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Implementation of Teacher-Related Interventions for Improving Learning Achievement among Low Achievers in Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract
This paper is premised on the fact that low achievers constitute one of the most challenging problems for school administrators and teachers in public secondary schools in Kenya. The objectives the study was to assess the implementation of teacher-related interventions for improving academic achievement amongst low achievers. Guided by Walberg's Theory of Educational Productivity, the study adopted convergent parallel mixed design. From a population of 972 from 91 public secondary schools, Slovenes formula was employed to select 394 participants across a stratified key education stakeholder participant's matrix. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected, analysed, triangulated and interpreted. The study established that despite teachers varied skillsets and teaching experiences, they effectively collaborated with their peers and other key stakeholders in using innovative approaches including extra-remedial teaching outside normal teaching hours, individualized education programmes, guidance and counselling, differentiated learning and team teachings amongst others. The study concludes that teachers understood the plight of low achieving students and employed interventions which were largely learner-centered to yield enhanced academic achievement. The study recommends that teachers should be re-tooled and up-skilled in new pedagogies and inclusive education to help them handle learners with differentiated learning needs in education.
Keywords: Teacher interventions, differentiated learners, enhanced learning achievement, low achievers, public secondary schools, Kenya.
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Background and Context

Globally, education occupies an indisputable place as a key driver to sustainable development and a people's wellbeing. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines education as a fundamental human right (United Nations, 2013) and in achieving Education for All (EFA), nations committed themselves to realization of EFA goals owing to the central role education occupies in the development of any nation (UNESCO 2012). The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consider education as a key driver of these aspirations (UN, 2013).

Studies by Glewwe, (2013) and World Bank, (2011) show a positive correlation between advanced education systems and other parameters of socio-economic advancement such as health, maternal and child mortality rates, decreased population rates and reduced delinquency rates. Persons with high education are employable, productive and are able to navigate life's challenges better besides having healthier families. This therefore means that the inverse of the foregoing argument could be true.

A report by Eurydice (2020) from findings across 47 European countries affirms that education makes societies fair and more inclusive and calls for education systems to be more equitable. It further asserts that low academic achievement and equity in education are interrelated and a student who is poor academically is deprived

of knowledge, skills and competences necessary for individual and societal survival. Recognizing this as a significant hurdle to socio-economic progress of its member states, the European Union had, since 2009 strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and training (Eurydice, 2020), key among its goals the significant reduction of low- achieving 15-year-olds in Mathematics, reading and science to at least 15% or less by 2020. Only Finland and Estonia of these countries have made significant progress meaning the rest are still struggling with low academic achievement. Most countries in the developing world, especially in Kenya have education statistics which suggest commendable strides made in providing education at the national level, these statistics when unpacked at along geographic and gender dimensions' reveal that the problem of low achievers still persists among some socio -economic groups and gender (Eurydice,2020).

1.2. State of the Art Review

There is prolific and robust literature on teacher interventions towards improving learning which counsels that teaching is an intricate and challenging task requiring expert skills and knowledge for it to bear meaningfully on student learning (Njue,2015, Jerim,2015, Muchungu, 2022, Mutua,2015). Teacher efficiency is hinged on student achievement, yet it is not teachers who sit for examinations (Njue, 2015). Due to the dynamism of the teachers need to continuously update their knowledge and skills. Teacher level interventions target teachers directly. These interventions are aimed at providing teachers with better pedagogical skills and information about student performances (Jerrim, 2015). Muchungu,2022 noted that teachers need to continuously be in-serviced with the aim of updating and refreshing their instructional practices for better results. This is because tutors are closely linked with performance of their schools and academic achievement of their learners (Jerim,2015). It is therefore desirable that they keep themselves updated on new pedagogical trends for improved academic achievement (Mutua, 2015).

Most countries world over keep evolving new strategies for enhancing student academic performance and reduce low academic achievement. According to OECD (2010), (28%) of learners' world over are low performers in Mathematics, Reading and or Science, and score below the baseline proficiency in the said subjects. The report intimates that these learners will most likely fail academically and this will impact negatively their future career pursuits. This proportion varies widely across countries and in some can be high as 40%. However, according to OECD (2013, 2016), Hong Kong, China, Korea and Singapore have less than one in ten students who are low performers in Mathematics.

In many schools in America, schools use collaboration as a strategy in teaching for improved instruction where an experienced teacher works together wit, h others in helping learners with learning difficulties through instruction (Xuan, Carol, Selene & Michelle, 2010). Some of the measures used by East Asian countries (Shanghai-China, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan etc.) include giving education prominence, emphasis on hard work, use of competitive assessments, home tutoring, thorough teacher vetting and tested courses in the curriculum (Jerrim, 2015). In Singapore, some of the precise measures include provision of early detection of learner challenges and provision remedial support. Identification of learners with learning difficulties is done through tests and the learners are assisted by experienced tutors. A report presented at the international conference on education in Geneva in 2008, emphasizes the need to consistently update teachers' instructional skills for improved student learning. Teacher effectiveness and efficiency largely depends on academic and pedagogical competence (Muchungu,2022).

