed descriptive survey design. The sample size was 30 public secondary schools, 30 school principals, 85 teachers, 136 students, and 1 County Director of Education. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. The findings showed that 90% of the teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they use a variety of teaching methods to teach their students while the majority (79.7%) of students indicated their teachers exposed them to variety of class activities. Jepketer et al. (2015) concluded that various teaching strategies encourages teachers to disseminate syllabus content and accommodates all students in a variety of learning activities in the classroom. Nompula (2012) established that principals should facilitate learning by making it lively, interact easily with students, use varied teaching methods such as role-play, simulations, lectures, discussions and competitions and use of questions and answers to make learning interesting to students. Farrell and Bennis (2013) postulates that principals should remain central in the process of teaching and learning and ensure teachers employ differentiated classroom teaching strategies to expose students to a variety of learning experiences.

Methodology

A quantitative approach was applied where convergent mixed-method design was used by conducting a cross sectional survey as a method of data collection. For qualitative data collection, phenomenology research design was used. According to Cresswell (2018), in convergent mixed method design, one data collection phase is used in which quantitative and qualitative data is collected and analyzed concurrently. This design was considered suitable for the study because it allowed the researcher to obtain data from the sampled population without manipulating the variables as Kothari (2004) advises. The study employed probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used for principals and schools respectively. Purposive sampling was employed to sample heads of departments and student leaders. The boys' schools and girls' schools have national schools, Extra County and county schools. To capture proportionate sample size for each, 1 school was chosen from each category making the sample size to be 3 boys' schools and 3 girls' schools. According to Kothari (2004), to ascertain an appropriate representation and avoid sampling error, the researcher can get a bigger sample from the population. Therefore, the researcher sampled 20 mixed schools which translated to 60%. Principals and students' leaders were sampled

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

purposively. Therefore, 3 boys' schools, 3 girls' schools, 20 mixed schools, 26 principals, 75 heads of departments and 105 students' leaders made up the sample size.

Table 1: Sampling Matrix

Category	Total Population	Sample Size	Sampling Method	Percentage (%)
Boy's Schools	5	3	Stratified	60
Girl's Schools	4	3	Stratified	60
Mixed Schools	34	20	Stratified	60
Principals	43	26	Automatic inclusion	60
Heads of Departments	178	75	Purposive	42
Students' Leaders	291	105	Purposive	36

Source: Field data 2020

Findings and Discussions

Strategies Principals Can Use to Improve Students' Academic Performance

The study sought to examine the strategies that a principal can use to improve students' academic performance in K.C.S.E in Machakos Sub-County. The respondents received a list of statements that best expressed their opinion on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 where 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree. Strongly agree and agree were combined as a positive response while disagree and strongly disagree were combined as a negative response.

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals’ Instructional Strategies and students’ academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

Table 2: Responses on Strategies to Enhance Students’ Academic Performance

Strategies employed		1		2		3		4		5	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Provision of in-service training for teachers	P	7	53.8	4	30.8	1	7.7	0	0	0	0
	HoDs	35	55.5	23	36.5	3	4.8	2	3.2	0	0
Provision of students guidance and counseling	P	9	69.2	3	23.1	1	7.7	0	0	0	0
	HoDs	34	54.0	26	41.4	3	4.8	0	0	0	0
Setting school mean score	P	7	53.9	4	30.7	2	15.4	0	0	0	0
	HoDs	33	52.4	25	39.7	3	6.3	1	1.6	0	0
Involving teachers in decision making	P	10	76.9	2	15.4	1	7.7	0	0	0	0
	HoDs	20	31.7	19	30.2	10	15.9	8	12.7	6	9.5
Initiating self-generating projects to subsidize fees	P	3	23.1	6	46.2	3	23.1	1	7.7	0	0
	HoDs	20	31.7	24	38.1	14	22.2	6	9.5	3	4.8
Teachers use of varied teaching methods	P	8	61.5	3	23.1	2	15.4	0	0	0	0
	HoDs	40	63.5	19	30.2	4	6.3	0	0	0	0
Parental involvement in students’ performance	P	10	76.9	2	15.4	1	7.7	0	0	0	0
	HoDs	40	63.5	20	31.7	3	4.8	0	0	0	0
Delegating administrative functions for instructional supervision	P	3	23.2	2	15.4	2	15.4	4	30.8	2	15.5
	HoDs	19	30.2	36	57.1	6	9.5	1	1.6	1	1.6

Source: Field Data

Provision of In-Service Training for Teachers

From the findings, 84.6 % of principals agreed that in-service training for teachers enhances the performance of students. In-service sessions and seminars entail training teachers on content delivery, marking methodologies, students’ supervision and control. This was supported by 92% of head of departments who viewed in-service training a pivotal ingredient in enhancing students’ performance. Their percentage is slightly higher than principals as they are the ones who directly recommend those teachers in their departments for the training to improve on their departments. During an interview, principal 3 stated that “teacher development enhances their professionalism and enables them to manage students well and teach better.” The results showed that 15.4% of principals did not support in-service training for teachers. Principal 6 stated that:

...although this strategy is noble, it is expensive because principals spend schools’ resources on this provision to make teachers tandem with the recent trends of setting questions and answering techniques.

