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Influence of Principals' Management of Capacity Building on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Mombasa County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Students' academic performance is an area of great concern to all stakeholders in education worldwide. Schools in Mombasa County have recorded poor students' academic performance in the last five years. The study sought to establish the extent to which the Principal Capacity building influence affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Mombasa County and propose intervention strategies that can be adopted to improve students' academic performance. The research question of the study was stated as follows: To what extent does principals' management of capacity building influence academic performance in public secondary schools in Mombasa County? The study used a descriptive research design. The target population of the study was 33 principals and 825 teachers in 33 public secondary schools in Mombasa County. The study used a survey to collect data for all the Principals and applied simple random, stratified and purposive random sampling techniques in selecting a sample size of teachers 248 from the target population. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the principals and teachers of the department. The validity of the questionnaires was ascertained using researchers, while the reliability of the instruments was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Quantitative data were analyzed using percentages meaning the study recommends the need for Principals to intensify the capacity-building teacher in order to give regular feedback to teachers.

Keywords: *Principal, Students' academic performance, capacity building, public secondary school*

1. Background to the Study

Academic performance is a key feature in education. Narad and Abdullah (2016) define academic performance to be a determinant of the success or failure of a school. It defines knowledge gained which is measured through examinations. In Kenya, the summative assessment measuring academic performance at secondary school is the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination. The Republic of Kenya Constitution (2010) emphasizes that secondary education is a fundamental human right of every Kenyan child and the success of the system is the quality of graduates produced at the end of the system.

Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Haris, Leithwood, Qu, and Brown (2010) assert that the principal fosters management practices; working methods that enhance quality consequently influencing students' performance. Castler (2010) opines management practices include students' discipline, teaching and learning resources, and supervision of curriculum. Principals should provide supportive practices for teachers while ensuring utilization of requisite materials, instructional supervision, and in-service programs as and when due. The curriculum methods, provision of resources and the school climate bear the impression of the principal (Yambo, 2014). Principal's management practices influence students' academic performance.

Following a universal prohibition of all corporal punishment in schools in the United States of America, a number of approaches are recommended that influence students' education that incorporates counsellors, students and parents in reviewing school discipline policies (Cameron, 2006). According to Robers, Kemp and Truman (2014), disciplined students conform to societal expectations which include passing in their examinations. In 24 developed countries, learning is delivered inclusive of extra-curricular activities, discipline management, and enhanced pedagogy that strongly impacted on students' motivation in learning (OECD, 2011). Zhao and Kuo (2015) posit that disciplined students perform well in examinations. Discipline enhances academic performance. These approaches enhanced students' academic performance.

In Tanzania, Heads of schools are allowed to cane students; however, this is being overdone by teachers (Haki

elimu, 2011). In 2019, a study was done on corporal punishment and its effect in national examinations. 15 schools were randomly sampled for a survey research in which 567 students participated. The findings indicated that harsh punishment adversely affected performance in national examinations (Stein, Steen camp and Tangi, 2019). According to Masista (2008), discipline of students is key to their excelling in studies. A principal must have in place a working discipline policy. In Kenya caning was done away with as it contravened the Children's Act of 2001. According to the Education Act (2013), the Principal is required to have standards that ensure moral and social conduct is observed in schools in form of clear rules and regulations. Discipline is high where principals are inspirational and integrative and discipline policies are developed and enforced (Okendu, 2012). Principals' management of discipline is a precursor to good performance by students.

Sergiovanni (2009) posits that principals are better placed to observe instructional activities in classrooms and give objective helpful cues for the teachers to improve instruction and note the need for professional development. Strategies employed by teachers to improve students' learning should meet set educational and teaching standards (Darling Hammond, 2012). According to Stoop (2011), effective teachers have a comprehensive pedagogical and content matter that influences students' achievement in test scores. What is taught and how it is taught determines students' academic performance (Al Hassan, 2014). Principals have a responsibility of providing training of teachers so that they discharge instructional duties in a professional manner.