In Japan, it is believed that all every student can achieve. The Japanese hold high expectations for all students and this has increased transition levels and there is no discrimination between and within schools. Teachers identify learners with learning difficulties and give remedial help during normal teaching time and after class. Every student according to Jerrim (2015) designs curriculum as a minimum standard of skills for mastery. In China, they connect and network disadvantaged schools. In Shanghai- China, rural schools are connected to good urban schools. They also develop their own education projects, strategies, design own organizational structures and educational resources to improve quality of education. The situation is similar in Japan where the local community helps the low achieving learners by providing after school remedial support (Jerrim, 2015).

In Africa, several studies have observed that secondary students' academic achievement in the continent is generally low. The quest has been for productive instruction and enhancing teacher efficiency for better academic performance (Gustafsson,2011) cited in (Annah & Dorothy, 2015). According to Magidanga (2017), teacher effectiveness, among other factors affecting academic performance, is determined by masterly of teaching content and their instructional competence. According to Krasnoff (2015), of all school level factors, researchers approximate that tutors account for over 30% of the variation in a school's attainment. Teachers test, assess and take care of learners with challenges in learning. Besides, curriculum evaluation, resource organization, determination of instructional activities or incentives in place for the sustainability of learning largely depends on the teachers (Mphale & Mhlauli, 2015).

Akinyi, Ruggah and Orodho (2022) study on class-size reveals that teacher effectiveness, among other factors affecting academic performance, is determined by masterly of teaching content and their instructional competence and class size. Teachers can help students to learn by developing their independent learning capabilities leading to

whole personal development and lifelong learning. This can be done by use of different instructional strategies to achieve desired academic outcomes, the development of students' interests and potential in addition to diversifying learning and teaching strategies. According to Kelly (2003), teacher-training programmes need to prepare teachers to face daily challenges in teaching and make them responsible for the success of students with low academic attainments.

According to Kelly (2003), Kelly & Pohl,2018, there is a tendency for teachers teaching to 'test' rather than teaching for gainful applicable knowledge skills. Research has consistently shown that within the classroom, teachers wield immense influence on students learning experiences and outcomes in terms of attainment and affect (Akinyi, Ruggah & Orodho,2022). Teacher-pupil relationships have been known to affect a child's educational experience greatly (Akinyi, Ruggah, & Orodho, 2022).

Many students with learning disabilities are overlooked or when they do receive assistance, they are isolated from the general class. Some low achievers remain in class to catch up with the other high achievers. The banning of repetition, extra coaching and holiday tuition, practices earlier seen as efforts to improve low achievement among learners further complicated the situation putting a substantial number of low achievers unattended. According to Shaw (1999) cited in Kelly (2003), low achieving learners constitute large portion of school dropouts, unemployed, alcohol abusers and criminal minds among others.

Kelei (2003) posits that, a good curriculum should aim at equipping the learners with the necessary skills for life, develop the individual to maximum potential in addition to helping the child to become a fully integrated member of the community. Hence, some schools are not able to meet the educational challenges of some struggling students (Selina, Patrick & Ferej (2017) because the curriculum did not consider the learners needs.

Teachers need to be prepared to handle low achievers in instructional classrooms (Walingo, 2010). Teacher training courses should be evaluated to find out how adequately they equip secondary school teachers for the classroom challenges and possibly explore team teaching as one strategy to alleviate the challenges (Kelly, 2003). According to Kremer et al (2013) as cited in Birte, Gallagher, Philips, Martina et al (2015), teaching and learning strategies should aim at adaptation or improvement of curriculum and teaching methods. This should encompass interventions, which bring in curriculum changes or specialized methods such as the use of information and communication technology tailored to meet individual learning needs. Remedial programs should be explored to deal with the needs of specific students taking into account the manner and methods of teaching, personal competences of the learners and their personal variations and dynamic attitudes (Akinyi, Ruggah, & Orodho,2022).

Teachers need to strengthen their knowledge base and in particular pay attention to low achievers. Without a better pedagogical knowledge of what works and what does not work for students who are slow learners, it will be difficult for secondary school teachers to address the barriers to low achievement (CERI, 2015). Higher quality interactions between teachers and students entail an intricate mixture of skills in testing, content masterly and teaching skills to deal with low achievers. According to Shabrina, Fatimah and Mlamad (2012), teachers are deemed to be the key foundation of learning and responsible for learner's success though teachers who are not meaningfully helpful affect learners' academic achievement.

Curriculum implementation is largely dependent on teachers if its outcomes are to be meaningful. If the high exodus of teachers to other professions is not tamed, the education sector will be adversely affected (Balitilla, 2017). According to Annah and Dorothy (2015), teaching methods is one of the strategies for improving students' performance. They further affirm that learner academic performance remains the key byproduct of any education system and illustrates the valid achievement of educational aims by learning institutions. There is need therefore to interrogate the role of teachers in implementation of interventions meant to improve academic performance of low achievers.

