

Principals' Role in Promoting Teachers' Professional Development and Learners' Performance In Secondary Schools in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Students' overall performance in country wide national examinations in Kenya has recorded below mean achievement as attested by Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results. The number of students scoring grade D+ and below has consistently remained high compared with those attaining grade C+ and above which is the country's minimum university entry. Concerns have been raised regarding this trend in students' achievement. This study examined the performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in Kirinyaga and Murang'a counties, Kenya. The study involved a sample of 205 principals and 367 teachers selected from secondary schools in the two counties. Researchers used validated questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data from teachers and principals and analysed data using descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was tested at $p > 0.5$ level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study established that there was no statistically significant relationship between principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance. The study recommended that principals should ensure that teachers put into practice knowledge and skills learnt during in-service courses so that students benefit from the investment. The Ministry of Education should also take keen interest in how in-service courses are conducted.

Key words: Learner Performance, Principal, Professional Development, Teacher Knowledge and Skills

INTRODUCTION

One of the most crucial factors in international competitiveness within the increasingly knowledge-based economy is education (Center for American Progress, 2005; Dutch Education Council, 2006). As learner academic attainment appears to rely mainly on teacher quality (Cornet, Huizinga, Minne & Webbink, 2006; Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005), it is therefore expected that various national administrations are taking steps to ensure that their teachers develop professionally. According to European Commission (2005), schools must make sure that students are equipped with lasting techniques for learning instead of memorizing information. More specifically, schools are increasingly endeavoring for self-controlled student learning. This sort of student learning calls for new teacher roles such as being an instructor or a tutor, which in turn means that, teachers themselves should study the skills and talents required to fulfil these new roles (Van Eekelen, Boshuizen & Vermunt, 2005). Furthermore, the ongoing technological improvements and continuous modifications in students' backgrounds pressure teachers to constantly develop themselves (European Commission, 2005). The American Federation of Teachers

(2006) postulates that in a school organization, the most crucial asset is the teaching fraternity. Therefore, for a school to thrive, the school system should strive to make sure that teachers continuously gain new knowledge. Townshend and Bates (2007) contends that in-service programmes are expected to help individual teachers in developing tremendous positive images of themselves as they acquire expertise, skills, talents and values. These skills are suitable for their career in teaching and in providing understandings in particular backgrounds through field experiences. When teachers apply the gained knowledge in teaching, the performance of the learners will be improved.

According to Eraut (2006), professional development of teachers can be defined as the natural process of professional growth in which a teacher steadily acquires self-assurance and confidence, gains new perspectives, acquires more expertise, discovers new techniques and takes on new roles. Professional development can be perceived by some people as a logical transformation as it can take different forms (Guskey, 2002). Professional development's main purpose is to improve learner achievement as attested by majority of educational researchers and policy makers (Guskey, 2002; Luke & McArdle, 2009). According to a study carried out

by Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007), professional development influences student performance in three different ways: it enhances teacher knowledge and skills which then enhance classroom practice and teaching which on the other hand elevates students' attainment. The most useful professional development activity focuses on engaging instructors to concentrate on the needs of their learners. They learn together with an aim of ensuring that all students achieve success. In summary, the need for continual professional development in learning institutions is now incontestable.

In Kenya, as in many other different countries of the world, academic performance in the national examinations determines a student's life. For a student to either proceed to the university or to a tertiary institution, the determining factor is the academic performance. Despite the fact that Kenyan children have more opportunities to attend school, there still remains large gaps in learning outcomes. This stagnation in learning is confirmed by results of national examinations such as KCSE. According to KCSE examinations results analysis from Murang'a and Kirinyaga counties, performance in the two counties is still below expectations and this trend is worrying. Results obtained from the Ministry of Education offices in both counties indicate that, the number of students who have continuously scored grade D+ and below every year have consistently remained high compared with those attaining grade C+ and above. Figure 1 shows the results of the two counties for the last four years for the candidates who attained grades A to C+.

Figure 1 shows that the attainment of quality grades at KCSE in the two counties is low as both counties have below average performance. However, Kirinyaga County has a slightly better performance in this range of grades as compared with Murang'a County. It is also evident that the students attaining university qualification grades is higher in Kirinyaga than in Murang'a County with almost a third of the candidates being able to attain the university qualification in Kirinyaga County. The performance is however different in the two counties for the grades D+ to E. Figure 2 shows the KCSE results analysis for the grades D+ to E in both Murang'a and Kirinyaga counties.