The need for capacity building was dependent on the type of personality of the teacher as well as the quality of pre and in-service offered by the principal Adu and Osei-Poku (2012). Teachers engage in instructional dialogue within and outside the school for improving content, pedagogical knowledge, test practice, and attitude to students' learning requirements (Stoll, 2009). Capacity building includes workshops, school visits, mentoring/coaching, and ICT integration in learning. It is the Principals' duty to identify teachers' needs for professional development. A report on Education Global Practice done in 68 low and middle economies across the globe indicates a dire need for in service training in order to enhance quality learning. In India, Kenya, and Tanzania, most teachers had knowledge but were weak in explaining concepts (World Bank, 2019). In Mozambique, 15 % of the teachers could not answer questions on teaching methods. According to the TSC Act of 2012 section, 35 asserted teachers must undertake career progression and professional development programs in order to be competent in the subject matter in areas of specialization (ROK, 2013). Enhancing teacher capacity leads to improved performance in national examinations.

In line with the global education for all declaration, the government of Pakistan gives priority to ensuring that schools have adequate instructional materials and laboratories (Dahar and Faize, 2011). Principals should encourage the use of resources to aid the delivery of the curriculum. Bloomberg (2011) opines that instructional materials provide a platform for learners to want to learn more. Textbooks provide an opportunity for private study and reference. In a classroom, setting teaching and learning becomes easier with textbooks (Olaniayan and Ojo, 2008). In Lesotho, 160 out of 250 secondary schools lack libraries according to a report by the World Bank (2008) on resources in secondary schools in sub-Saharan countries. Parents pool resources to buy basic textbooks or rent them for 20% of the price. Students' test scores are adversely affected by a lack of basic resources. Attakumah (2015) did a study on textbook book availability and students' achievement in high school. Findings indicate students with a high textbook ratio perform well in West African School Certificate Examinations.

In Kenya best performing students are attracted to national schools which have the best resources (Mbiti and Lucas, 2011). Core course work texts are availed to only 5% of students in rural Kenya. Some students go through school without a textbook in any subject. Only prestigious schools have libraries stock supplementary materials (World Bank, 2008). According to Education 2030 framework for action, all schools should be equitably stocked with textbooks based on curricular frameworks and supplementary materials that engage students in multi-dimensional learning as well as multimedia and Digital resources (UNESCO, 2017). Principals should encourage the use of resources to the aid delivery of the curriculum.

Zepeda (2015) opines that supervision of teachers is a two-way process meant to improve students' performance in examinations. It is a guide to identifying teacher development needs. In Athens, shared leadership in schools is encouraged as a way to enhance students' academic outcomes. According to Kouisanov (2011), effective principals focus on the supervision of teachers in order to improve instruction through feedback and encouragement. Principals are visionary leaders who contribute to the good performance of their students in examinations. Githuba and Nyabwa (2008) note supervision of teaching by the principal influences provision of tuition, a proper testing policy, syllabus coverage, teacher induction courses, and team building. According to Osman and Mukuna (2013), Principals need to have adequate knowledge of instruction. Principals liaise with Quality and Assurance Officers from the Ministry of Education to engage in evaluative learning and get cues on best practices.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Principals' management practices are manifested in setting proper and achievable goals, good supervisory practices, and staff professional development as well as providing conducive teaching and learning environment in Mombasa County. National academic performance has continued to be poor with University admission grades of C+ to be a declining from 31.53% in 2015 to 11.38% in 2018 recording 15.6% margin drop (Quality Assurance and Standards Office, Mombasa County, 2018). Poor academic Performance would greatly affect learner progression from one level to another. Despite support from the government of Kenya and other stakeholders, the performance of students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Mombasa County is consistently low with more than two-thirds of students scoring less than the average C+ which marks the minimum entry to the university.

The government of Kenya has put in place mitigation measures in an attempt to change this trend. Despite all these interventions, academic performance in public secondary schools in Mombasa has been generally poor and declining. There are insufficient empirical studies on principal's management practices such as discipline as supervision of teaching and learning, staff professional development, and use of resources which are key to promoting effective teaching for enhanced students' performance.