According to Kirti (2008), quality assessments should be developed which should reveal the nature and quality of instruction and the extent to which learning has occurred. In addition, Keler (2015) attests to the importance of carrying out needs assessment in education to establish the discrepancy between what the current curriculum achieves and what the society expects it to achieve in order to meet the set educational objectives. Needs assessment helps the curriculum developers to conceptualize the kind of curriculum to develop in terms of subjects for each level and resources required to meet the societal needs.

This therefore means that students without diverse needs like the low achievers are disadvantaged further raising the question as to whether our public secondary schools have the capacity to accommodate all students regardless of any educational needs. The education system should be thoroughly evaluated as often as possible to confirm if it meets the goals and objectives for its formulation (Walingo, 2010). Keller (2015) further asserts that, many students needing special attention are "falling through the cracks" in the education system. In Bulter's study (1989) as cited by Keller (2015), it was revealed that some low-achieving students used inefficient strategies such as disruptive behaviour and cheating when they feared that they are unable to perform.

In Kenya, many secondary school teachers have not been trained in special needs since it does not form part of their curriculum in the universities where they are trained. There is a great need to train secondary school teachers in order to build their capabilities to assist low achievers. Pedagogy matters as far as quality of teaching

is concerned. Majority of secondary school teachers in Kenya are lacking in knowledge about education of learners with special needs (Walingo, 2010). According to Kelly (2003), initial professional preparation for secondary schools does little, equip graduates for working with students with academic challenges. Additionally, research findings have shown that, generally girls underachieve than boys at KCSE (KNEC, 2024). KNEC 2023 results indicated that girls lagged boys in all quality grades from grade A to grade B- (KNEC,2024). The females also dominated the lower grades from grade C to grade D- in the same examination(KNEC,2024). Krause *et al* (2003) cited in Silyvier (2017) noted that some learners are readily teachable due to their willingness to learn while others have difficulties adjusting to classroom learning hence have little motivation for learning. There is therefore need to investigate challenges perceived to be influencing academic performance of low achievers to facilitate development of strategies and curricula activities that tutors believe will help deal with this category of learner's needs (Ndereba, 2014).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the numerous interventions which teachers put in place to enhance academic performance in schools generally, the issue of students' low achievers by region and gender still persists. Poor performance of students in national examination is increasingly becoming a critical issue, which concerns not only the government but also all other education stakeholders and the general society in Kenya. Poor academic achievement at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) heralds a bleak future for low achievers who stand condemned by the poor performance in these national examinations. KCSE academic attainment is a key determinant of whether the learner will progress to university or to other higher levels of education and training. Academic achievement in the national examinations therefore determines the quality of a student's life after school. Few attempts have been made to examine how best to accomplish and improve education for low-achievers in the public secondary schools. A one-size-fits-all approach to education invariably leaves a substantial number of students behind.

In Kajiado County where this study was conducted, statistics painted a glimmer picture of performance at KCSE over the years putting the performance at 'D', way below the national standard, a situation leaders and other education stakeholders lamented every time results are announced. Statistics in 2022 showed that out of a candidature of 11,690 who sat for KCSE in that year, 5424 representing 46.3% scored grades D (2175), D- (2769) and E (480). In 2021 KCSE results still indicated that out of 10241 candidates, 1893 scored D, 2524 scored D- and 615 getting grade E, which translates to 49.1 percent of the total candidature in the study locale. Results for 2020 showed that of the total candidature of 9374, 1606 of them scored D plain, 2070 scored D- and 443 scored E representing about 44% of the candidates. Performance for 2019 showed that, out of the 8,638 students who sat KCSE, 3,897 got between D- and E (45%), in 2017, 3,400(42.4%) students out of the total 8,028 got between D- and E, and in 2016, results indicated that 2738(37%) (students got between D- and E) out of the total number of 7,388 who sat for KCSE. Generally, students who scored grades D and E are seen by the society as wastage and considered failures. No wonder, when the 2023 results were announced in January 2024, the cabinet secretary of education ordered an immediate investigation to find out what can be done to alleviate the plight of the 48,174 students who had achieved a straight grade E (KNEC,2024). Students scoring grade E do not even receive certification having nothing to show as evidence of receiving secondary education (Mogaka, 2014).

According to Kamau (2005), Elate (2013) cited in Njue (2015), low achievers in national examinations are often construed to be people of low intellectual competences and hardly secure employment and chances for further education. There is dearth of research knowledge on the best strategies which teachers can employ to assist the perennial low achievers enhance their learning outcomes. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to assess the extent teacher-based interventions helped low achievers enhance their academic achievement.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the teacher related interventions that are used by teachers' in Kajiado County to alleviate the perennial problem of low achieving students in National examinations in the county. The specific objectives will be to explore the influence of various strategies such as: extra-remedial teaching, individualized education programmes for weak students, differentiated teaching strategies, team teaching and peer teaching on students' academic achievement among lo achievers in the study locale.

