

Influence of Administrative Practices on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Matungulu Sub-County, Kenya

By

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the influence of administrative practices on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Matungulu Sub-county, Kenya. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the 230 participating students and 40 teachers in 10 public secondary schools in Matungulu sub-county. All the Principals (10) from all the 10 participating schools were purposively sampled. Three sets of instruments were used to collect data. These included the Students' Questionnaire (SQ); the Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ) and the Principals' Questionnaire (PQ). Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used in data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the influence of administrative practices on academic performance was strongly positive and significant ($r = .844$, $P \leq 0.5$). The study recommends among others that school principals should intensify the routine checking of professional records by teachers to ensure adherence to the dictates of the professional records.

Key words: Administrative practices, students, academic performance.

1.0 Introduction

Contemporary educational reform places a great premium on the effective instructional leadership and management of schools. The logic of this position is that an orderly school environment, that is efficient and well managed, provides the preconditions for enhanced student learning (Nyagosia, 2011). Effective instructional leadership is generally recognized as the most important characteristic of school administrators (Hoy & Hoy, 2009; Lezotte, 2010). Effective instructional leadership has been shown to result in school improvement and effectiveness. The indicators of schools having effective instructional leaders have been shown through research to include factors like teacher morale and satisfaction, school and organizational culture, teacher effectiveness and time on task and improved academic performance (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Reid, 1987; Lezotte, 2010; MacNeil, 1992; Watkins, 1992; Wilson, 2005)

Wamulla (2013) has argued that the importance of the head teacher's leadership is one of the clearest of the messages from school effectiveness research. He draws attention to the fact that there is no evidence of effective schools with weak leadership. Leadership is not simply about the quality of individual leaders, although this is of course important, it is also about the role leaders play, their style of management, their relationship to the vision, values and goals of the school and their approach to change. Leadership at work in educational institutions is thus a dynamic process where an individual is not only responsible for the groups' tasks, but also actively seeks the collaboration and commitment of all the group members in achieving group goals in a particular context (Cole, 2000).

Maicibi (2003) contends that, without a proper leadership style, effective performance cannot be realized in schools. Even if the school has all the required instructional materials and financial resources, it will not be able to use them effectively if the students are not directed in their use of the materials or if the teachers who guide in the usage are not properly trained to implement them effectively. Leadership in this context pursues effective performance in schools because it does not only examine tasks to be accomplished and who executes them, but also seeks to include greater reinforcement characteristics like recognition, conditions of service and building of morale, coercion and remuneration (Balunywa, 2000).

Literature reveals that three characteristics have frequently been found to be associated with successful leadership; these are: strength of purpose, involving other staff in decision making and professional authority in the process of teaching and learning (Wamulla, 2013). Research by Lezotte (1991) indicates that in successful schools, the head teacher is the key agent in bringing about change in many of the factors affecting school effectiveness. He adds that an effective head teacher is, in most cases, not simply the most senior administrator or manager, but is in some sense a leading professional. This implies involvement in and knowledge about what goes on in the classroom, including the curriculum, teaching strategies and monitoring of pupil progress (Wamulla, 2013). In practice, this requires the provision of a variety of forms of support to teachers, including encouragement and practical assistance.

The head teacher acts like a company chief executive officer. He/she coordinates and controls all the activities in the school either directly or indirectly through delegation. Whichever the case, his/her physical presence in the school is important in order to supervise all the managerial aspects (Reche, Bundi, Riungu & Mbugua, 2012). The major duties and responsibilities of school head include; holding staff meetings to facilitate coordination of various activities in the school, checking teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans and internal supervision of curriculum implementation through physical observation of teachers' while lessons are in progress. All these functions require the school head to be physically present in the school.

