

# Influence of Principal Management Practices of Academic Progress Records on Students' Academic Performance in KCSE in Public Schools in Mashuru Sub-County

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### Abstract

*The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of principals' management practices of academic progress records on students' academic performance in KCSE in public schools in Mashuru Sub-County. According to records available from the office of the Kajiado County Director of Education, the performance of students in KCSE in Mashuru Sub-County has not only been poor but also spiralling downwards. This has culminated in only 23 students attaining a grade of C+ in a period of four years. The minimum grade for university entry for KCSE graduates is C+ whereas majority of the candidates in the subcounty are scoring below D+. The study utilized a descriptive research design. The target population consisted of 45 principals, 540 teachers and 585 student leaders totalling to 1170. Simple random sampling was employed to select a sample size of 13 principals, 54 teachers and 56 student leaders. Data was collected by use of interview schedule for principals and questionnaires for teachers and student leaders. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages with the help of SPSS. The study concluded that that principals' management practice of academic progress records influence students' academic Performance in KCSE in public secondary schools, hence compromising the quality of examination grades achieved in the sub-county. From the students, it was established that this activity had no definite time in many schools and the principals cited that they were facing a number of challenges which hindered efficiency in the practice of management of academic progress records, translating poor academic results. The findings of the study will help the Ministry of Education in formulating of assessment modules for students' academic progress as well as empower the principals to enhance performance.*

**Keywords:** *Principals' Management Practice, Academic Progress Records, Students' Academic Performance in KCSE, Public Secondary Schools*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Instructional supervision endeavours to improve students' achievement. The principal's task is to initiate academic activities leading to a successful realisation of set goals and targets. Principals are leaders and managers of all that take place in schools. They are charged with ensuring that educational strategies are put in place to support effective teaching and learning in schools (Naomi, Ronoh & Tanui, 2016). Ayako (2009) observed that effective school principals set goals for academic achievement by harnessing their resources to attain them. They are conversant with timetabling procedures for effective teaching, management of professional records and academic progress records, class visitation as well as to monitoring, setting and administration of examinations. Namunga (2017) points out that academic performance could be improved if instructional performance is heightened with good teacher-student observation, frequent checking of teachers' professional documents, induction of new teachers and having instructional conferences to improve teaching and learning. This is corroborated by Mutinda (2016) and Reche, Bundi, and Riungu (2012) who found that if principals conduct their role effectively in instructional management, there is inevitable influence on improved students' academic achievement in KCSE.

Bernard and Goodyear (2002) stated that some supervisors will not be able to carry out instructional evaluation effectively if they are not well qualified and trained in techniques of evaluation, versed with subject content, good organization skills and ready to accept teachers' idea and interest. Danielson and MCGreal (2000) cited limited supervision experience and skills as being a problem in teacher supervision where supervisors lacked enough training in providing constructive feedback while maintaining professional relationship. Mbera (2015) asserts that many school principals experience great difficulty in balancing their administrative duties with their curriculum leadership or instructional function.

In Kenya, principals have the responsibility of directly influencing goal setting, tasks accomplishment and supervising curriculum implementation. They are expected to have working knowledge of effective instructional strategies in order to understand the instructional needs of their students and teaching staff to effectively address emerging needs (Blankstein, 2010). Principals are bound to help teachers to comprehend instructional goals and work with them to improve content delivery with clear understanding that what student learn is critical.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

According to records available from the office of the Kajiado County Director of Education (2020), the performance of students in KCSE in Mashuru Sub-County has not only been poor but also spiralling downwards. This has culminated in only 23 students attaining a grade of C+ in a period of four years. The minimum grade for university entry for KCSE graduates is C+ whereas majority of the candidates in the subcounty are scoring below D+ (CDE-Kajiado County, 2020). The poor performance calls for a scrutiny of what could be the cause to this status quo. Just like many public schools in Kenya, schools in Mashuru Sub-County have the necessary resources – including textbooks, furniture, classrooms and trained teachers. Despite such effort, the performance in K.C.S.E continues to decline. There is therefore need to establish whether despite all efforts put in place by all concerned educational stakeholders there exists a link between principals' instructional supervision and the students' academic performance in KCSE since 2016 in the sub-county.