1.5. The Theoretical Framework

This study was undergirded by Walberg's Theory of Educational Productivity propounded by Walberg (1981) examined the influences on learning which affect academic performance by employing multiple ways of identifying factors that influence academic performance. Its dependability is anchored on its wide integration of over 3000 studies done in collaboration with many other theorists studying influences on student learning and how they affect academic performance. The proponents of this theory argued that students are the most important asset in any schooling system because there is a direct connection between academic performance and economic development hence the reason low academic achievement should attract our attention.

The theory isolated nine key variables, which influence academic outcomes. These are identified as learner capacity or previous accomplishment (aptitude), motivation, developmental stage or age, amount of learning, efficiency of instruction, classroom environment, age group and exposure to mass media. He summarized them further into three main domains with the first three falling under learner characteristics (ability, motivation and age), the fourth and fifth factors (quantity and quality) he classified them as instruction and the remaining four (classroom climate, peer group, home environment and exposure to mass media) aspects of the psychological environment. The theory thus posits that these variables, depending on how they can be moderated, have potential to negatively or positively influence academic performance. This study looked at academic achievement among low achieving learners and school-based interventions that can help improve academic performance among low achievers. From the foregoing, Walberg's theory of Educational Productivity provided a solid base for this study given the treatise it gives to these variables influencing educational outcomes, which are of interest to the researcher.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework being a model or diagrammatic way of examining study variables (Orodho,2017), adopted for this study depicted how interventions were used for improvement of learning achievements among low achievers in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The conceptual framework shows how the independent variable which is teacher-based interventions influence the dependent variable which is the learning achievement of students who are low achievers (Orodho, Nzabalirwa, Odundo, Waweru & Ndayambaje,2016a).

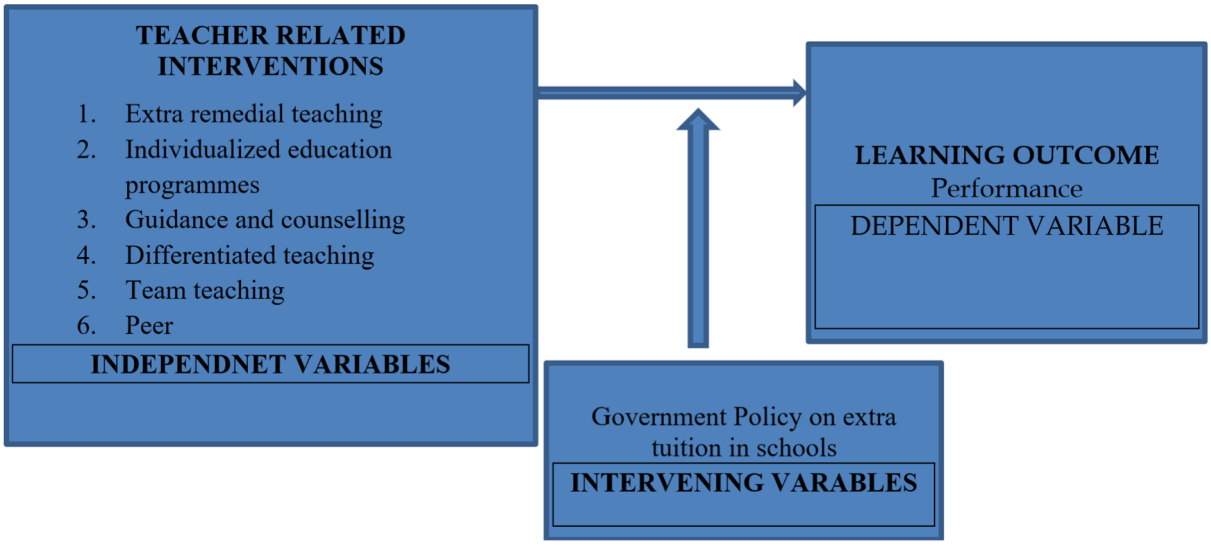

Figure 1: Relating implementation of teacher interventions and performance of slow achievers

The conceptual framework is also aligned to Walberg's Theory, thus posits that these variables, depending on how they can be moderated, have potential to negatively or positively influence academic performance. This study looked at the intervening variable of Government of Kenya policy which outlaws extra tuition in schools as a measure to ensure school administrators do not levy hidden costs to parents.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted convergent parallel mixed design. From an accessible population of 24, 958 from 91 public secondary schools in Kajiado County, constituting 91 principals, 685 secondary school teachers, 24,000 secondary school students, 91 Board of management chair persons (BOM) and 91 chair persons of parents' associations (PA). Combinations of random and nonrandom techniques were used to generate 20 principals, 180 teachers, 154n students, 20 BOMs, and 20 Parents Association chairpersons yielding a sample size of 394 participants.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2} = \frac{24,958}{1+24,958x.05x,05} = \frac{24.900}{1+62.25} = \frac{24,900}{63.25} = 393.7 = 394.$$

Optimum allocation was allocation and purposive sampling strategies were used to allocate participants in the various strata. The criterion for allocating 100 teachers was based on the fact that each school had at least 5 qualified teachers to participate in the study (Orodho,2017, Orodho, Nzabalirwa, Odundo, Waweru & Ndayambaje,2016a).