The results in Figure 2 show that a higher percentage of candidates have been scoring the lower grades of D+, D, D- and E as compared with those candidates who attained the university entry grades of A to C+ (Figure 1). The results also show that the percentage of wastage is higher in Murang'a where almost half of the candidates scored the lower grades. This means that on average, performance in Kirinyaga County is better than in Murang'a County. This low overall performance has continued in spite of the fact that most schools in the two counties are presumed to be having enough and well trained teachers as well as adequate facilities. Maintaining excellent results and working towards the improvement of low academic performance is the major undertaking of an instructional leader. School principals as instructional leaders have to employ instructional practices. Promotion of professional development of teachers is among these practices. All these are geared towards the achievement

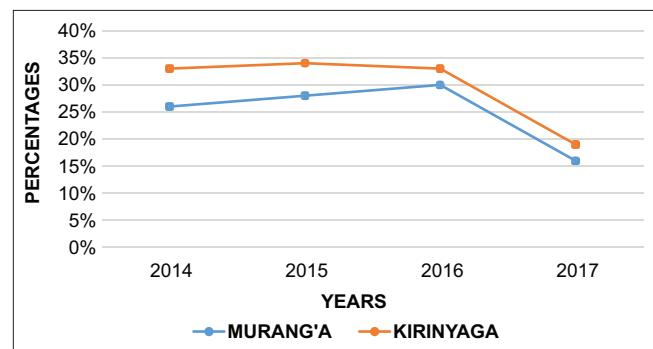


Figure 1. Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties KCSE Results Analysis for Grade A to C+

(Source: Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties Education Offices, 2018)

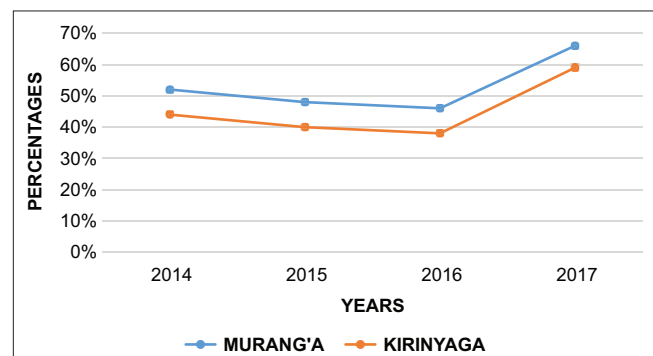


Figure 2. Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties KCSE Results Analysis for Grade D+ to E

(Source: Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties Education Offices, 2018)

of the school's intended objectives which include better academic performance. It is against this background that the researchers sought to evaluate the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and its influence on learners' performance in Murang'a and Kirinyaga counties, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

In the process of professional growth, teachers are involved in professional development. During professional development, teachers acquire confidence, gain more knowledge, discover new methods and also gain new perspectives that they can apply during the process of teaching and learning. The principals are the teachers immediate supervisors and are expected to ensure that this growth is promoted with a view of improving students' academic achievement. The purpose of this study was therefore to assess the performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and its impact on learners' performance in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties, Kenya.

The objective of this study was to examine performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties, Kenya.

Null Hypothesis

The study sought to provide knowledge on the role performed by principals in promoting teachers professional development and its relationship to learners' academic performance. This was meant to unearth the issues that may be contributing to the poor overall performance at national examinations in the two counties. The study postulated and tested the following null hypothesis;

H_0 : There is no statistically significant relationship between the performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in KCSE in Murang'a and Kirinyaga counties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aimed at assessing the role of principals in promoting teachers professional development and how it influences learners' academic achievement. In this section, literature on principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' academic performance as captured in the study's variables was discussed. The relationship between professional development and learners' academic achievement is also outlined.

Mizell (2010) defines professional development as the approach that schools and school districts use to make certain that educators continue to bolster their practice throughout their teaching career. The most effective professional development approach involves clusters of teachers who consciously focus on the needs of their students. They all learn and solve problems with the aim of ensuring that learners succeed. Developing teachers refers to offering personalized support, offering intellectual encouragement and forming desirable professional practices and values in the teaching profession (Desimone, Smith, & Ueno, 2006). According to a research carried out by Yoon and Birman (2002), the most common principal leadership behaviour with a positive effect on teacher classroom instruction is promotion of professional development. In agreement, Desimone et al, (2006) indicates that professional development is thought to be a key to improving teacher instruction and therefore, school administrators are responsible for offering teachers with quality professional development.

