

ABSTRACT

Academic performance occupies a central place in determining quality of education. Studies conducted in different parts of the world have revealed challenges and problems associated with management of education in public schools. In Kenya these problems have been linked to performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations (KCPE) in public primary schools. In Homa Bay Sub County KCPE overall mean score between 2010 and 2012 was 244.31 lower than neighbouring Sub Counties of Rongo (246.46) and Rachuonyo South (245.88). The purpose of the study was to establish perspectives on selected school factors influencing pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Homa Bay Sub County. Objectives of the study were: to establish perspectives on influence of financial management practices, determine perspectives on influence of instructional materials procurement procedures, establish perspectives on influence of instructional supervision, and establish influence of Assessment practices on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools. A conceptual framework showing the relationship between financial management, instructional materials procurement procedures, instructional supervision and assessment practices as independent variable and academic performance as dependent variable. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Study population consisted of 60 head teachers, 60 deputy head teachers, 60 class teachers and one Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (SCQASO). Fisher's formula was used to select 52 head teachers, 52 deputy head teachers and 52 class teachers, while saturated sampling technique was used to select one SCQASO. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interview schedule and observation guide. Face and content validity of the instruments were determined by experts in Educational Administration. Reliability of the instrument was determined by test re-test method in five (8.3%) schools not involved in the main study. Pearson's r for head teachers' deputy head teachers and class teachers questionnaire were 0.78, 0.74 and 0.74 respectively at set p -value of 0.05, meaning they were reliable. Quantitative data from the closed- ended items of the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages. Qualitative data from the open-ended items in the questionnaire and interviews was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub themes. The study established that financial management practices and instructional materials procurement procedures were perceived to have low influence on academic performance as indicated by overall mean ratings of 3.12 and 3.02 respectively. Instructional supervision and assessment practices were perceived to have had high influence on academic performance indicated by overall mean ratings of 3.50 and 3.80 respectively. The study concluded that financial management practices and instructional materials procurement procedures were perceived to have little, while instructional supervision and assessment practices were perceived to have greater influence on the state of academic performance in public primary schools in Homa Bay Sub County. The study recommended timely disbursement and increase of funds to address escalating prices of instructional materials and more focus to be put on instructional supervision and assessment policy. The findings of this study are important to policy makers and educational administrators in focusing on key issues brought out as a way of improving pupils' academic performance in national examinations in public primary schools.