

Influence of Instructional Leadership Practices On Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract

Instructional leaders aim at improving the effectiveness of instruction in order to increase the achievement of all students. These leaders should know when, how, and why to initiate and sustain instructional change, create a school-wide inclusive culture of high expectations for achievement and for rigor, relevance, and respect in the classroom. Instructional leadership is principally the role the head teacher of a school. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of head teachers' instructional leadership practices on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. Students' academic performance in secondary schools in Machakos County has been low in the recent past and not sufficiently competitive compared to other neighbouring counties, hence a study was necessary in order to establish whether the head teachers' instructional leadership practices were among the root causes of the evident persistent poor performance, hence provide remedial action. The objectives of the study were to: assess the influence of defining the school mission by head teachers on the academic performance, establish how managing of the school instructional programme by influences academic performance, find out the extent to which promoting a positive school learning climate influences academic performance and to determine how advancing teachers' interests by head influences academic performance of in Machakos county. This study was based on the leadership frames theory formulated by Bolman and Deal (2003), which assumes that four leadership dimensions contribute to effective leadership, which are: clarity of goals, coordination, organizational culture, sensitivity to the human needs of others; and recognition of the ways that people seek to advance their own interests. The study applied Survey design. The target population included the head teachers, teachers and students from all the 90 public secondary schools in Machakos County. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select 38 head teachers, 190 teachers and 345 students from among high and low performing secondary schools in Machakos County. The study used the Head Teacher Questionnaire (reliability 0.78), Teachers Questionnaire (reliability 0.74) and the students Questionnaire (reliability 0.75). The validity of the research instruments was established through expert judgement and triangulation. Piloting was done among three schools from the target population in order to establish reliability. The response rate was 87.5%. Descriptive statistics (Means, percentages and frequencies) was used to determine the distribution of the variables under study among the respondents. Pearson Correlation was used to test the relationships between the instructional leadership practices and the academic performance. The study found that all the four instructional leadership practices are strongly associated with academic performance (defining the school mission ($r(30) = 0.606$, $P < 0.01$), managing of the school instructional programme ($r(30) = 0.603$, $P < 0.01$), promoting a positive school learning climate $r(30) = 0.715$, $P < 0.01$) advancing teachers' interests ($r(30) = 0.580$, $P < 0.01$). The study recommends balanced instructional leadership by head teachers in order to enhance proper utilization of all resources, so as to realise good performance in examinations for their schools.

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