Nations around the world have continuously embarked in profound changes of their education systems with an aim of improving their systems. According to Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz, (2015), there is a general understanding among policymakers, intellectuals and educators that one of the keys that can lead to achievement during these reforms is promoting professional development of in-service teachers. Teacher professional development comprises of many processes such as actions and mechanisms (Tan & Dimmock, 2014). In agreement, Kaur (2012) states that the expectation is for schools to work impartially and successfully for all learners in an ever diverse classroom. Changes of this magnitude essentially require great transformations in curriculum and instructional practices. The changes involve understanding what and how teachers teach their students and therefore, in

order for professional development to be successful, it must be seen as a process and not a one day event. Professional development needs to provide teachers with specific and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day activities in their classrooms (Bautista, Tan, Ponnusamy, & Yau, 2015). In agreement, Desimone and Garet, (2015) states that there are five key characteristics that make professional development successful. These features include content focus, active learning, coherence, sustained duration, and collective participation.

According to Blase and Blase (2001), principals have a major task in professional development processes as they are expected to help their teachers to develop their skills, obtain current information in their fields and learn about innovative teaching approaches. Districts and school assistance for professional development will possibly contribute to higher teacher morale and decrease attrition of teachers in schools. When principals support teachers' professional development, they increase their usage of contemplative and knowledgeable actions including new and innovative ideas and instructional risk-taking. Blase and Blase further ascertain that principals use several strategies to promote professional development. These strategies include: putting emphasis on teaching and learning, offering teamwork support amongst teachers, developing tuition interactions among teachers and making use of standards of adult learning to staff development.

In agreement with Blase and Blase, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) offer insight into promotion of professional development. They argue that the support that principal's offer as well as their participation in the professional learning of staff produces the largest effect on the learning achievement of students. The principal has numerous ways of offering support to instructors as they advance tutoring and learning. Principals can set up and provide or inform teachers of relevant possibilities for staff development. The principal can also encourage staff improvement that is closely related to the school's goals. Effective professional development permits educators to expand the knowledge and skills needed to address areas in students' learning that are demanding. Mizell (2010) further avers that effective professional development programmes require considerate planning, followed by careful implementation with feedback to ensure it responds to educators' mastery needs. Educators who participate in professional development have to put their new awareness and skills to work. Professional development is not effective unless it causes teachers to enhance their instruction or causes school administrators to become better school leaders.

The constant professional development of teachers has in recent times received a whole lot of attention in studies and in practice for various reasons. First of all as a result of the reality that learner attainment seems to depend mainly on teacher quality (Cornet et al., 2006; Rivkin et al., 2005). It therefore becomes reasonable to assume that empowering teachers through enhancing teacher quality by stimulating incessant development of teachers will in the long run result in learners' attainment. Even as this assumption is taken for granted by

most authors, sure confirmation of it has been discovered in studies, in that, for instance, collaboration, sharing of ideas, and evaluating views between teachers is undoubtedly related to learners' achievement (Gruenert, 2005). In agreement, Mizell (2010) asserts that professional development is most effective when it happens in the context of educators' every-day work. While learning is part of the school day, all educators are concerned with growth rather than mastering of content being confined to those who volunteer to take part on their own. School-based professional development is of help to educators in analyzing student achievement data at some time during the school calendar. This helps in identifying learning problems right away, developing solutions and promptly applying the solutions that address and cope with the students' needs. Additionally, Mizell (2010) further avers that professional development can be beneficial if it takes place earlier before the commencement of classes or once the classes stop.

In contrast, other authors understand that teacher education programs for professional development are part of teachers' professional journey. They therefore argue that student teachers (pre-service) can also be considered as a target audience of teacher professional development activities (Niemi, 2015). Niemi depicts teacher professional development as a continuum that covers the entire career of a teacher including initial training programs. Niemi further ascertains that there are four ways that illustrate how to support teacher professional development. This can be done through multi-professional cooperation, promotion of pedagogical innovation through design-based approaches, linking pre-service and in-service research-based teacher education, and supporting new teachers through induction periods.

