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**PLANNING COMPETENCIES OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN BUMULA SUBCOUNTY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Planning competencies of heads of departments is a key factor that contributes to the achievement of school goals and objectives. Heads of department are managers and planners of activities in their various departments. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of planning competencies of heads of department on students' academic performance in Bumula Sub County Kenya. The study was based on two major theories of educational management:

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the formal model of education management and collegial model of education management. The researcher used a descriptive survey design, the study target population was 22 public secondary schools in Bumula Sub County. A random sampling technique was used to select teachers and Yamane's (1967) formula was used to calculate the sample size. A multiple regression analysis was used to quantify the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The model of relationship was hypothesized in the form of  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$ . From the regression analysis results Hod planning competencies had  $p \leq 0$  thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the study concluded that there is a significant relationship between HOD planning competencies and students' academic performance in Bumula subcounty. The study recommends that heads of department should plan syllabus coverage by preparing schemes of work.

**Key Words:** *Planning Competencies of HOD, Students Academic Performance, Bumula Sub County*

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Management competence refers to the procedures, style, strategies, and instructional techniques that HOD uses to manage students' behavior and learning activities in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives of a school within the time frame allotted (Atebe, 2009). Management competence is defined as the ability to manage students' behavior and learning activities in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives of a school within the time frame allotted (Cunha, 2019). To be successful in their professions, heads of departments need to possess a particular set of talents. For a complete grasp of the skills necessary for efficient school management, it is essential to comprehend and recognize the function of a Head of Department (Wuganga, 2012). To be adequately prepared to make the transition from being a subject teacher to an academic head, it is essential for every class teacher to have a crystal-clear understanding of the skills they will need when they are promoted to management positions. This will allow them to be adequately prepared (Atebe, 2009). Heads of department have roles that range from but are not limited to teaching, dealing with departmental issues or academic staff, acting as an official or spokesperson of the department and researchers among others (Karisa, 2015). In order to carry out the predetermined departmental plan that has been agreed upon by the Faculty, each and every Head of Department is necessary to display leadership, exhibit vision, and delegate authority to others (Waweru et al., 2013). It is common knowledge that the means by which heads of departments carry out their responsibilities, as well as the degree to which authority is delegated, will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size and composition of the departments, as well as the individual approach taken by each head of department (Atieno, 2018). The performance of secondary heads of departments has been hindered as a result of role ambiguity, role conflict, tension, and occasionally stress due to the fact that they do not have a sufficient understanding of their tasks and responsibilities (Atebe, 2009).

In contrast, this role of the middle manager in educational institutions has been relatively neglected, particularly in terms of capacity building during staff capacity development. There is a lack of transparency and measurement of the HODs' capabilities and qualifications in school management (Atieno, 2018). When it comes to promoting teachers to managerial roles, one factor that is considered is teachers' performance in national examinations in their respective subject areas. The classroom teachers can advance to the post of HOD if they do well in their various subjects. The majority of them instantly begin to perform poorly after being promoted (Waweru et al., 2013). It has never been made clear what the possible reason for the poor performance after promotion from classroom teacher to HOD (Karisa,



2015). Given that a successful individual in this position needs to have a number of different competencies, this is a necessary step in this research processes therefore this study seeks to determine the influence of management competency of heads of department on students' academic performance with a focus on a particular variable which include: planning, organizing, coordinating and monitoring & evaluation competencies of HOD in Bumula Sub County in Bungoma County, Kenya.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Planning competencies of heads of departments is a key factor that contributes to the achievement of school goals and objectives (Karisa, 2015). Heads of department are managers and planners of activities in their various departments and hence having effective and operational plans is associated with an improvement in students' academic performance (Atebe, 2009; Waweru et al., 2013). However, given the recent cases of continued poor performance of schools in Bumula Sub County, there is a need to ask whether this is related to the competencies of the teachers in regard to planning. This doubt arises because of the Ministry of Education (MOE) 2020 report that some teachers in Kenya don't prepare and plan before classes. A poor tendency to develop schemes of work was reported in a random quality check control across the schools. This, therefore, raised a question on the importance of such schemes and planning and hence this study sought to find out the influence of planning competencies of heads of department on students' academic performance focusing contextually on Bumula Subcounty, Kenya.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To establish the influence of planning competencies of heads of department on students' academic performance in Bumula Sub county, Kenya.

