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**“IMPLICATIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES ON  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN KAKAMEGA NORTH SUB  
COUNTY, KAKAMEGA COUNTY”**



**Lydiah Linet Wamocha**

*Masinde Muliro University of Science and  
Technology, Kakamega,  
Kenya*



**Tundo Lucheli**

*Masinde Muliro University of Science and  
Technology, Kakamega,  
Kenya*



**Knight Tundo**

*Masinde Muliro University of Science and  
Technology, Kakamega,  
Kenya*

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## 1. Statement of the Problem

Kakamega North is a Sub County in Kakamega County which has been known to post very low results for the last six years consecutively as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Kakamega North Sub County Mean Scores for 2010-2016

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Mean Score	4.455	4.411	3.893	3.892	4.637	4.797	3.337

Table 1 shows that there is no year within the last seven years when the average mean score of the schools in this sub county ever went close to 50% which is 6.00 out of the possible 12.00 mean score. The current mean scores posted are equivalent to a D+ instead of an A which is the equivalent of 12.00. This therefore calls for the need to look into the implications of instructional strategies put in place by the school principals for academic achievement.

### 1.1 Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objective:

To identify the instructional strategies principals apply to improve academic achievement in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub County.

### 1.2 Research Question

Based on the research objective, this research work was guided by the following research question: What are the instructional strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance by principals in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub County?.

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is aimed at helping educational managers and leaders to embrace effective instructional strategies to improve academic performance in secondary schools.

### 1.4 Scope of the Study

The study was basically concerned with the implication of instructional strategies on academic performance in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub County, Kakamega County, Kenya. The respondents in the study were teachers, principals and academic Heads of Departments

### 1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows that the independent variable which is the head teacher’s instructional strategies has an effect on the academic achievement of the individual schools in the sub county. The instructional strategies that affected performance in secondary schools included target setting, inclusive decision making, classroom supervision and checking of teachers and students’ records of work covered. However there are some intervening variables such as physical structures, students’ entry behavior, teacher attributes and teaching and learning facilities in the schools in the sub county. This diagrammatically shown in Figure 1.

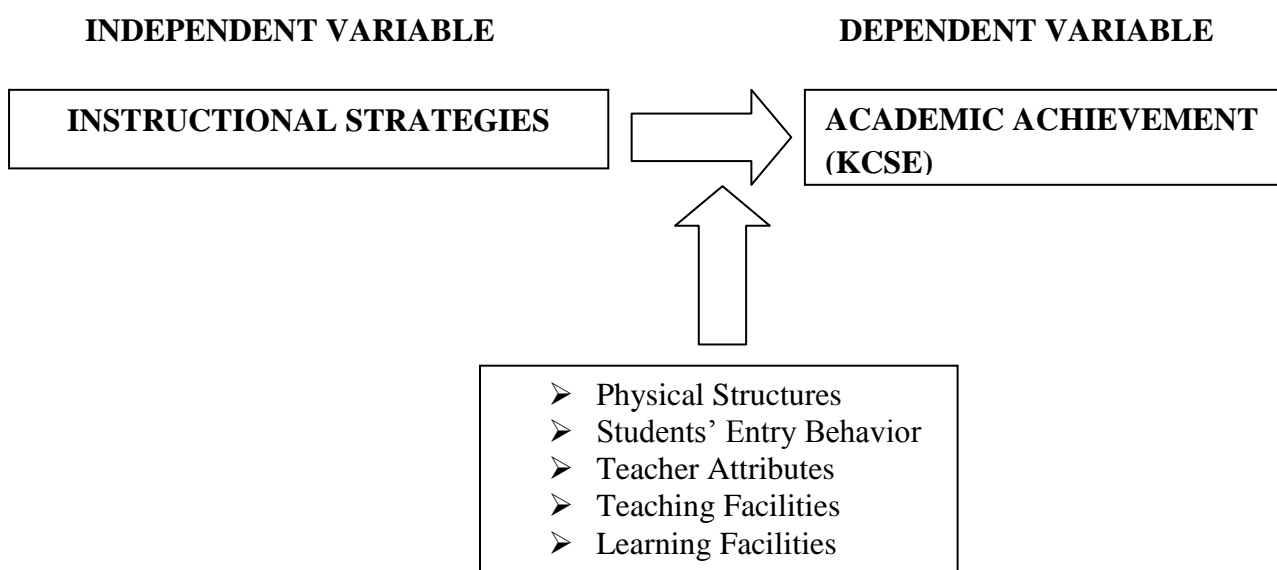


Fig 1 A Conceptual Framework on the Instructional Strategies of the Headteacher

## 2. Literature Review

Edmonds (1979) conducted a research on instructionally effective schools in Detroit and a review of previous studies involving effective schools in New York, California, and Michigan, and he concluded that school factors have predominantly contributed towards the creation of instructionally effective schools. These factors were identified as strong administrative leadership, high levels of expectations in student achievements, an orderly but not oppressive school climate, a focus on pupil acquisition of basic school skills, conducive atmosphere to the instructional process, and means of student progress monitoring and resources that can be focused on the fundamental learning objectives of the school.