Table 1: Population and Sample size

Category of population	Total population	Sampled	Sampling procedure
Principals	91	20	Purposive sampling
Secondary teachers	685	180	Simple random sampling
Students	24,000	154	Simple random sampling
BOMs	91	20	Purposive sampling
PA Chairpersons	91	20	Purposive sampling
Total	**24,958**	**394**	

2.2. Research instruments

This research employed questionnaires, and interview guides to collect data. The choice of the questionnaire was influenced by the adoption of the mixed method research, which required the gathering of enormous data that can only be realizable through use of questionnaires (Orodho, 2017). The interview guide was used to get verbal responses and facilitate gathering of in-depth information from secondary school principals. The questionnaires were used to collect data from school principals, teachers, students during the first strand of the mixed methods research design. Data for the qualitative strand were collected using interview guides from school principals, BOM Chairpersons and PA Chairpersons as well as focus group discussions from students.

Qualitative interview and focus group discussions enabled the researchers get views and perceptions of those being interviewed. The spoken viewpoints were translated into the living data that the researcher evaluated or interrogated to answer research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) cited in Kelly (2003). According to Orodho et.al. (2016a), the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in or someone else's mind. The sole aim of unrestricted interviewing is to access the perceptions of the interviewee and not to manipulate the responses (Orodho,2009 ,2017) .

2.3. Pretesting of Research Instruments

Piloting enabled the researchers to evaluate the instruments and address any discrepancies noted prior to the real study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Once the instruments have been created, they should be tested out on the actual ground before they are used in actual research (Orodho, 2017; Orodho,2016a). Overall, pre-testing is important because deficiencies such as unclear directions, insufficient space, wrong phrasing among others can be detected. In addition, vague questions can be revealed hence leading to rephrasing of questions (Orodho, 2009). The research instruments were piloted in 8 selected schools in Kajiado County, which did not take part in the actual study.

In quantitative data, validity was enhanced through cautious sampling, suitable instrumentation and fitting statistical treatment of the data. In qualitative data, validity was obtained through honesty, depth richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants chosen, the level of triangulation and the independence of the researcher (Orodho, Nzabalirwa, Odundo, Waweru, & Ndayambaje,2016a).

To test reliability, pretesting was conducted in 8 secondary schools in Kajiado County which did not participate in the actual study. A split-half technique of reliability testing was done to test whether each item stated in the questionnaire would yield the desired and consistent outcome (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006) as cited in Makewa et al (2011). The split-half approach was used to determine the stability of the instruments. The reliability is the correlation between the scores on the two instruments. If the results are consistent (stable) over time, the scores should be similar. To determine stability, the relationship between the two scores obtained from the *split-half test* must be considered (Orodho, Ampofo, Bizimana & Ndayambaje,2016c).

2.4. Data collection Procedures

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Kenyatta University. The introductory letter was presented to National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) when applying for the research permit. On getting the permit, the researcher presented it to the Kajiado County Commissioner and the County Director of Education (CDE) before embarking on data collection. The researcher personally administered the instruments to all the respondents. The whole data collection exercise was carried out over a period of four weeks, in the course of the school term (Orodho,2017).

2.5. Data Analysis

The study used questionnaires to collect data from teachers, students, BOMs and PAs in the quantitative phase of mixed methods and interview guides to collect data from the Principals , teachers and BOM chairpersons in the qualitative strand .Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively (means and standard deviations) and inferentially (correlations and regressions analysis) with the help Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and presented in frequencies, percentages, tables and graphs and charts while qualitative data was analyzed

thematically, and presented in narrative form (Best & Khan,2006; Orodho, Khatete,& Mugiraneza,2016b; Orodho, Ampofo, Bizimana & Ndayambaje,2016c, Tashakori & Teddlie,2003).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Views of teachers on best ways to use to improve learning achievement

Teachers identify learners with learning difficulties and give remedial help during normal teaching time and after class. Teachers test, assess and take care of learners with challenges in learning. The views of teachers on best ways to use to improve learning achievement are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Teachers views on best ways to use to improve learning achievement

Statements of opinion	S/Agreed		Agreed		Neutral		Disagree		S/Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I try all ways to help poor performers improve	133	70.7	45	24.2	10	5.1				
I give separate remedial lessons to students who are slow to understand outside class time	52	33.1	91	48.4	31	16.5	4	2		
I give my own simplified notes to students to copy during/ after teaching	101	53.5	56	30.6	19	10.2	5	2.5	7	3.2
I revise exams and individually help those who do not do well.	106	56.1	63	33.6	8	4.5	7	3.8	4	2
I sometimes use projectors, Television, radios, laptops, computers, charts, pictures and other resources in teaching.	77	40.8	72	38.2	25	13.4	10	5.1	4	2.5
I counsel and guide low achievers nicely and encourage them to do well.	132	70.1	50	26.8	5	2.5			1	0.6
Those who fail assignments and exams are called out in the assembly and shamed for failing exams.	8	4	5	2.5	14	7.6	45	24.1	116	61.8
I organize learning trips, excursions and contests with other schools to motivate learners	51	27.4	85	45.2	30	16	11	5.7	11	5.7
I call parents to discuss individual performance of their child in my subjects	64	33.8	100	53.5	17	9	7	3.8		
I encourage my students to consult other subject teachers who do not teach them to help them if they do not understand something.	124	66.2	45	24.2	11	5.7	5	2.5	3	1.3