## **THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

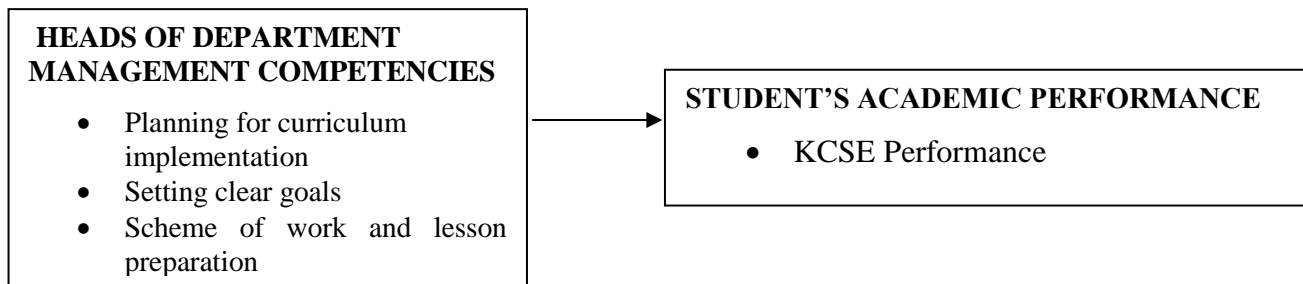
The Formal Model of Educational Management theory (Bush, 2010) was used in the study. These models operate under the presumption that organizations have a hierarchical structure and that they pursue predetermined goals using a technique that is rational. The leaders of institutions derive their authority and power from the official positions they hold, and these managers are responsible and accountable to the entities that sponsor their institutions for the successful operation and implementation of policies that have been agreed upon (Bush, 2010). Formal models of educational management are linked with the managerial leadership style (Bush, 2010). The execution of actions, tasks, and activities in an efficient manner as a means of facilitating the activities of other organizational members, a high degree of rationality in the behavior of organizational members, and the distribution of authority and influence to formal positions based on the status of the positions within the organizational chart are some of the assumptions that are made by this style of leadership. In contrast to the majority of leadership styles, managerial leadership does not include vision as a central concept because its primary focus is on the efficient management of ongoing activities rather than on envisioning a brighter future for the educational institution. This is because managerial leadership encourages its followers to concentrate on the present rather than on the organization's potential (Bush, 2010).

The second theory that was used in the study is the collegial forms of educational management (Bush, 2011). The determination and formulation of policy, decision making based on a process of discussions, agreements, consensus,



and power sharing among some or all of the members of the organization who are considered to have a common perception of the organizational objectives are major assumptions made by these models. Transformational leadership, participatory leadership, and dispersed leadership are the three leadership styles that are associated with collegial models (Bush, 2010). The major assumptions that are made by these models include the determination and formulation of policy, decision making based on a process of discussions, agreements, and consensus, and power sharing among some or all of the members of the organization who are considered to have a common perception of the organizational objectives. The three forms of leadership that are connected with collegial models are transformational leadership, participatory leadership, and dispersed leadership (Bush, 2010). An increase in school efficiency as a result of implementing a participative approach, justification of participation by democratic principles, and accessibility of leadership to any legitimate stakeholder within the framework or context of site-based management are the three criteria that constitute participative leadership as a normative theory (Bush, 2010).

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic performance is the measuring of success or how well a student meets set standards set by the government or institutions themselves, numerous studies have analyzed the factors behind academic performance. Identifying the variables that influence the achievement of young individuals at school is of great importance to stakeholders as it's an essential tool for public authorities in charge of the definition of optimal and efficient education policies on the other hand this kind of analysis helps parents, students, and educational institution to improve the quality of career options (Wuganga, 2012). (waweru et al., n.d,2013) in their study of factors influencing academic achievement in public secondary schools in central kenya: an effective schools' perspective observed that academic achievement determines whether a student will proceed to university and other tertiary colleges or not. Further (waweru et al., n.d,2013) observed that failure in examinations spells doom for the students as their future become uncertain and full of desperation. Education system in Kenya lacks a national learning achievement assessment system that is pertinent to establishing the levels of learning achievement at various levels (Atieno, 2018)



Planning competencies is the abilities required in the process of choosing the goals that are to be attained and selecting the methods and means of accomplishing the pre-decided goals (Cheruiyot et al., 2019). The HODs are responsible for the creation of the annual program for their departments, the preparation of lessons, the assessment of instructors, and the establishment of professional training programs for teachers. Although the majority of schools in United Kingdom engage in long-term planning for the adoption of curriculum and textbooks, this planning pays little attention to the requirements of the educators and other individuals who will be responsible for its implementation. The essence of planning is inadequate because it does not concentrate on the endeavors of students, does not motivate teachers, and does not clearly define goals (Braund, 2010). Anecdotal evidence shows that heads of departments (HODs) are involved in the process of making decisions regarding policies; however, there is little evidence to suggest that HODs are successful in putting those policies into action. Apprehension of failure, lack of educational knowledge, a lack of self-assurance, and a resistance to change are some of the other factors that can be barriers to ineffective planning (Karisa, 2015.)