The Vision 2030 visualizes a world where each government will considerably increase the supply of qualified teachers through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries (UNESCO, 2015). The qualified teachers that are provided in the schools will require proper supervision and continual professional development. These roles are played by principals as instructional leaders in the various institutions that the teachers are practicing in. Wanyama (2013) avers that the students' performance depends on the school principal. This is because the principals are the focal system of a school through which all important functions take place and is also the controller of all resources that may influence students' performance in a school.

Capacity building in curriculum implementation has remained one of the major areas that have to be addressed in the education sector. Various education commissions, task forces and studies have shown that in the majority of cases, competences are not always marched with tasks (KEMACA, 2008). Although teacher improvement under the in-service training is a key strategy, there may be a need for non-stop improvement in the quality of services through continuous teacher development. The rationale for this move is to remove existing weaknesses in the teacher quality and to equip practicing teachers with skills beyond those acquired in the pre-service training (Republic of Kenya, 2005). It is therefore the duty of the principal to make certain that teachers as instructors are encouraged to attend the in-service courses, seminars and symposiums among others.

Principals are expected to analyze staff professional development needs and address them by running school based In-Service Training (INSET) programmes. These can easily be achieved by making necessary arrangements with resource personnel that can assist such as Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) and other available educationists. This means that the principal should be able to create professional development opportunities for teachers through enrollment in programmes either inside or outside the school. A principal can also ensure the exchange of information amongst teachers and the transfer of expertise and knowledge gained from these programmes and courses. When the knowledge gained in these courses is utilized in the classrooms, better academic performance is expected in the respective schools.

The use of higher-order instructional strategies is increased when teachers receive professional development in a particular strategy (Desimone et al., 2006). Principals can realize this through notifying teachers about professional development opportunities as well as planning in-service activities at the school level that target specific and unique instructional goals. Principals also promote professional development of teachers through using supervisors such as the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) to train teachers on instructional strategies especially when they visit their institutions for routine supervision. Principals also support teachers by allowing them to be out of their working stations for independent studies such as the school-based and part-time studies in colleges and universities. They also use experts in particular areas such as teachers who are Kenya National of Examinations Council (KNEC) examiners to train the teachers and learners the techniques used in the marking of national examinations.

In Kenya, there are multiple strategies aimed at teacher professional development. Numerous organizations are involved in in-service training of teachers. They include Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI). These institutions provide recognized training through courses, conferences, workshops and seminars. Workshops and seminars are organized at several levels where professionals are invited as facilitators to enhance teachers' professionalism. These facilitators are meant to mentor teachers in their various areas of study. Teachers also get a chance to interact with each other and learn from one another through peer mentorship. They are able to bench mark with one another and pick best practices from other schools. These may assist in improving academic performance in their respective schools.

However, according to Glennerster, Kremer, Mbiti and Takavarasha (2011), Kenya as a country may need to adopt specific pedagogical techniques in curriculum reform so as to address problems common in their schools. These techniques may be of great assistance towards the achievement of the vision 2030. The problems include large class sizes, varied education levels and family backgrounds, irregular student attendance, and weaker motivated, poorly-trained teachers. Current teaching methods and curricula are failing very large numbers of children who attend school regularly

but learn very little. Poor academic achievement in the national examinations is the evidence showing that the large number of students attending school may not be learning much. The central questions are therefore how to devise pedagogies adapted to students' needs and how to get teachers to implement them through effective instructional practices supervised by principals. For the teachers to be able to implement the new skills, capacity building for the teaching force is inevitable.

Since the advent of free primary and subsidized secondary education in Kenya, the ratio of teacher to student has escalated from the advocated range of 1:40 to 1:60 (MOEST, 2010). The teacher-student ratio element is a prime contributor to the compromised results of the students. According to UNESCO report (2012) on efforts made by the government to ensure education for all (EFA) as a Millennium Development Goal, Kenya faces a severe shortage of qualified teachers which is causing schools overall performance to be negatively affected. This is due to their large numbers and at times as a result of the teaching techniques that will be employed by the teacher as they try to take care of the big population (Okongo, Ngao, Rop & Nyongesa, 2015). This issues can be addressed through professional development of teachers as they will learn new techniques of handling such big numbers. The teachers will also not experience the demotivation that might creep in with lack of empowerment.