1.2. Research Question of the Study

The study was guided by the following research question: To what extent does principals' management of capacity building influence academic performance in public secondary schools in Mombasa County?

2. Literature Review

According to Okungu (2013), capacity building involves innovative ways of handling new and existing content by identifying a new way of doing things, adopting best practices trends, and technology, and building supportive community networks. Teachers can learn from each other as they improve their knowledge of content and pedagogy (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). According to Hauser, Stebla, and Vogt (2015), teacher professional development is designed with a view to creating a positive change for students' academic performance. It empowers the teacher with information on content, pedagogy, and skills in ICT to allow integration in learning. A study drawing on qualitative and case studies of 30 countries - American, European, and Asian countries done by Darlington Hammond, Chieng Wei, Andree, and Richardson (2009) on the types of professional development provided to teachers realized the following percentages of preferences: workshops 91.5%, school visits 22%, coaching/mentoring 45%, research 39.8%, and peer observation 63%. These findings indicated that teachers preferred workshops through which they can develop professionally. School visits done for observation were least preferred. This study sought to find out which programs principals offer on professional development to teachers and their effect on performance in students' academic performance in public schools in Mombasa County, Kenya.

In Nigeria, Uchendu (2011) conducted research on capacity building programs and secondary school teachers' work in a descriptive survey in Cross Rivers State. The study focused on the provision of capacity building. A survey research design was used and 200 schools were sampled. The study indicated that teachers preferred coaching, mentoring, workshops, ICT training, and conferences. The least preferred was in-service training. The findings indicate a significant relationship between capacity building and teachers' work performance. This study sought to identify principals' provision of capacity building programs using the survey design for 33 principals and 248 teachers on academic performance in Mombasa County, Kenya.

In Kenya, a study was done by Kyalo, Jepketer, and Kombo (2015) on the relationship between teachers' capacity building and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nandi County. Thirty schools were sampled with a sample comprising the total population of Principals, 85 teachers, and 136 students in a descriptive study design. The findings indicate that teacher capacity development influences quality of education depending on effective teaching skills, knowledge, and attitude acquired by teachers through continuous training in pre and in-service courses. In a case study adopted by Kiriskoi (2015) on the Integration of ICT education in a secondary school in Kajiado County with a population of 535 students and 23 teachers, a sample of 30 students and 18 teachers participated in the study. The findings indicate a significant improvement in school mean from 6.2 in 2007 to 8.4 in 2015. This indicates that academic performance increased with the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. These studies do not address the influence of principals' provision of capacity building to teachers on students' academic performance in Mombasa County, Kenya.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

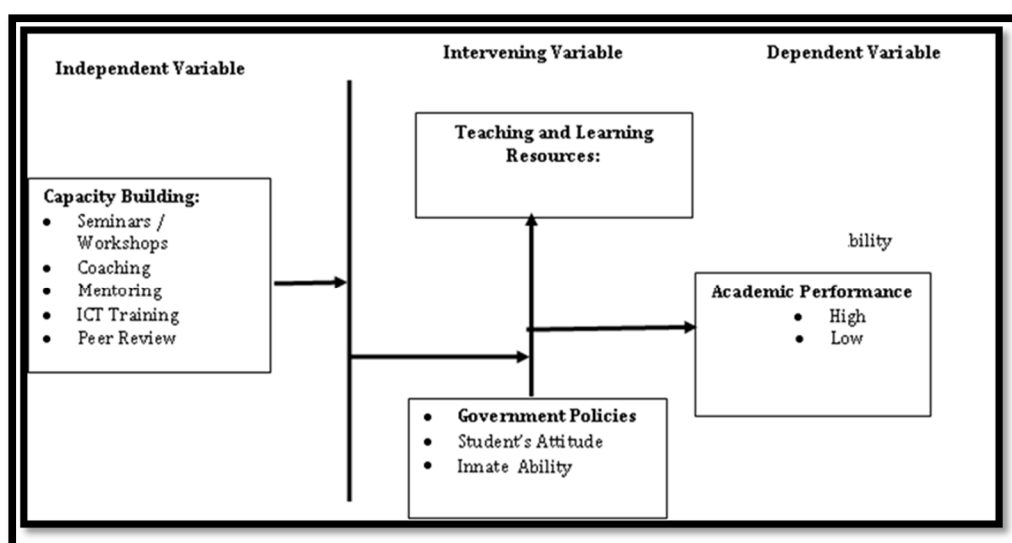


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between Principals' Management Practices and Students' Academic Performance