In order to overcome the challenges in the department, HOD should take into consideration the following planning principles, all of which require training: Planning ought to take place within the confines of the school's policy, with an emphasis on academic instruction and student growth; When planning, every single aspect should be connected to and in line with the plans of the school. Additionally, human limitations should be taken into account, including the amount of work that teachers have to do and the amount of time that students require to finish their assignments (Atebe, 2009). According to the management guidelines provided by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), a Head of Department (HOD) needs to have certain essential skills in order to be able to manage people effectively. These skills include high levels of decision making and problem solving, as well as communication skills, which are important when managing meetings within departments (T.S.C, 2018). As a manager of human resources and relations, a HOD is expected to have the personal ability to inspire confidence in their colleagues and foster a sense of community within the organization. The Head of Department should have strong instructional leadership and supervision skills, as well as the ability to cultivate an environment that is conducive to productive learning, while they are in charge of instructing the department's area of specialty. For the department to continue to foster interactive learning, this calls for critical and creative thinking on everyone's part.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to obtain a sizeable and considerable amount of data from the study population. The study target population was 359 teachers. Yamane formula (1967) was used to determine the sample size and then randomly selected. According to Yamane (1967), for a 95% confidence level and  $p=0.05$ , the size of the sample for the study is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{359}{1 + 359(0.05^2)} = 283$$



As a result, 283 teachers were included in the research as shown in Table 1.

**Table I: Target population**

Category	Target population	Sample size
Principals	22	17
Deputy Principals	22	17
HODs	110	87
Teachers	205	162
Total	359	283

The study relied on primary data that was collected using closed ended questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-administered to teachers in Bumula Sub County. The quantitative data from the field was analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. The regression model adopted was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where  $Y$  = is the dependent variable (students' academic performance),  $x_1$  = planning competencies of HOD,  $\beta_1$  = Beta coefficient,  $\beta_0$  = Constant term and  $\varepsilon$  = Error term.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Descriptive statistics of effects of planning competencies of heads of department on students' academic performance.**

According to the analysis of the findings it was revealed that, out of 219 who responded, 18 (8.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 120 (54.8%) of the respondents agreed, 80 (36.5%) of the respondents were neutral and 1 (0.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the HOD plan for the programmes of the department at the start of every term. This meant that majority of the respondents 138 (63.0%) agreed that HOD plan for the programmes of the department at the start of every term and the 80 (36.6%) were not sure whether the head of the department plan for the programmes of the department at the starting of every term or not, the percentage figure showed that the head of department at times fails to perform the role accordingly it is therefore a clear indication that the HOD should prepare and plan well for the programmes in the department well and inform all the members in the department despite the majority of the respondents being in agreement with the statement. When it comes to the HOD focusing on the need of teachers in the department



who will implement the plan. 16(7.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 123 (56.2%) of the respondents agreed, 79(36.1%) of the respondents were neutral, 1(0.5%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. This clearly showed that majority of the respondents 139(63.5%) were in the agreement that HOD focuses on the need of teachers in the department who will implement the plan. Out of the respondents 76 ( 36.1%) were not sure if the head of department focuses on the need of the teachers and actually this meant that the HOD should make sure that all the teachers have what they are required to implement the plans for the department by working hand in hand with the school administration.

Out of 219 respondents, 27(12.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed with another 152(69.4%) respondents who agreed HOD plan for the syllabus coverage by preparing a scheme of work while 38(17.4%) of the respondents were neutral and could not tell if the head of department prepares the scheme of work for the syllabus coverage, 1(0.5%) disagreed and 1 (0.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement and therefore it meant that majority of the respondents 179 (81.7%) were in agreement with the statement. The statement mean of 3.94 means majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement. When it comes to HOD ensuring that teachers follow scheme of work while planning for the lesson. Out of 219 respondents 17 (7.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 158 (72.1%) of the respondents agreed, 43(19.6%) of the respondents were neutral, 1(0.5%) disagreed and 0 (0.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This actually showed that majority of the respondents 175(79.9%) were in agreement that HOD ensures that teachers follow scheme of work while planning for the lesson.