Results in Table 2 show the views of teachers on best ways to use to improve learning achievement. Overall, majority of the teachers at 178(94.7%) agreed that teachers tried many ways to help poor performers improve, but none disagreed. In addition, more than three quarters of teachers at 153(81.5%) agreed that they gave separate remedial lessons to students who are slow to understand outside the normal class time. The study further sought to know from the teachers whether they revised exams and individually helped those who do not do well of which nearly three quarters of them at 169(89.9%) agreed they do so with only 11(5.8%) disagreeing.

Further results on whether those who failed assignments and exams were called out in the assembly and shamed for failing exams revealed that nearly three quarters of teachers at 161(85.6%) disagreed. Only 13(6.9%) of the teachers agreed. This does not agree with student data which revealed that this negative reinforcement of publicly shaming poor performers was at 45% from the responses. Majority of the teachers at 164(87.2%) also agreed that they called parents to discuss individual performance of their children in their respective subjects. It was further found out that more than three quarters of the teachers at 182(96.8%) counsel and guided low achievers nicely and encouraged them to do well.

In addition, nearly three quarter of the teachers at 136(72.6%) agreed they organized learning trips, excursions and contests with other schools to motivate learners. About 40% of the respondents agreed that they used one form of ICT or the other to facilitate understanding by their leaners. As seen in the literature reviewed, variation of learning stimuli can enhance academic achievement particularly of underachievers. Some schools still used negative reinforcement like punishments and public shaming to discourage poor performance. This according to Kelly & Pohl (2018) can lower learner motivation to perform well in class and inhibit healthy teacher- leaner interaction. The 21st century head teachers need to be agents of change who can be involved in curriculum improvement and instructions in schools (Akinyi, Ruggah & Orodho,2022). These findings agree with a study by

3.2. Engagement of BOM members in discussing teacher related interventions

High quality interactions between teachers and students entail an intricate mixture of skills in testing, content masterly and teaching skills to deal with low achievers. The views of the BOM members about their engagement in discussing teacher related interventions for improving performance of low achievers is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: BOM members' discussion on teacher related interventions for improving performance of low achievers

Point of discussion	Weekly		Monthly		Termly		Yearly	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Performance targets			2	10.5	12	63.2	5	26.3
Academic improvement plans			2	10.5	16	84.2	1	5.3
Helping low achievers	7	36.8	2	10.5	10	52.6		
Motivation of students and staff			2	10.5	8	42.1	9	47.4

According to results in Table 4 nearly two thirds of the BOMs at 12(63.2%) said they engaged in discussing teacher related interventions for improving performance of low achievers termly in their schools, 5(26.3%) discussed yearly while 2(10.5%) discussed monthly. In addition, more than three quarter of the BOMs at 16(84.2%) said they had termly academic improvement plans in their schools, 2(10.5%) had a monthly academic improvement plans and 1(5.3%) had yearly academic improvement plans. Further results showed that, more than half of the BOMs at 10(52.6%) discussed on a termly basis how academic performance in their school could be improved while, 7(36.8%) engaged in discussing teacher related interventions for helping low achievers on a weekly basis**.**

Additionally, 9(47.4%) and 8(42.1%) of the BOMs said they motivated the students and staff in their schools yearly and termly respectively. Only 2(10.5%) carry out motivation of students and staff monthly. Its' not clear what form of motivation is given to both teachers and students though according to Othoo & Nekesa (2022), intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for both teachers and students generally improves academic performance. Most teachers feel demoralized by the current remuneration and reward they get from the TSC. Moreover, for quality academic performance, the TSC as the teachers' employer should change it leadership styles, vocal tones and iron hands on management of teachers (Chui & Ogola, 2017) for improved service delivery.

However, from the interview responses from principals, parents paid for remedial programs and from these payments, students and teachers' motivation is realized and that was said to enhance their motivation. The implication of the above findings shows that it is within the mandate of the BOM members to engage the teachers, students and parents in meaningful discussions geared towards promoting and improving the academic performance of low achievers in their respective schools.

Inferential statistical analysis

Participation of BOM members in school activities

Learners' academic performance remains the key byproduct of many education systems and illustrates the valid achievement of educational aims by learning institutions. There is need therefore to interrogate the role of boards of management in implementation of interventions meant to improve academic performance of low achievers. Table 5 presents how BOM members participate in school activities.