In a dynamic and increasingly technological world, teachers need to be updated with current innovations in the world. This is because according to Lyons (2012) schools with adequate teaching/learning resources including ICT materials such as textbooks, charts, maps, audiovisual and electronic instructional materials such as radios, televisions, computers and projectors among other gadgets stand a better chance of performing well in examination than poorly equipped ones. However, in the absence of proper policies and guidelines, ICT implementation has remained largely elusive in most schools. There exists teachers who are either computer illiterate or technologically ignorant (Manduku, Kosgey & Sang, 2012). Principals can overcome this challenge by ensuring that teachers are equipped technologically through in-service training.

Other strategies for promotion of teachers' professional development include Strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education (SMASE). SMASE is an educational programme whose aim is to help improve the performance of Science and Mathematics in Kenyan schools. SMASE is a collaborative undertaking between the Kenyan Government through the Ministry of Education and the Government of Japan through Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA). SMASE came into being when Mathematics and Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) consistently posted poor performance in KCSE. This poor performance became a matter of great concern in the country (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The SMASE programme is an In-Service Training (INSET) that specializes in upgrading the capacity of teachers in mathematics and science. The objective of the SMASE INSET is to reinforce mathematics and science education at secondary level via INSET's for teachers of mathematics and science.

The general aim of the SMASE programme consequently is to improve the teaching and learning quality of classroom teachers and additionally improve the control and leadership abilities of educational managers. There are learner-centered methods of teaching such as peer teaching that teachers have not relied on for a long time. In keeping with the aim of SMASSE (2004), mathematics which is a science and other science subjects ought to be learner-centered. For this reason, there's need for teachers to change their approaches towards teaching and learning. All these is meant to improve learners' achievement in national examinations.

In the year 2016, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) introduced Performance Contracts (PC) for Principals and Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool for teachers. This was geared towards strengthening of curriculum implementation and accountability in the utilization of resources with the aim of improving learning outcomes. TPAD is meant to ensure that teachers' absenteeism is checked through the clock in and clock out registers. This is meant to improve teachers' school and lesson attendance. The use of TPAD is also supposed to ensure that teachers prepare the required professional documents which include: schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes as well as proper maintenance of learners' progress records. The tool ensures that teachers not only prepare these documents but also utilize them in their day to day teaching and learning activities.

Principals as the primary line QASOs are required to undertake various activities in ensuring the success of the TPAD. One of the activities is the preparation of a professional development plan to address identified performance gaps by teachers in their institutions and offer professional support. This is all meant to improve the academic performance of the learners. Although TSC, has put a lot of emphasis on the implementation and success of the PC and the TPAD, the teachers and the Teachers Unions such as Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) are on record opposing the two tools and calling on their members to boycott the whole exercise. It is therefore not yet clear whether the tools will be of assistance in the improvement of students' academic performance. With the significance of professional development of teachers on learners' performance in Kenya and in response to the concerns expressed by previous researchers, the present research addressed the gap by investigating the role of principals on professional development of teachers and how they influence learners' performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Model for Instructional Leadership developed by Weber (1996). The model was found suitable for the study because it expounded on instructional leadership practices. Among the leadership practices is professional development and progression of teachers in their career. Weber's model of instructional leadership integrates research on how leaders can be empowered. Managing curriculum and instruction is the obligation of the leader and must be in line with the mission of the school (Weber, 1996). Instructional leaders' selection of classroom super-

vision and instructional practices should guarantee that learners are offered opportunities which ensure that they are able to accomplish their goals. Learners can achieve their goals and succeed when teachers are provided with the necessary resources and knowledge. The leader enables teachers the use of current research in exceptional practices and academic techniques to reach school goals for students' overall performance. Murphy's (1990) ideas were supported by Weber when Weber asserted that the instructional leader encourages quality instruction by organizing seminars where teachers interact, evaluate and hold classrooms visits during lessons. The lesson observation that is currently mandatory in the TPAD constitutes classroom visits by the lesson observer. According to Weber, the leader should provide specific recommendations and positive criticism on the teaching and learning process. Leaders similarly determine specific duties that teachers should perform so as to ensure better learning environments. Additionally, the principal has the responsibility of protecting instructional time by coming up with effective school policies and procedures including time spent on professional development programmes by teachers.