HOD setting clear goals to be achieved by the department was tending to be higher with 89(40.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 91(41.6%) of the respondents agreed, 38(17.4%) of the respondents were neutral, none disagreed and 1(0.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This meant that majority of the respondents 180(82.2%) were in agreement that HOD ensures that teachers follow scheme of work while planning for the lesson and therefore this shows that the HODS in Bumula sub county are more of competent when it comes to setting of clear goals for the learners. Most achievable role was that of HOD ensuring the set goals are achieved 90(41.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 94(42.9%) of the respondents agreed, 35(15.9%) of the respondents were neutral, 0(0.0%) disagreed and 0(0.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This meant that majority of the respondents 184 (84.0%) were in agreement that HOD ensures that teachers follow scheme of work while planning for the lesson. The statement mean of 4.18 means majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Planning Competencies of HOD**

	SA F (%)	A F (%)	N F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mean
HOD plan for the programmes of the department at the starting of every term.	18 (8.2%)	120 (54.8%)	80 (36.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	3.72
HOD focuses on the need of teachers in the department who will implement those plan	16 (7.3%)	123 (56.2%)	79 (36.1%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	3.70
HOD plan for the syllabus coverage by preparing scheme of work	27 (12.8%)	152 (69.4%)	38 (17.4%)	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	3.94



HOD ensures that teachers follow scheme of work while planning for the lesson	17 (7.8%)	158 (72.1%)	43 (19.6%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	3.87
HOD sets clear goals to be achieved by the department	89 (40.6%)	91 (41.6%)	38 (17.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	4.20
HOD ensures the set goals are achieved.	90 (41.1%)	94 (42.9%)	35 (15.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4.18
<b>Overall Mean</b>						<b>3.94</b>

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was carried out to determine association between heads of department planning competencies and students’ academic performance in Bumula Sub County. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to aid in establishing correlation between the study variables of interest. Correlation coefficient shows the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the study variables. The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation analysis of Planning Competencies of HOD and Students’ Academic Performance**

		Student’s Academic Performance	Planning Competencies
Student’s Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
Planning Competencies	Pearson Correlation	.717**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The findings in Table 3 show that there is significant positive relationship between planning competencies of heads of department and students’ academic performance among schools in Bumula sub county ( $r = 0.717$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ). This implies that an improvement in planning competencies is associated with an improvement in student’s academic performance.

### Regression Analysis

A univariate regression model was adopted to establish the relationship between the study variables. The results for the regression analysis of the heads of department planning competencies and students’ academic performance in Bumula Sub County are presented in Table 4.





**Table 4: Regression Coefficients Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.113	.492		-16.491	.000
Planning Competencies	.708	.103	.934	22.434	.000
<b>R -Square = 0.801</b>					
<b>F = 214.763; P &lt; 0.05</b>					
<b>Dependent Variable: Student's Academic Performance</b>					

The results on the R-square was 0.801 meaning that management accounts for 80.1% of the variation in students' academic performance in Bumula sub county. The Analysis of Variance shows that the significance value was 0.00 which is significant to imply that the model was statistically significant in forecasting the influence of management competencies of heads of department on students' academic performance in Bumula Sub County. This means that there is satisfactory goodness of fit between management competencies of heads of department and students' academic performance in Bumula Sub County. The model regression coefficients indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between planning competencies of heads of department and students' academic performance in Bumula Sub-County ( $\beta = 0.708$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that a unit increase in planning competencies of heads of department will result to a significant improvement in students' academic performance in Bumula Sub County. Planning for implementation of the curriculum acts as a guide by the members of department to ensure that they teach the learners relevant contents as stipulated in the curriculum, setting clear goals by HOD enables members of the department to know how and when to achieve those goals. In addition, preparing schemes of work by HOD enables members of the department to remain in the scope of teaching and completing the syllabus at the required time.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that planning competencies for the implementation of the curriculum is associated with a significant improvement in student's academic performance. Planning acts as a guide by the members of department to ensure that they teach the learners relevant contents as stipulated in the curriculum which leads to better academic performance

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance students' academic performance, the study recommends the heads of school departments to plan syllabus coverage by preparing schemes of work, ensuring that students' progress records are maintained and effectively delegating duties to members basing on their qualification and experience. They should also ensure that teachers mark student's assignment to measure the performance as well as check the lesson attendance record to ensure that teachers



attend all the lessons.

## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

Under the supervision of both Dr. Simon Kipkenei and Dr. Emily Chepkoech lecturers in the school of department of Education Foundation, Kibabii University, Kenya, Anne Nabwile Wanyonyi, wrote the concept paper, proposal and thesis as well as the article. Under their guidance, she collected and analyzed data as reflected in the work. Therefore, any grammatical errors are solely hers.

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## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION**

Anne Nabwile Wanyonyi declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this Manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues; including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and (or) falsification, double publication and (or) submission, redundancy has been completely observed by the authors.

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