A study by Reche et al (2012) on factors contributing to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public day primary schools conducted in Kenya in Mwimbi division, Maara district established that; principals are holding few staff meetings while all head teachers randomly check the teachers' schemes of work only once a term; most head teachers check lesson plans once a month, and that majority of the head teachers do not at all physically observe classes conducted by the teachers in a given term. In addition, the findings revealed that there was less monitoring and reporting of the progress of the schools activities while head teachers do not follow up on curriculum implementation during the course of the term which could be a factor contributing to poor performance in national examinations. The current study sought to establish the influence of administrative practices on students' academic performance in Matungulu sub-county.

Researchers generally agree that a combination of familial, school, teacher and students factors exert significant influence on the educational aspirations and academic achievements of children (Kimani, Kara & Njagi, 2013; Nyagosia, 2011; Reehe et al, 2012). These factors can contribute to poor academic performance or improved academic performance. Academic performance in public secondary schools in Matungulu sub-county has always been below average. Information provided by the Matungulu Sub-county Education Office (2016) indicates that the sub-county has hardly attained a mean score of 5.0 for the period 2009 – 2014 (Table 1) and thus the concern for this study.

Table 1: Performance in mean scores of public secondary schools in Matungulu Sub-county from 2009 – 2014

Year	Sub-county Mean Score
2009	3.50
2010	3.84
2011	4.911
2012	4.349
2013	4.453
2014	4.80
Average Mean Score	4.309

Source: Matungulu Sub-county Education Office (2016)

Academic performance is obviously a result of a number of factors. It is, therefore, important to investigate and expose factors which are contributing to poor academic performance in Matungulu sub-county. This study therefore sought to investigate the administrative practices influencing students' academic performance in secondary schools in Matungulu sub-county. The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

Ho₁: There is no statistically significant influence of administrative practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Matungulu sub-county.

2.0 Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was all the 32 public secondary schools with an approximate population of 385 teachers and 2,300 form three students. Public secondary schools in Matungulu sub-county were stratified into Extra-county schools, County schools and Sub-county schools. The number of schools randomly selected from each stratum are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample size for schools

School Category	Available schools per strata	Proportional allocation	Schools allocated per category
Extra county schools	1	$\frac{1}{32} * 10 = 0.3125$	1
County schools	8	$\frac{8}{32} * 10 = 2.5$	2
Sub-county schools	23	$\frac{23}{32} * 10 = 7.18$	7
Total	32		10

Source: Matungulu Sub-county Education Office (2016)

The number of students, teachers and principals from the 10 schools selected for the sample are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sample size for students, teachers and principals

Category	Population	Sample size	Sample per school
Students	2,300	230	23
Teachers	385	40	4
Principals	32	10	1
Total	2,717	280	28

Source: Matungulu Sub-county Education Office (2016)

The sample is as shown in Table 3 above. The study employed three types of research instruments. These were students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire and school heads' questionnaire. Analysis of the data was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer program (version 20). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

3.0 Results and discussion

Teaching experience

The study sought to find out from the teachers and principals the number of years they have served in the teaching service and by extension the current school that they were currently serving. Analysis of this parameter is shown in table 3.

Table 4: Teaching and headship experience in high school

	Teachers experience in high school		Principals experience as head in high school	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
5 years and below	7	17.9	3	30.0
6 to 10 years	7	17.9	5	50.0
11 to 15 years	11	28.2	1	10.0
above 16 years	14	35.9	1	10.0
Total	39	100.0	10	100.0

It is clear from table 4 that about 64 percent of the teachers had worked in the teaching service for over 11 years while about 18 percent had worked for between 6-10 years and a similar number had also worked for below 5 years. This means that the teachers had the knowledge of whatever problems that are affecting the teaching service particularly in relation to the study variables. With regard to the principals, the study found that most (50%) of them had served as school heads for a period of between 6-10; years while about 30 percent of them had served for a period of less than five years (table 4). A few (20%) however had served for a period of over eleven years.