Weber (1996) suggested that lesson observations during instruction provide opportunities for expert interactions. Professional development opportunities for both the observer and the one being observed also arise out of these interactions. In SMASE, teachers are encouraged to practice Lesson Study in groups where they brainstorm over challenging topics in their specific subjects. The teachers who comprise teachers from the same department or from different schools meet and plan on a certain topic. They plan for the lesson together and one of them teaches the lesson in one of the classes or in schools. The other teachers are present during the lesson. They observe the lesson and after the 40 minutes meet and discuss their observations. They therefore learn from each other and are able to grow professionally in their area of specialization. In other words, a mutual relationship is cultivated where all professionals involved acquire treasured and valuable information for professional growth. Hallinger (2000) ascertains that fostering a positive school-learning environment includes guarding instructional time, supporting professional development of the teachers, sustaining high visibility and providing ways of motivating both teachers and learners. In line with Hallinger and Murphy (1985) arguments, principals can reinforce better academic performance and productive effort. Reinforcement can be done through the cautious use of school time and through the choice and implementation of credible staff development programmes. Principals therefore play an active role in the skillful progress of instructors.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was employed in this study (Creswell, 2012). The study was undertaken in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties, Kenya. These two counties were chosen for the purpose of this study as they have varied categories of secondary schools which include National, Extra-County, County and Sub-County schools.

Schools were selected from each of these four categories. The researchers employed multistage sampling technique comprising of: stratified sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was employed to select the schools to take part in the study. Lists of all the public secondary schools in the two counties were obtained from the respective education offices in the two counties and were used to stratify the schools into the four categories of National, Extra County, County and Sub-County schools. This was to ensure representation of all categories of schools in the sample. Murang'a County was apportioned 123 schools which was at least 60% of the sample as it has a higher population as compared with Kirinyaga County which was apportioned the other 82 schools. Therefore, 205 schools were selected for the study. The next stage involved the selection of principals and teachers. The 205 sampled schools provided the 205 principals who were selected using purposive sampling. From a target population of 8,049 teachers, a sample of 367 teachers was selected. From each school, simple random sampling was used to select the teachers that participated in the study.

Data was collected using validated questionnaires and interview schedules as the prominent data collection tools. The tools were used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaires consisted of open ended and closed questions and a five item Likert scale (Mugenda, 2011). The interview schedules comprised of closed and open ended questions. The researchers held discussions with 205 principals through face-to-face interviews and administered questionnaires to 367 teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the data. Quantitative data was presented in form of frequency tables while qualitative data generated from open-ended questions was reported in narrative form. The research hypotheses was tested at $p > 0.5$ level of significance by use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the significance of the quantitative data analyzed to determine whether to reject or not to reject the postulated hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the study was to examine the performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in secondary schools in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties, Kenya. The researchers interviewed all the sampled principals thereby obtaining a return rate of a 100% for the interview schedules. Majority of the targeted teachers responded and comprised of 355 teachers giving a return rate of 96.73% for the teachers' questionnaires. This high response rate was achieved because the researchers made follow ups on all questionnaires that they had issued. Results and discussions were based on the study's stated objective and hypothesis. The research aimed at analyzing the conduct of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties.

Principals' Role in Promoting Teachers' Professional Development

A Likert Scale to measure how principals performed their roles was developed. It had seven items and respondents were to tick one response for each item. The response was selected from either Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The mean score for each statement was computed and used to measure the rating of the role of the principal in promoting teachers' professional development on a scale ranging from one (1) to a maximum of five (5). Mean scores between 1.0 and 2.4 were rated as low, mean scores between 2.5 and 3.4 were rated as moderate while mean scores between 3.5 and 5.0 were rated as high. The findings on analysis of roles performed by principals are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows analysis of roles performed by principals on promotion of teachers' professional development as viewed by teachers. This analysis revealed that most teachers agreed that principals in both counties played the role of promoting teachers' professional development. On notifying teachers about professional development opportunities, both Kirinyaga and Murang'a Counties were rated high at = 4.21 and = 3.66 respectively. These results show that principals sought information relating to professional development and gave this information to the teachers. These results are further confirmed by findings relating to principals' facilitation of teachers' professional growth. The study revealed that in Kirinyaga County, principals' facilitation of teachers' professional growth which includes allowing them time off to study was high at M= 4.17 in Kirinyaga County and equally high in Murang'a County at M= 3.61. On whether principals provided opportunities for career advancement, Kirinyaga was rated highly at M= 3.90 and equally high in Murang'a at M= 3.61. Regarding provision of resources to augment teachers' professional development, this study showed that

rating was high in Kirinyaga County (M= 3.83) and moderate in Murang'a County (M= 3.41).