Table 5: Statistical measurement on how BOM members influence academic achievement

Table 4.10: How BOM members participates in school activities

	Dependent variable: Academic achievement	
	Regression statistics	**Model 1**
BOM members school-based interventions		
Predictor: BOM Members School based interventions	R	.537
	R-squared(R^2)	.289
	Adjusted R squared(R^2)	.423
	Standard error of estimate (E)	.45080
	Significant Change	.761
	Durbin-Watson	1.434

Table 5 portrays results of a multiple regression analysis on how BOM members' school-based interventions (predictor) influence academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. The Pearson's R=.537 indicates that there was a strong positive relationship between BOM members school-based interventions and academic achievement in public secondary schools in the study locale. The R-squared (R^2) computed yielded a value of .289 suggesting that BOM members school-based interventions explained 28.9% of the variations in academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, with 71.1% being explained by other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R-squared (R^2) =.423 confirmed that BOM members school-based interventions explained 42% of the total viability in academic achievement.

The standard error of estimate (E) was found to be .45080 suggesting that there were other factors not observed in the model but which had some influence on academic achievement. The Durbin-Watson test yielded a value of 1.434. A value of 1 means that there is no auto correlation in the sample values. Values approaching 4

indicate negative auto correlation and values approaching 0 indicate positive auto correlation. This led to the conclusion that there was a statistically significant relationship between BOM member schools-based interventions and academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kajiado County. These findings imply that BOM members need to be conversant with the relevant legal and administrative documents to sharpen their administrative skills, for good governance and accountability for better academic outcomes.

3.3. Views of School Principals on teacher related interventions

When asked during the interviews to give their views on best ways to use to improve learning achievement among low achievers, overall, 18(94.7%) of principals said they tried all ways to help poor performers improve while 1(5.3%) disagreed. Additional results captured during the interviews on whether they give separate remedial lessons to all students and sometimes to those who are slow to understand outside class time, the study revealed that, overall, 17(89.3%) of the principals agreed while 1(5.3%) of the principals said they do not give separate remedial lessons to students who are slow to understand outside class time. The pressure to complete syllabus overrode efforts to help struggling low achievers and slow learners. Differentiated teaching was done mostly after completion of syllabus when learners could be grouped according to their abilities and given tasks commensurate to their academic strength and assisted that way.

Further results revealed that, 8(42.1%) of the principals admitted that teachers in their schools give their own simplified notes to students to copy during and after teaching, 2(10.5%) remained neutral whereas 7(36.8%) said teachers in their schools do not give their own simplified notes to students to copy during and after teaching and in this case learners were asked to make their own notes from textbooks and other sources. Additionally, further results showed that teachers in their schools revise exams and individually help those learners who do not do well and overall, 18(94.8%) of the principals agreed they do so and only 1(5.2%) disagreed. Further, 15(79%) of the principals agreed that teachers in their schools sometimes integrated ICT in their lessons by using projectors, television, radios, laptops, computers, and other resources like charts and pictures in teaching. Three (15.8%) remained neutral while 1(5.2%) disagreed. Availability of a variety of these resources and frequency of use was wanting according to the principals. These findings are confirmed by a study by Hafeez (2021) who opines that student academic achievement is raised substantially when teachers creatively use multiple teaching methods and a variety of teaching and learning of resources. It is therefore important for principals, BOMs and PA to ensure availability, adequacy and utilization of facilities and resources in their schools so that positive academic achievement can be realized through diversified pedagogies and media in teaching and learning.

Additional results indicated that 17(89.4%) of the principals agreed that teachers counsel and guide low achievers nicely and encourage them to do well in their schools, 1(5.3%) disagreed. This clearly implies a good intention by teachers in trying to help the low achievers in the schools. Literature suggests that, there are few specialized teachers in secondary schools who are able to handle learners with challenging learning needs in the inclusive classrooms who may be part of the proportion of low achievers. There is need for a review of initial teacher training curricula to prepare teachers to deal with all learners**.** Additional results captured during the interviews indicated that 18 (94.7%) of the principals said that students who fail assignments and exams are not called out in the assembly and shamed for failing exams and nor punished. This to some extent contradicted findings from the teachers and BOM respondents who rated this aspect higher than the principals. However, 1(5.3%) agreed that those who fail assignments and exams are called out in the assembly and shamed for failing exams and punished.

It was further noted that, overall, 16(84.2%) of the principals agreed that teachers organized learning trips, excursions and contests with other schools to motivate learners though there was a challenge in funding by either schools or parents to support these arrangements. However, 3(15.8%) remained neutral. Further results captured showed that majority of the principals 18(94.7%) agreed teachers call parents to discuss individual performance of their children in their subjects especially during academic clinics which are held once a term in most schools. Further analysis of qualitative results revealed that, 16(84.2%) of the principals interviewed agreed that teachers in their schools encourage their students to consult other teachers who do not teach them to help them if they needed assistance.