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. Research design is viewed in form of its description and interpretation without manipulation (Jwan, 2010). In addition, Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) assert that descriptive survey design helps a researcher to gather, summarize, present, and interpret information for the purpose of clarification. Any research undertaking involves lots of cost implications; hence, this design will be deliberately selected for the study because it allows for quick data collection at a comparatively cheap cost (Grinnel, & Yvonne, 2013). This approach was suitable since the researcher intended to collect comprehensive information through the description to establish the principals' management practices and their influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Mombasa County, Kenya. The design is appropriate for the study because it was conducted in a setting that required direct responses from respondents while investing in existing phenomena without manipulating the variables. The study adopted the descriptive research method which is meant to collect data in order to answer questions about the current status of the subject or topic of the study. Descriptive methods use formal instruments to study the preferences, attitudes, practices, concerns, or interests of the subjects under study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The target population is a complete set of individuals, cases, or objects with some common characteristics to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Records at County Education Office show that Mombasa County has 33 principals and 825 teachers. The study targeted 33 principals since they are in charge of administering school discipline and academic matters and also the 248 teachers since they are considered to have knowledge of factors influencing students' academic performance in Mombasa County, Kenya. The deputies were not involved because they play the same roles as the principals in administering students' school discipline.

The researcher determined the reliability of the instrument items through a single test administration for the six sets of questionnaires piloted in six schools were not part of the actual research. The values range from 0-1 in which the increase in value shows an increase in reliability. Thus, the coefficient value ranging from 0.6 to 0.7 is recommended as it shows the accepted reliability. Further, Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) indicate that the 0.8 coefficient value is most recommended. Therefore, this obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.844. The results from the reliability test on the Principal's questionnaire were given as follows: Student's on Capacity-building, .844 produced using SPSS 21.0. The average alpha coefficient for every industry variable was way above that fulfills Merterns, D. M. (2019) suggestion that a 0.7 coefficient value shows that the tools are highly reliable. Therefore, the average score of alpha index (α) value of 0.846 obtained was thus acceptable as it is within the range. The results from the reliability test on the Teachers' questionnaire on Capacity building, with alpha values were .834. The average alpha coefficient for every industry variable was way above that fulfills Merterns, D. M. (2019) suggestion that a 0.7 coefficient value shows that the tools are highly reliable. Therefore, the average score of alpha index (α) value of 0.846 obtained was thus acceptable as it is within the range.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the study which are organized in sub-sections based on the study objectives. The study aimed at investigating the influence of principals' management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Mombasa County, Kenya.

4.1. Measurement of Capacity Building Influencing Students' Academic Performance

Teachers were asked about the objective of Capacity building in a school and to indicate their views on the formulated statements, given in the questionnaire. The response of teachers on the capacity building and its influence on students' academic performance in view of capacity building and its effect on the performance of students' academic performance were analyzed and the results were presented in table 4.4 and further the results were captured in Figure 2 for showing clarity of the analysis.