On whether principals encourage peer exchange to enhance professional growth, the study revealed that in Kirinyaga County, the rating was high (M= 3.97) and moderate in Murang'a County (M= 3.30). On organization of school based INSETS, both counties were rated moderately at 3.27 and 3.05 in Kirinyaga and Murang'a Counties respectively. Finally, on whether principals motivated their teachers in the realm of professional development, the rating was high in Kirinyaga (M= 3.76) and moderate in Murang'a (M= 3.15). These results show that principals in both counties, greatly supported teachers' professional development though at varying levels. The overall outcomes of the study as presented in Table 1 were in agreement with the aggregate score in the two counties which was moderate in Murang'a County (M= 3.39) and high in Kirinyaga County (= 3.98). The ratings were therefore higher in Kirinyaga than in Murang'a County.

Responses from the teachers' questionnaires and the principals' interview schedules established that most teachers 265 (79.34%) pointed out that their principals alerted them about professional development opportunities. Similarly, 257 (76.95%) of the teachers indicated that their principals facilitated their professional growth through facilitation of workshops, seminars and symposia in respective subject areas. These results were confirmed by responses in principals' interview schedules. For instance, a principal involved in the study remarked that;

At the beginning of each school year, teachers in my school give their training needs through their Head of Departments (HODs) for consideration. This ensures that I'm able to budget well and also get ample time to seek approval from the school Board of Management (BOM).

The findings of this study agree with Onumah (2016) who identified that establishment and support for continuous staff

Table 1. Results of analysis of roles performed by principals according to teachers

	Roles performed by the principal	County	Frequency	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	M	Sd
1	Alerts teachers about professional growth opportunities	Murang'a	201	17	24	13	103	44	3.66	1.19
		Kirinyaga	133	2	4	9	67	51	4.21	0.82
2	Facilitates teachers' professional growth	Murang'a	201	17	28	16	95	45	3.61	1.22
		Kirinyaga	134	1	6	10	69	48	4.17	0.81
3	Provides opportunities for career advancement	Murang'a	201	7	32	41	74	47	3.61	1.11
		Kirinyaga	134	2	2	24	86	20	3.90	0.72
4	Provides resources to enhance teachers' professional development	Murang'a	201	18	33	31	86	33	3.41	1.20
		Kirinyaga	131	3	5	27	72	24	3.83	0.85
5	Encourages peer exchange to enhance professional growth	Murang'a	200	15	45	29	87	24	3.30	1.16
		Kirinyaga	133	0	11	21	62	39	3.97	0.89
6	Organizes school based insets	Murang'a	200	35	36	35	73	21	3.05	1.29
		Kirinyaga	133	8	16	48	54	7	3.27	0.95
7	Motivates teachers in the realm of professional development	Murang'a	195	35	32	27	71	30	3.15	1.36
		Kirinyaga	125	4	10	19	71	21	3.76	0.94
	Aggregate score	Murang'a	201						3.39	0.98
		Kirinyaga	134						3.98	0.84

M (mean), sd (standard deviation)
Source: irungu (2018)

development among others is a major supervisory function of secondary school head teachers. Onumah further stated that principals should organize in-service activities in their respective schools. The main focus of these activities should be on specific instructional goals. Promotion of teachers' professional development can be achieved by making use of supervisors such as HODs as well as colleagues to train teachers on instructional approaches, allowing teachers' time for independent studies in universities and other colleges and using external sources such as county-level workshops and specialists who are experts in certain areas.

Findings of this study also agree with Desimone et al. (2006) who established that teachers' use of higher-order instructional strategies can be enhanced through developing teachers professionally. Teachers are able to apply instructional strategies during their teaching practices especially as a result of professional development on a particular strategy. This was ascertained by one principal during the study who remarked as follows;

When teachers attend workshops, symposiums and seminars on curriculum implementation, they get motivated, more confident and re-energized. This is because they get equipped with new ideas on education trends and more knowledge on education matters. They come back ready to improve on their teaching methods and also become more effective in their responsibilities.

Relationship Between Principals' Role in Promoting Teachers' Professional Development and Learners' Performance

The study tested the null hypothesis which stated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the performance of principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in KCSE in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties. Table 2 shows the results of the Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between performance of principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance for each of the two counties.