Principals hold the key to quality of school, the atmosphere of learning and the dimension of refined methodology. They are tasked with supervising instructional programmes and ensuring effective use of instructional time to foster the attainment of educational goals and objectives. Instructional leadership and management play a pivotal role in good academic performance in schools. Further qualitative analysis on how principals described the teachers in their schools enriched by interviews conducted became clear that little is being done to address the plight of low achievers as reported by one of the principals of a sub county school that:

> My teachers are cooperative, team players but need to improve on their teaching techniques especially when it comes to handling low achievers. Teachers mostly tend to concentrate on the bright students leaving out the slow learners (P 15, 22nd March, 2023)

From the foregoing response, it is apparent that many teachers concentrate on the high performers leaving

out the low achievers. This can be attributed to lack of knowledge and skills to handle such learners in the secondary schools or the desire to get best grades. According to Abdi (2017), teachers experience plays an important role in enhancing students' academic achievement. In addition, the quest for teachers to provide good results as a measurement for higher approval ratings in the TPAD makes them to concentrate on the high achievers at the expense of the low achievers. The TPAD is mechanism by the TSC, which enables principals to evaluate the performance of teachers with a view of improving the teaching and learning standards has not done much to improve performance. A study by Chui & Ogola (2017) found out that most teachers are overworked, demoralized and have no time to offer individualized attention to low achievers.

Another principal who reported that:

> My teachers work with those students who are bright. There is no initiative in place to help low achievers. Teachers seem to demand for extra remuneration to conduct remedial lessons and when it is done, it is for whole class to cover syllabus. There are no separate programs for low achievers perse (P13, 27th March, 2023)

This comment further suggests the need for providing more opportunities for secondary school teachers in public secondary schools to be trained on how best to handle low achievers who have transited from regular or special schools at primary school levels. Even the remedial or Learner Support Programs (LSP) being paid for by parents do not cater for the interests of the low achievers. Teachers are paid for engaging the students in extra teaching outside the normal class hours but not to offer individual coaching to low achievers.

Hence, paying teachers for remedial teaching does not guarantee that the educational needs of low achievers will be met within their school environments. In addition, principals were tasked with describing the involvement of teachers in the education of students in their schools. One principal reported that:

> My teachers are quite involved in the students learning and individual performance since this will paint the true picture of the school overall performance (P 7, 27th March, 2023)

From the foregoing quotation, it is evident that when teachers are concerned with the overall individual performance of the students, the school overall performance will be improved since each student performance plays a crucial part in the final class or school performance. According to Khoza (2012), in educational institutions, success of head of schools is measured by academic performance or how well students meet standards set out by the government and the institution itself. Another principal of an extra county school asserted that:

> Most of them have no Individualized Education Programmes for low achievers and have to be pushed. In fact, majority even create professional records for satisfying TPAD assessments but not to help learners." (P16, 23rd March, 2023)

This comment brings to the fore the importance of teachers taking into account the individual educational needs of each student separately. Principals need to spend more time in classrooms and engaging teachers in conversations about effective teaching and learning. Additionally, another principal asserted that:

> My teachers are actively involved by coming up with programmes and systems meant to improve students' performance (P 11, 22nd March, 2023)

From the foregoing quotation, it is apparent that in some schools, teachers are doing a wonderful work in coming out with mechanisms aimed at improving and addressing the academic needs of the diverse students' needs in the schools. Therefore, motivation of students is an important element in education. Additionally, another principal asserted that:

> My teachers are helpful and always ready to attend to the students professionally. They are very concerned and ready to give extra guidance and motivation to the students (P 4, 22nd March, 2023)

This comment brings to the fore the importance of motivation of students as well as proper guidance and counselling by all teachers. Low self-esteem and negative attitude towards certain subjects can be linked to poor performance in some students. Low performing learners are frequently portrayed as missing the needed motivation, initiative and self-drive on their performance (OECD, 2016).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

The triangulation of results from data sources and various instruments revealed that implementation of teacher-related interventions for enhancing academic performance among low achievers has been taking place in public secondary schools with teachers from many schools helping poor performers improve on their performance by discussing individual performance of the learners with their parents and also motivating the students through organizing learning trips, contests between schools and educational excursions to places of educational interest. The study also further established that low achievers and all other learners were given remedial lessons through programmes such as Learner Support Programmes (LSP) outside the normal class time to help them improve on their performance. Additionally, the study revealed that teacher related interventions are carried out on termly

basis to discuss intervention measures for improving the academic performance in the school. It was also revealed that, there is need to train more secondary school teachers on pedagogy, content and knowledge in Special Needs Education (SNE) so that they can be in a better position to handle low achieving students who transit from primary schools and have special needs in education. It was evident that, many secondary school teachers had inadequate skills in SNE, and those trained requiring re-tooling and upskilling.

4.2. Recommendations for Policy

1. Training and re-tooling of secondary school teachers in special needs education should be made compulsory. All secondary teachers should be re-trained on special needs education to enable them handle learners transiting from primary schools who have special needs in education**.**
2. The ban on illegal levies and tuition in public schools should be reinforced since majority of public secondary schools hide these charges and impose on parents in the name of assisting low achievers and improving academic performance.
3. The classification of schools into various levels to accommodate the entry Behaviour of learners from primary schools should be done away with as these subjects low achievers to discrimination in the school system.

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