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

Due to expenses involved in in-service training, this could justify why several principals were not willing to incur it due to limited funds.

Shortfalls in the provision of teachers' training make teachers lack current information and content delivery styles which could improve their teaching methodologies. These study findings agreed with Stoop (2011) who postulated teachers' development and training helps them be effective teachers who diversely handle student differences well when teaching. Up to date professionalism enables them to collaborate well with other educational stakeholders towards good students' academic performance. Kiptum (2018) findings showed that friendly and collaborative learning relationships, healthy communication channels with parents and provision of timely feedback information assist students to understand the recent trends both in the setting of exams and marking modalities possibly leading to improved students' academic performance.

Provision of Students Guidance and Counseling

The study showed that 92.3% of the principals supported provision of students' guidance and counseling departments could lead to improved students' performance. Guidance and counseling act as an avenue for students to ventilate their frustrations and unnecessary demands which could lead to reduced riots and strikes in schools. From the study findings, 95.3% of heads of departments agreed that provision of guidance and counseling to students is crucial in enhancing good performance because when students are guided in their studies and counseled in every aspect, they remain disciplined and conform to school expectations, goals, mission and vision. According to Dagnew (2018), students' guidance and counseling helps maintenance order in the schools, enable students to concentrate their energies positively on their future and develop a sense of responsibility to enable students to have integral growth that is physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.

It is 7.7% of principals and 4.7 % of heads of departments who did not uphold provision of guidance and counseling as an essential strategy. This could be related to the schools in the sub-county who are perennially known to be schools of rampancy and indiscipline of students posting poor quality grades despite having departments of guidance and counseling. Harris and Bennet (2012) study findings established that schools might be having department of guidance and counseling but not functioning fully hence not achieving the intended purpose which to some, could be a cause for not cherishing them as an indispensable avenue for helping students to grow well. According to study finding of Ouma et al. (2014), schools where students' guidance and counseling are not enhanced, schools become a beehive of all sorts of indiscipline and performance goes down. As advised by the Kenya Ministry of Education (2015), it is principals' prerogative to ensure students are guided and counseled well as a mode of channeling their studies and their future aspirations. Guidance and counseling sessions help students to settle any issue which could create tension among them and provide an awareness of why they are at school. During interview, head of department 10 exclaimed that: "...disciplined and molded students tend to concentrate more on their studies, unlike students who are neither guided nor counseled in school."

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

These findings are in concurrence with Babatola et al (2016) who held that engaged students with educational focus are likely to perform better and succeed well compared to those who disregard guidance and counseling as their degree of self-esteem and interest are low and thus have no need to impress, uphold good names of their school and status for good performance. This calls for the principals to ensure academic guidance and counseling in made vibrant and available for all students.

Setting School Mean Score

The study indicated that 84.6% and 92.1% of principals and heads of departments respectively viewed setting of mean scores for their schools as a strategy to improve students' performance. The percentage of heads of departments is slightly higher than principals because heads of departments are the ones who tabulate the set targets for onward transmission to school principals. According to Blankstein (2010), schools without set school and subject means score is a directionless institution as the students have nothing to focus on and might fail to see the importance of improvement in their academics. Principal 5 said that "setting targets makes teachers and students focused as they know what is expected of them." The study findings are in concordant with findings of Okendu, (2012) who holds that when students are given targets to reach, they utilize all their potentialities to beat the set targets and this could make them aim higher in terms of performance. Head of department 20 noted that "setting of targets could be effective in schools if done collaboratively by all the concerned stakeholders: "principals, teachers, students and parents. Such involvement enables all parties play their role effectively to ensure set goals are achieved." During academic days, principals could release results and with targets earlier agreed on to check if there is a positive or negative deviation. Such comparison enables discussion on the way forward as none wants to be blamed for negative deviation. These findings are in agreement with Onsando (2016) who showed that as a strategy, setting targets for all subjects helps teachers and students work harder to achieve them hence improving their performance.