Professional qualification

The study further sought to find out the level of professional qualification for the teachers and principals and the results are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Professional qualification (Teachers and Principals)

	Teachers qualification		Principals qualification	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	1	2.6		
Diploma (D.Ed)	4	10.3	1	10.0
Degree(B.Ed)	31	79.4	4	40.0
Masters (M.Ed)	3	7.7	5	50.0
Total	39	100.0	10	100.0

Table 5 shows the distribution of teachers and principals in terms of their professional qualification. It can be observed that majority of the teachers are degree holders in education with about 10 percent of them being diploma holders, while about 8 percent of them are master of education degree holders. On the other hand, about half (50%) of the principals are master of education degree holders while 40 percent of them are bachelor in education holders. This is a clear indication that school headship is done by qualified professionals who are capable of understanding the problems bedeviling the sector

3.1 Influence of administrative practices on students' academic performance

Instructional leadership and management is touted as the epitome of good academic performance. An orderly school environment, that is efficient and well managed, provides the preconditions for enhanced student learning (Nyagasia, 2011). Effective instructional leadership is generally recognized as the most important characteristic of school administrators (Hoy & Hoy, 2009; Lezotte, 2010). According to Reche et al (2012) the major duties and responsibilities of school head include; holding staff meetings to facilitate coordination of various activities in the school, checking teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans and internal supervision of curriculum implementation through physical observation of teachers' while lessons are in progress.

On the basis of the aforementioned, the main objective of the study sought to assess the influence of administrative practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Matungulu sub-county. In order to achieve this, it was important to gather teachers and principals views on the frequency of performing the various administrative practices in school. The measurement scale adopted was a five point scale in which a score of 5 represented always, 4 = sometimes, 3 = neutral, 2 = rarely and 1 = never. Analysis of the administrative practices from teachers and principals perspective is as shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 6: Administrative practices (teachers' viewpoint)

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES N = 39	Mean	S. D
1. Checking teachers lesson notes, Records of work with schemes.	4.38	.990
2. Evaluate performance of teachers	4.46	.884
3. Checking teachers punctuality in Classroom	4.54	.854
4. Encourage teachers to benchmark/ Visit other schools and learn from colleagues	3.90	1.209
5. Supervising teachers to ensure they complete the syllabus on time	4.54	.822
6. Holding regular meetings with teachers to check on performance update	4.51	.823
7. Involving teachers to decide on best strategies to improve teaching and learning	4.38	1.091
8. Purchasing and maintaining teaching and learning materials	4.28	1.075
9. Makes decision on who to admit in the school (cut off points)	3.74	1.332
10. Makes decisions on staff development activities	4.10	1.252
11. Building teamwork among teachers to ensure they support one another	4.18	1.211

Table 6 shows the viewpoint of teachers with regard to the frequency in which various administrative practices were carried out by the principals as school administrators. It can be noticed from the table that majority of the teachers' were of the view that principals always checked teachers lesson notes, records and schemes of work (mean = 4.38). Principals always evaluated teachers performance (mean = 4.46) and always checked on the punctuality of teachers (mean=5.54). Similarly, supervising teachers to ensure they complete the syllabus on time (mean = 4.54); holding regular meetings with teachers to check on performance update (mean =4.51) and building teamwork among teachers to ensure they support one another (mean = 4.18) were always being done. It should be noted however, that, encouraging teachers to benchmark/visit other schools and learn from colleagues (mean = 3.90) and making decisions on who to admit in the school (mean =3.74) were done sparingly (sometimes).

In order to corroborate the teachers' views, it was important to find the views of the principals on how the administrative practices were being discharged from their viewpoint. Analysis of this is shown in table 7

Table 7: Administrative practices (Principals' viewpoint)

Administrative practices N= 10	Mean	S.D
1. Checking teachers lesson notes, records of work with schemes.	4.50	.972
2. Evaluate performance of teachers	4.80	.422
3. Checking teachers punctuality in classroom	4.70	.483
4. Encourage teachers to benchmark/visit other schools and learn from colleagues	3.90	.568
5. Supervising teachers to ensure they complete the syllabus on time	5.00	.000
6. Holding regular meetings with teachers to check on performance update	4.80	.422
7. Involving teachers to decide on best strategies to improve teaching and learning	4.80	.422
8. Purchasing and maintaining teaching and learning materials	4.90	.316
9. Makes decision on who to admit in the school (cut off points)	4.20	1.317