Table 2 indicates that there existed a weak, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .049$, $n = 201$, $p = .497$) in Murang'a County and also in Kirinyaga County ($r = .117$, $n = 138$, $p = .185$). The results also indicated that the relationship was not statistically significant in both counties. Therefore, the null hypothesis in reference to both Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties was not rejected implying that there was no statistically significant relationship between the performance of principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in KCSE in Murang'a County as well as in Kirinyaga County.

Table 3 illustrates the results of the Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between performance of principal's role in promoting teachers' professional development

Table 2. Correlations between performance of principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance for murang'a and kirinyaga counties

County			Promotion of teachers' professional development	Learners' performance
Murang'a	Promotion of teachers' professional development	Pearson correlation	1	0.049
		Sig. (2-Tailed)		0.497
		N	201	191
	Learners' performance	Pearson correlation	0.049	1
		Sig. (2-Tailed)	0.497	
		N	191	191
Kirinyaga	Promotion of teachers' professional development	Pearson correlation	1	0.117
		Sig. (2-Tailed)		0.185
		N	138	129
	Learners' performance	Pearson correlation	0.117	1
		Sig. (2-Tailed)	0.185	
		N	129	131

Source: Irungu (2018)

Table 3. Correlations between performance of principal's role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance for both counties

		Learners' performance	Promotion of teachers' professional development
Promotion of teachers' professional development	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.053	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	0.347	
	N	320	339

Source: Irungu (2018)

and learners' performance for both counties combined. The results indicated that there was a weak, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .053$, $n = 320$, $p = .347$) in both Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties.

The results in Table 3 shows that the relationship was not statistically significant when the two counties were combined. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implied that there was no statistically significant relationship between the performance of principal's role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance in KCSE in both Murang'a and Kirinyaga counties combined. These results indicate that levels of learners' performance in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties could not be associated with the performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development. This implies that teachers may not be putting into practice the knowledge and skills learnt during INSETS intended for the teachers' professional development. The outcomes may also raise questions about the efficacy of the professional development INSETS for teachers.

The findings of this study disagreed with a research carried out by Yoon and Birman (2002). They found out that promoting professional development of teachers is among the most common principal leadership behaviour having a positive influence on teacher classroom instruction and learners' achievement. The findings also disagreed with Desimone et al. (2006) who found out that promotion of professional development of teachers increases their use of higher-order instructional strategies after obtaining professional development on a particular strategy. This higher order instructional strategies are expected to lead to better academic achievement by the learners. Principals in Murang'a and Kirinyaga Counties should seek ways of ensuring that after teachers attend seminars, symposiums as well as in-service training, they apply the strategies acquired as these strategies may lead to better academic performance of the learners. Perhaps teachers were acquiring knowledge and skills through professional development but the knowledge acquired was not being utilized to improve academic performance of the learners in the two counties.

CONCLUSION

The study raises major concerns on the performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development in the two counties. The Pearson product correlation computed between performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development and learners' performance established that a weak, positive and insignificant correlation existed between the two variables. The findings indicated that performance of the principals' role in promoting teachers' professional development had no significant relationship with learners' academic achievement at KCSE in the two counties. Therefore, it was likely that both knowledge and skills gained by teachers in seminars and in-service courses did not result in meaningful effects on learners' academic achievement. Perhaps knowledge gained by teachers during professional development INSETS was not effectively applied at the classroom level. This study

concludes that though principals supported teachers' professional development, knowledge and skills gained by teachers did not translate into higher academic performance of students.

From the findings of this study, the researchers recommend that principals should ensure that teachers put into practice in the classrooms, the knowledge, skills and abilities learnt during INSETS so that students' benefit from the investments in teachers' professional development. This can be achieved through enhanced classroom supervision by principals during teaching and learning. In line with the implementation of the knowledge gained through professional development of teachers, the researchers recommend that teachers who have participated in INSETS and whose learners eventually perform well academically should be recognized and awarded to enhance competition amongst teachers. Researchers also recommend that principals can also organize forums in their schools where those teachers who have undergone training can educate the other teachers. This will ensure that all teachers implement the new knowledge that has been gained collaboratively to all the learners.

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) should also take keen interest on how professional development INSETS are carried out. MOEST should also come up with policies that will ensure that principals participate in professional development designed primarily for teachers so that they can support their outcomes. In addition, principals also require professional development that will assist them in addressing their own specific roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders. These recommendations are based on the fact that though principals support INSETS and facilitate teachers to attend these courses, learners seem not to benefit hence results remain low.

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