Involving Teachers in Decision Making

The study findings disclosed that 92.3% of principals involved their teacher in discussing academic programs of students. Involving teachers in academic decisions and related activities and responsibilities like procurement of books and class texts, revision materials, setting and or buying of exams make administration of schools a shared responsibility. The study on principals' involvement of teachers in decision making was confirmed by 61.4% heads of departments. This is a critical aspect that principals need to relook into as the findings of heads of departments' points a different scenario from what principals indicated which could mean there might be some important decisions principals could be making solely without involving teachers in their respective departments. According to findings of Ayodele, Olabisi and Michael (2016), sharing of duties should extend to the whole learning and teaching process as it eliminates the mentality that all resolutions are made by principals while teachers are mere implementers of principals' deliberations without inquisitorial quest. Principal 9 envisaged that "schools were principals

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

involve teachers in decision making tend to have more proactive teachers as the performance set to be achieved is their creation and will not want what they have set and planned fail.”

The study revealed that 38.6% of heads of departments cited principals do not involve teachers in decision making. When asked why such a deviation, head of department 18 opined that “some principals fear being challenged by teachers on their decision which might not be important in the running of the schools.” Head of Department 33 positively supported it by urging that “involving teachers on teaching and learning decisions, their ideas and opinions might be of great help to principals in enhancing students' academic performance.” The study indicated that there is a great need for teachers to be directly involved in academic matters for them to own their outputs as portrayed by students' performance. These study findings are confirmed by Wambua (2017) who stated that sharing of decision concerning teaching and learning process and involving teachers in matters pertaining academic raises teacher's morale and commitment since they own whatever is deliberated and endeavor to fulfill.

Initiating Income Generating Projects to Subsidize Fees

From the study, 69.3% of the principals believed in income-generating projects to subsidize fees for financially challenged students. This is supported by 69.8% of heads of departments. Having reliable and efficient income-generating projects enables schools to lower dependence on supplies especially foodstuffs. Principals 1 opined that:

...schools could start tilting their land and produce food thus reduce boarding expenses. On other cases schools with cosmic lands could start cattle rearing for the provision of milk and meat to subsidize the tendered meat.

School canteens, publications, hiring of school buses among other were viewed as financial boosters in schools. On the contrary, 30.7% and 30.2% of principals and heads of departments respectively were against the strategy. Some principals asserted that such projects could interfere with the core function of the school or bring conflict of interest and divert the schools from its core function as an educational institution. Study by Nyagosia et al. (2013) found that initiating income generation projects enabled schools to have an alternative source of income leading to financial sustainability which reduces debts accrued due to low fees payments. These findings are in agreement with Gbollie and Keamu (2017) who found that, projects help schools have a constant supply of commodities in case there is a shortage of such kinds in the market though if not well monitored, such projects can derail its intended purpose.

Teachers Using Varied Teaching Methods

From the study, 84.8% of the principals thought that varying teaching stimulus improves students' content absorption and concentration. This strategy was supported by 93.7% of heads of departments who indicated that use of varied teaching methods during lesson presentation make students alert and grasp with ease subjects stereotyped as difficulty. Study findings by Rahman et al. (2011) revealed that schools where teachers vary teaching methods especially

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

student-centered methods seem to perform better than those only use lecture method. Proper lesson observation by the principals assists teachers to revise their teaching methodologies. This is supported by findings of Too et al. (2012) that teaching method determines the way students retain the subject content since each subject has different way of teaching with specified objectives and specified learning and learning resources which necessitates teachers to use the appropriate teaching methodology to make topic comprehensible to the students. During interview, principal 11 said that:

...poor teaching methodologies eventually lead to a poor understanding of the taught subjects resulting in poor comprehension of examination questions, poor answering of questions eventually leading to poor grades by students.

These findings corresponded with study findings by Mugambi (2015) who envisages that principals should encourage teachers to use different teaching methods such as demonstration, field works, study tours and lesson simulation to cater specific needs of students. Nzoka and Orodho (2014) study findings found that use of varied teaching methods with different teaching styles reduce monotony brought about by one type of teaching and this makes teachers address students varied mental capabilities hence accommodating every student.

Parental Involvement in Students' Performance

The study showed that 92.3% of the principals advocated this strategy vastly which was supported by 95.2% of the head of departments. Relating parents and making them central to affairs about students in many cases contribute largely to their academic progress since they are key educational stakeholders in supporting teachers and principals. Parental involvement was indicated as a big challenge previously in the study as many parents were not making frequent follow-ups on how their children were doing at school. According to study by Bayu (2020), parents as vital educational stakeholders are supposed to know what is happening at schools, challenges facing students, communication done, pay school fees, and any other requirements given for the welfare of the students. During academic clinics, principals sit down with the students, teachers, and parents in general plenaries and discuss general academic performance. Principal 9 noted that:

...termly academic clinics allow every parent to have time with subject teachers, heads of departments and discuss their children performance. This makes parents take up their responsibility of monitoring their children on behavior and even how they do their mid-term and vacation breaks assignments.