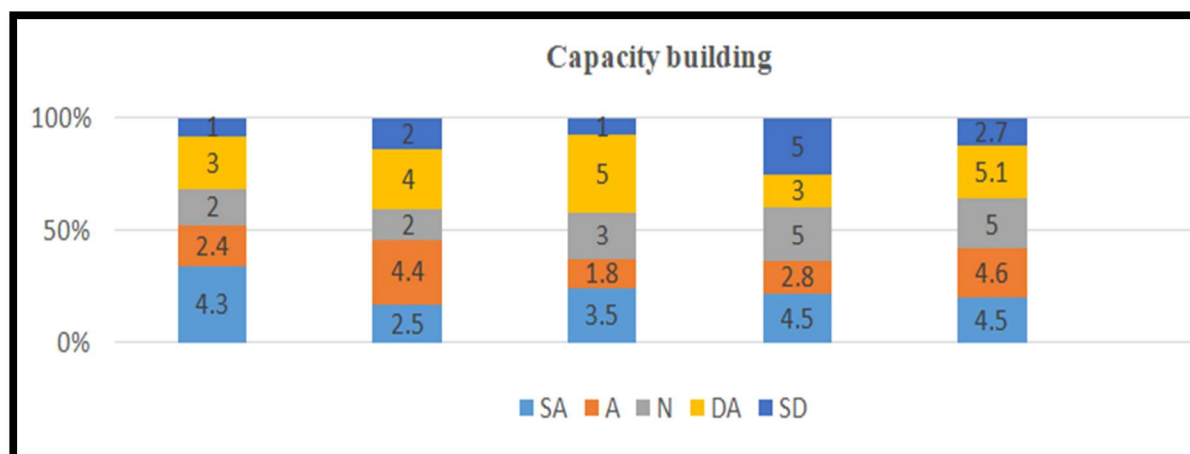


Figure 2: Measurement of Capacity Building Influencing Students' Academic Performance

4.1.1. Measurement of Capacity Building and Its Influence on Students' Academic Performance

Under this section, the principals were given a set of statements to give their views on each statement and its influence on the students' academic performance. The respondent's responses were collected with the help of the questionnaires coded and tabulated. The table 4.10 gives the responses as well as the percentages they represent below in table 4.2.

Statements	SA f (%)	A f (%)	N f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
The school has mentorship/coaching	5(17.2)	13(44.8)	3(10.3)	7(24.14)	1(3.45)
There is a practice school visits	9(31.03)	12(41.38)	2(6.9)	4(13.8)	2(6.9)
There exists seminars/workshop	3(10.3)	16(55.17)	3(10.34)	6(20.7)	1(3.45)
On peer assessment practice	5(17.24)	14(48.28)	4(13.79)	4(13.79)	2(6.9)
The school has ICT integration	11(37.93)	9(31.03)	2(6.9)	6(20.7)	1(3.45)

Table 1: Measurement of Capacity Building and Its Influence on Students' Academic Performance

The respondents were asked about the statements given in the questionnaire. About the school having the mentorship/coaching program- 5 (17.2%) strongly agreed, 13 (44.8%) agreed, while 3 (10.3%) remained neutral, 7 (24.14%) disagreed and 1(3.45%) strongly disagreed and the statement about school practicing, school visits- 9 (31.3%) strongly agreed, 12 (41.38%) agreed, 2 (6.9%) were neutral, 4(13.8%) disagreed and 2(6.9%) strongly disagreed on the statement about the schools go. For school visits- 9 (31.03%) strongly agreed, 12 (41.38)% agreed, 2(6.9)% were neutral 6 (20.7)% disagreed and 1(3.45%) strongly disagreed and on the schools performing seminars/Workshops- 5(17.2%) strongly agreed, 16(55.17%) agreed, 3(10.34%) remained neutral, 6(20.7%) disagreed and 1(3.345%) strongly disagreed. On the statement about Peer assessment practice- (17.24%) strongly agreed, 14 (48.28 %) agreed, 4 (13.79%) were neutral, 4 (13.79%) disagreed and 2(6.9%) strongly disagreed. With the statement on the statement about the school has ICT integration- 11(37.93%) strongly agreed, 9 (31.03%) agreed, 2(6.9%) chose to be neutral, 6(20.7%) disagreed and 1(13.45%) strongly disagreed with the statement that the school is ICT integration to influence the students' academic performance. This analysis is further depicted in figure 4.17 given below for ease of interpretation and clarity.