### **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of principals' management practices of academic progress records on students' academic performance in KCSE in public schools in Mashuru Sub-County.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 Systems Theory**

The Systems Theory which was developed by Ludwig Von Batenlaffe (Patton & McMahon, 2006). A school as a system is composed of various parts which work in an interrelated manner for accomplishment of stated goals. A school exists in the form of an open system because it receives input from the society and it also gives output to the society. The school receives curriculum, teaching materials, finances, teachers, parents and students. The principal coordinates the activities as he/she performs the instructional supervision tasks. Checking of professional documents, class visitation, checking students' academic progress records and implementation of instructional programmes play a major role in the realization of the institution's objectives. The teacher, students and parent as representatives of the environment influence the function of the system at greater percentage. It is also applicable that the institution as a process unit shapes the environment. Therefore, effective instructional supervision such as principal management practice of academic progress records by principals plays a major role in the success of an individual student, school and the entire society.

#### **2.1.2 Role Theory**

Role Theory which was advanced by Gatzels and Egon (1975). They looked at an organisation as a social system. The theory espouses a social system where individuals define their role, role of others and expectations (Nyongesa, 2007). The theory postulates that people in their position use their roles to perform their functions and their roles dictate their outward mannerisms. This affects the responsibilities and the expectations in regard to the roles and more so in educational institutions (Hindsin, 2007). According to this theory, education has various positions; namely, principals, HODs, teachers, parents, education officials, the government, and students and if one fails in their role then the system fails. A school receives teachers and students from the society and the head teacher coordinates the activities as he/she performs his/her instructional supervision tasks: checking of the professional records, pupils' notes/exercise books, classroom visitation, provision of learning and teaching resources, checking of students and instructional programmes play a major role in the realization of good performance (Perker & Wikman, 2005).

### **2.2 Empirical Literature**

In monitoring students' progress, Halverson (2005) observed that school leaders should have intermittent measures of student learning across the classes and that collaborative focus should be encouraged on problems of teaching and learning. Meetings to discuss school instructional initiative should be organised and learning goals discussed based on student achievement data. A principal who provides instructional leadership promotes performance through frequent monitoring of students' progress. The strategies for monitoring student progress is keenly based on the usage of student data for instructional decision making, meeting regularly with teachers to review students' progress, and continuously checking on student progress data to assess teacher effectiveness. Principals are basically concerned with value-addition and commitment to raise student standards, school improvement and facilitating the process of change (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010).

Lydia and Nasongo (2009) observed that the most outstanding factor that influence students' performance in examinations has to do with the school management and that principals play this significant role due to their tasks and roles. According to Bush, Kigunda and Moorosi (2011), effective leadership promotes favourable school and learners' outcome. Principals' leadership as instructional supervisors in checking students' academic progress plays an important role in the outcomes of the set goals. It is the genius of the leadership of the

principal that mobilises human and material resources and creates the necessary climate of students' productivity in quality grades (Pont, Nusche & Hopkins, 2008).

The key function through which principals' leadership appears to shape students' outcomes includes setting directions, selecting and developing teachers, establishing supportive conditions and shaping core values. Alimi and Akinfolarin (2012) conducted a study on the impact of instructional supervision on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Their study found out that there is significant impact on checking pupils' notes on academic performance in English language subject area. Williams (2003) and Campbell (2008) assert that, there is a significant impact of checking of students' academic performance in English language subject in secondary schools in New York City, USA. They argued that checking of student progress is a mediating influence on teachers, instructional community and school organization that lead to high performances.

McDevitt (2008) on forming personalized goals and monitoring academic progress established that students' academic self-regulation on their goal directed learning strategies related to attainment of educational standards. The consistent monitoring of students' progress by principals saw an increase in their academic performance in KCSE. Pansri (2008) affirmed the importance and usefulness of providing extra coaching to pupils who are preparing for major national examinations. Frequent exposure of students to tests can improve examination performance. Promptness in giving and making homework assists in identifying areas of weakness to be improved.

## 1.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was used to guide this study. The target population consisted of 45 principals, 540 teachers and 585 student leaders totalling to 1170. Simple random sampling was employed to select a sample size of 13 principals, 54 teachers and 56 student leaders. Data was collected by use of interview schedule for principals and questionnaires for teachers and student leaders. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages. Data was analysed with the help of the SPSS version 27. Analysed data was presented using frequency tables, pie-charts and bar graphs.

## 4.0 KEY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Response Rate

Results demonstrate that all the students filled in and returned the questionnaires while 47 questionnaires administered to the teachers were properly filled and returned. Of the 13 targeted interviews, the researcher managed to successfully interview 11 principals. The results show that the study had a response rate of over 80% as shown on Table 1.

| Table      | 1:   | Sampled     | Successful   | Return Rate |
|------------|------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Response   | Rate | Respondents | Participants |             |
| Principals |      | 13          | 11           | 84.6%       |
| Teachers   |      | 54          | 47           | 87.0%       |
| Students   |      | 56          | 56           | 100%        |