According to studies by Martinez (2015), parents who attend parent - teacher meetings, participate actively in students' extracurricular activities, observe grades scored by their children, assist them in completing homework assigned, impart moral values and motivate their children to perform well. The involvement of parents on school endeavors makes them aware of students

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

behaviors at school, mode of conduct, know assignments given and above all identify weaknesses at early stages of their children such that they can nurture them appropriately which could largely improve on their performance. Involvement of parents in academic affairs was in tandem with findings of Kiptum (2018) who held that when parents become part of students learning, it creates a climate of commitment and a cordial relationship among teachers, students and parents is enhanced where each party plays its role well to avoid blames for poor performance. According to the findings of Jepketer et al. (2015), collaboration between teachers and parents avoids teachers profiled by the parents for poor performance in their respective subjects or exposed to public ridicule due to poor results hence principals should ensure parents play their role well.

Delegating Administrative Functions for Instructional Supervision

The study showed that 38.5% of the principals favoured delegating some of their responsibilities to create time for instructional supervision while 61.5% did not support the strategy. A higher number of heads of departments endorsed this policy at 87.3%. The findings indicated that very few principals were willing to delegate some responsibilities. This might be due to uncertainty on the part of the principals who feared comparisons from teachers' competences and/or feared losing their administrative powers. When principals delegate some responsibilities, it alleviates their burden hence creating time to check mode of content delivery by teachers, their professional documents, classroom attendance and assignments done by students. Sharing of administrative roles shortens chain of command and according to the views of head of department 52, “it eases convey of some decisions that require immediate response on instructional supervision which does not need a special command form principal.”

According to Fuller et al. (2011), there are some managerial functions under the principals which need full-time supervision for the smooth running of the school but others when delegated to other able administrators like deputies, senior teachers, heads of departments, class teachers, discipline masters, teachers on duty among others, principals create time to interact with teachers and students and monitor any upcoming behaviors. Principals when not having time for instructional supervision, some unbecoming behaviors in school might fail to be noticed among teachers and students which could adversely affect teaching and learning process. School as a collegial institution, some roles could be shared with competent personnel to allow principals to have more time for instructional supervision. Classroom management makes cradle of all other functionaries since students spend most of their time in the classroom than any other place calling principals to have more time and be involved with daily teaching and learning process. These findings of the principals and heads of departments are in concordance with findings of Norviewu-Mortt (2012) who postulated that when principals have enough time to oversee instructional supervision, their positive inputs, attributes and managerial skills on instructional supervision enable to model and maintain healthy collegial strategies which are innovative to improve on academic performance of their schools. Principals need time on instructional supervision that could create time to concentrate on teaching and learning processes for better performance by the students.

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

Conclusion

Study findings showed that there were some strategies that could be put in place to improve students' academic performance among secondary school students. They include and not limited to the provision of teachers in-service training, providing students with guidance and counseling sessions, involving teachers in decision making on academic matters, initiating income-generating projects, teachers varying teaching methods, involving parents in the learning of their children and delegating administrative functions for instructional supervision.

Recommendations

- i) Principals to devise strategies which are adaptive and applicable in classroom teaching and learning to enhance performance.
- ii) Parents to be actively involved with their children academic progress and performance.
- iii) Teachers to poses these strategies and apply them when teaching students.