10. Makes decisions on staff development activities	4.50	.707
11. Building teamwork among teachers to ensure they support one another	4.70	.483

It can be seen from table 7 that principals always checked teachers lesson notes, records and scheme of work (mean = 4.50) and always evaluate teachers performance (mean = 4.80). They also supervise teachers to ensure completion of syllabus on time (mean = 5.00), always hold regular meetings with teachers to update themselves on performance (mean = 4.80). In addition, the principals always do purchasing and maintenance of teaching and learning materials and make decisions on staff development activities among others. All in all, principals always perform all the practices that were mentioned in the questionnaire. This corroborates well with the view of the teachers who also averred that most of the time, principals performed the administrative practices. According to Reche et al (2012) in a study on factors contributing to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public day primary schools conducted in Mwimbi division, Maara district established that; principals are holding few staff meetings, all head teachers randomly check the teachers' schemes of work only once a term, most head teachers check lesson plans once a month, and that majority of the head teachers do not at all physically observe classes conducted by the teachers in a given term.

Testing Hypothesis: The null hypothesis stated thus:

Ho₁: Administrative practice have no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Matungulu Sub-County.

In order to test the validity of this claim, simple linear regression analysis was run at the .05 level of significance and the following results were found as shown in tables 8 and 9.

Table 8: Influence of administrative practices on student academic performance
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.841 ^a	.708	.671	.13176

a. Predictors: (Constant), Administrative practices

From the table 8, it can be seen that R = .841 implying that there was a very strong positive relationship between administrative practices and academic performance. The R square value of .708 also shows that administrative practices accounted to nearly 71 percent of the total variance in academic performance.

In order to test whether the administrative practices could predict academic performance, ANOVA analysis as shown in table 9 shows that the model summary as shown was a good predictor (F(1,8) = 19.36; P ≤ .05).

Table 9: ANOVA for influence of administrative practices on students' academic performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.336	1	.336	19.360	.002 ^b
	Residual	.139	8	.017		
	Total	.475	9			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Administrative practices

Further, the partial regression coefficient reveals that administrative practices statistically and significantly predicted academic performance of students, $\beta = .841$; $t(9) = 4.40$, $p < .05$. (Table 5)

Table 10: Regression coefficients: influence of administrative practices on student's academic performance.

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
		Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.806	.682		2.648	.029
	Administrative practices	.611	.139	.841	4.400	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

From the findings in tables 8-10, it is clear that the administrative practices and academic performance are not independent of each other. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that administrative practises have no influence on students' academic performance in Matungulu sub-county was rejected at the 0.05 level of significance and conclusion was made that academic performance and administrative practices are statistically dependent.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, some of the administrative practices which principals performed include checking teachers lesson notes, records and scheme of work (mean = 4.50) and evaluating teachers performance (mean = 4.80); supervising teachers to ensure completion of syllabus on time (mean = 5.00), and holding regular meetings with teachers to update themselves on performance (mean = 4.80). In addition, the principals always do purchasing and maintenance of teaching and learning materials and make decisions on staff development activities among others. From the analysis, the study found out that there was a very strong positive relationship between administrative practices and academic performance ($r = R = .841$) and the coefficient of determination expressed by R square value of .708 shows that administrative practices accounted to nearly 71 percent of the total variance in academic performance.

This study found a strong positive and significant relationship between academic performance and administrative practices by the principals. This therefore implies that academic performance and administrative practices are statistically dependent. Thus a conclusion can be made to the effect that academic performance of learners is highly predicated on administrative practices. This means that if the principal is highly engaged in supervision of teachers, checking professional record and coordinating school activities, then the academic performance will greatly improve. The study recommends that principals should intensify the routine checking of professional records by teachers to ensure adherence to the dictates of the professional records. This effort must be supported by the quality assurance officers from the ministry of education who will be doing external quality reviews on a regular basis

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