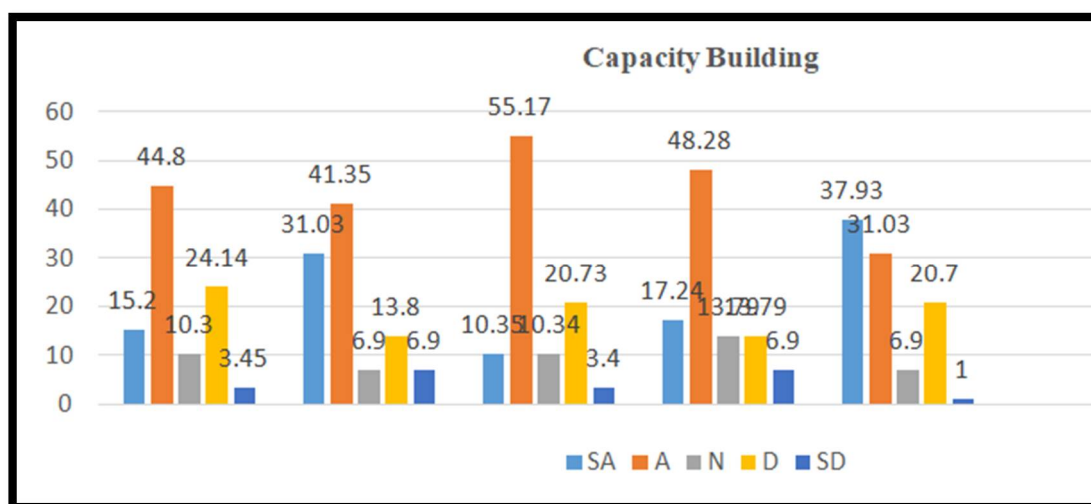


Figure 3: Capacity Building Showing in Pictorial form the Analysis Discussed Above

5. Discussion

The aim of the study was to establish how students' academic performance in Mombasa County public secondary schools was influenced by capacity building. The principals/Teachers were asked to give their views onset of statements. On the statement regarding Coaching/mentorship and its influence on the students' academic performance response from principals, 17.2 percent strongly agreed and 44.8 percent agreed, while the teacher's responses 35.24 percent strongly agreed and 36.6 percent agreed. On the statement that schools arrange for school visits, the principal's response was 9 (31.03%) strongly agreed and 12 (41.38%) agreed and for the teachers, 39 (17.2%) strongly agreed and 115 (50.7%) agreed. On the statement as to whether schools conduct seminars/workshop 3 (10.3%) strongly agreed and 16 (55.7%) agreed as for the teachers 52 (22.9%) strongly agreed and 94 (41.4%) agreed. On the statement about school practices peer observation 5(17.24%) strongly agreed and 14(48.28%) agreed. While the teachers 50 (2.2%) strongly agreed and 82 (36.1%) agreed. On the statement about the schools having ICT facilities, 11 (37.93%) strongly agreed and 9 (31.03%) agreed, while for the teachers 58 (25.6%) strongly agreed and 91(40.01%) agreed. These findings appear to agree with other studies done, including Taluka, Pakistan by Teenvo (2011) on challenges faced by teachers and students in teaching and learning English at the secondary school level. The study was done using a survey design in which questionnaires were administered to teachers and students. The 11 teachers and 70 students also participated in focus group discussions while 6 experts were interviewed. Findings indicated that lack of facilities hindered teaching and learning of the English

language, another study carried out in Nigeria Uchendu (2011) conducted research on capacity building programs and secondary school teachers' work. The findings indicate a significant relationship between capacity building and teachers' work performance.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

On capacity building, the study established data, coaching/mentorship, school visits, seminars/Workshops for teachers, peer observation, and ICT integration as the most preferred options of professional development which will influence students' academics. From the study results, it was established that the principal can influence a teacher to enhance quality teaching and learning whose outcome is good academic performance. In which students can score above average. Teachers should be resourceful in their collection, preparation, and use of teaching materials, according to the report, in a move to minimize cost in the development and maintenance of resources and materials. Teachers should also manage the students professionally to promote active student participation in learning. The government should ensure equitable distribution of resources and learning materials to all public secondary schools for successful learning and teaching in urban areas to increase students' academic performance. In terms of teaching methods, principals should use management practices to enhance performance in public secondary schools.

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