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

References

- Akinnibagbe. (2002). The relationship between leadership and follower in-role performance and satisfaction with the leader: The mediating effects of empowerment and trust in the leader. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 28,(1), 4-19.
- Akpan, V. I., & Okoli, A. C. (2017). Effect of the use instructional materials on Academic performance of pupils in Ikwuano Abia State. *International Journal of Trend in Research and Development*, 4 (1), 247-250.
- Asrat Dagnew (2018). The relationship among parenting styles, academic self-concept, Academic motivation and students' academic achievement in Fasilo secondary school, *Research in Pedagogy*, 8 (2)
- Ayodele, J. B., Olabisi, R. & Michael, D. (2016). Principals' administrative strategies and students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2 (1), 2454-1362.
- Bayer, A (2016). Challenges facing principals in the first year at their schools. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4 (1), 192-199.
- Dangara, U. Y. (2015). The Impact of Instructional Supervision on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(10), 160-167.
- Farrell, T. S., & Bennis, K. (2013). Reflecting on ESL teacher beliefs and classroom practices: A case study. *RELC journal*, 44(2), 163-176.
- Fuller, E., Young, M., & Baker, B. D. (2011). Do Principal preparation programs influence student achievement through the building of teacher-team qualifications by the principal? An exploratory Analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47 (1), 173-216.
- Gbollie, C., & Keamu, H. P. (2017). Student academic performance: The role of motivation, strategies, and perceived factors hindering Liberian junior and senior high school students learning. *Education Research International*, 2017. 1-11
- Government of Kenya. (1999). Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Education in Kenya (The Koech Report). Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Harris, J.J. & Bennet, C. (2012). *Student Discipline: Legal, Empirical and Educational Perspectives*. Indiana: Indiana University Bloomington.
- Jepketer, A., Kombo, K., and Kyalo, D. N (2015). Teachers' Classroom Strategy for Enhancing Students' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nandi County, Kenya. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20 (7), 61-73.
- Kayani, M. M., Akbar, R. A., Faisal, S., Kayani, A., & Ghuman, M. A. (2017). Analysis of Socio-Economic Benefits of Education in Developing Countries: A Example of Pakistan. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 39(3), 75-92.
- Kiptum, C. (2018). Correlation between instructional leadership and students'academic achievement in public secondary schools in Baringo County, Kenya. *British Journal of Education*, 6 (1), 92-102.
- Kirui, K., & Osman, A. (2012). Head teachers' Perception of their roles in secondary schools in Kenya: A case study of Kericho Day Secondary School in Kericho County. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 2 (23), 267-272.

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology (2nd Ed)*. Delhi: New Age International Ltd.
- Mugenda , O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2010). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Mugambi, P. (2017). Influence of instructional supervision on the academic achievement of students in national examination in public secondary schools in Tinderet Sub County, Kenya . *Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Social Sciences*, 1 (2), 1-6.
- Nakpodia, E. (2011). *Handbook for Effective Supervision of Instruction (3rd Ed)*. London : Sage Publishers Ltd.
- Nambuya, O. B. (2013). School based factors influencing student's academic performance at kenya certificate of secondary education in Teso South District. *Unpublished Master of Education Project. University of Nairobi*.
- Namunga, N. W. (2017). Effects os supervision of Instructional Practices on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 7 (2), 418-427.
- Ndungu, B. W., Allan, G., & Bomett, E. J. (2015). Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation by Principals on Effective Teaching and Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Githunguri District. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(9), 10-17.
- Ngipuo, E. B. (2015). *Influence of head teachers' instructional supervision practices on pupil's performance in Kenya certificate of primary education, Kakuma refugee camp schools, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Nompula, Y. (2012). An investigation of strategies for integrated learning experiences and instruction in the teaching of creative art subjects. *South African Journal of Education*, 32, 293-306.
- Norviewu-Mortty, E. K. (2012). Principals' strategies for improving the academic achievement of students of disadvantaged rural junior high schools in Ghana. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/493> on 4th July 2018
- Nyagasia, O. P., Waweru, N. S., & Njuguna , W. F. (2013). Factors Influencing academic achievements in public schools in Central Kenya: An effective schools' perspective . *Educational Research International*, 2 (2), 174-184.
- Nzoka, J. T. and Orodho, A., J., (2014). School Management and Students' Academic Performance: How Effective are Strategies being Employed by School Managers in Secondary Schools in Embu North District, Embu County, Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4 (9), 86-99.
- Ouma, M. A; Simatwa , E.M.W and Serem, T, D.K. (2014). Management of pupil discipline in Kenya: A Case Study of Kisumu Municipality. *Educational Research*, 4(5), 374-386.
- Okendu, J. N. (2012). The influence of instructional process ans supervision on academic performance of secondary school students of River State, Nigeria. *Academic Research International Journal*, 3 (1), 147- 151.
- Rahman, F., Jumani, N. B., Akhter, Y., Chisthi, S. H., & Ajmal, M. (2011). Relationship between training of teachers and Effectiveness Teaching. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2 (4), 150-160.

Citation: Ndambuki, M. L; Nduku, E & Mwaniki, C. (2020). Principals' Instructional Strategies and students' academic performance in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 4(9), 84 – 99.

Saito, E., & Sato, M. (2012). Lesson study as an instrument of school performance: A case of Japanese practices. *Management in Education*, 26(4), 181-186.

Too, C., Kimutai, K. C., & Zacharia, K. (2012). The impact of head teachers' supervision of teachers on students' academic performance. *The Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(3), 299-306.

Wachira, F. M., Gitumu, M., & Mbugua, Z. (2017). Effects of Principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Kieni West Sub County, Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 72-86.