Jones (2010) in his work identifies strategies which he also calls practices which must be put

in place for a school to succeed. They include balanced assessments, classroom walks through, team teaching, individualized professional learning, instructional coaching, leadership teams, mentoring, strategic planning, policies and procedures, staff meetings, reward systems and teacher study tours among others as the best strategies a principal can put in place to realize good academic performance. He notes that these strategies combined are likely to positively influence academic performance.

Research has found that instructional leaders should be goal oriented. They should be able to define a clear direction for the school and motivate others to join in the achievement. Instructional leaders emphasize on the importance of vision, goals and mission for schools which are to succeed (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

Classroom supervision is another vital strategy the principal would use to succeed in instructional leadership. However, Barth (1990) and Cuban (1998) agree that the classroom has been mostly a private domain of the teachers in which the principals may not be welcome. They say in some cases the principals have less expertise in the subject area than the teachers whom they supervise which makes the principals implication of this supervision strategy a challenge especially in secondary schools. Blasé & Blasé (1998) argue that effective instructional leadership involves the principal monitoring the students' progress.

Musungu and Nasong'o (2009) noted that vision is a paramount strategy as far as academic performance is concerned. According to them, for a school to realize sterling academic performance, there is need to set a clear vision for the school. This vision should be communicated to the school community and support its achievement by giving it instructional leadership, provide the resources and be seen in every part of the institution. They further suggest team work as a strategy for what they call a discreet head teacher. He or she will set up committees and smaller groups of members of staff to investigate ideas or strategies.

In addition Halinger and Murphy (1986) also attest to this by noting that Instructional leaders are goal oriented. As leaders they are able to define a clear direction for the school and motivate others to join in its achievement. In instructionally effective schools, this direction focused primarily on the improvement of students' outcomes.

Glew, et. al. (1995) as well as Jewell, (1998) in their study on participation in organization refers to this kind of process as participative and that it gives a voice to that lower person in the organization. This makes the person to feel involved in the running of the institution hence realization of good results. They converge on the fact that people will always be obliged to support a decision where they were involved in making and will always want it to succeed. Mullins, (2005) puts it clearly that many people believe that participation in decision making leads to higher performance and any person who wants to survive in the current competitive world.

In organizations where teachers lack involvement in decision making, there is truancy, excessive excuses, unproductive and non achievement of organizational goals of (Awotua – Efebo, 1999). In the schools where the teachers are involved in decision making process, they become more committed and give adequate support to the principal hence success (Udoh & Akpa, 2007). Olorunsola (2011) gives credit to collective decision making process as it relieves the principal of problem which might have otherwise piled on him.

Omobude & Igbidu (2012) carried out a study on influence of teachers' participation in decision making on their job performance in public and private secondary schools in Oredo Local Government area of Edo State in Nigeria. Their main instruments were a questionnaire and a teacher's performance evaluation report card (TPERC). Amongst their findings was the fact that teachers in private secondary schools participate more in decision making than teachers in public secondary schools.

In public secondary schools, their findings state that the ministry of education influences most of the decisions unlike in private secondary schools where the proprietor, the principal and teaching staff collectively make decisions. They further found out that teachers who are involved in decision making produce better academic results than those who don't. They therefore recommended that schools need to involve teachers in school governance for the teachers to produce better academic results.

### **3. Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Method**

The researcher used mixed research method i.e. both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from questionnaire was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics in form of percentages, frequencies and means. Qualitative data from interviews were organized into themes and sub-themes.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The researcher used descriptive survey research design in this study. This is a research design where the researcher describes the state of affairs as it is and then reports the findings (Orodho & Kombo, 2012). The research investigated how the principals' instructional strategies affect academic performance.

### **3.3 Research location**

The research was carried out in Kakamega North Sub County, Kakamega County, Kenya. The Sub County has a total of 37 secondary schools registered as examination centers. It borders Matete Sub County on the North, Navakholo Sub County on the South East, Kakamega East Sub County on the East and Turbo Sub County on the South. This Sub County has only one constituency which is Malava and it is divided into five divisions' i.e. Central, West, South, North and East. It is part of Kakamega County whose population density according to the 2009 population census is 515 people per square kilometer and the poverty index stands at 57 per cent.

The main economic activity is farming specifically sugarcane which is supplied to the factories of West Kenya and Butali sugar and subsistence farming particularly of maize and dairy farming. The researcher therefore chose this area for study because of its consistent low academic performance.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population for this research comprised of 37 principals of secondary schools in Kakamega North, all the 185 academic Heads of Departments, and 370 teachers. The total population for this study therefore was 592 subjects

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

The researcher selected the participants using stratified random sampling which was a representation from various sub groups in the population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The

schools were stratified into boys boarding, girls boarding, mixed day, boys boarding and day and girls' boarding and day. Saturated sampling was used where the respondents in the population were few. In this case, the 1 boys' boarding school was selected as well as both girls' boarding schools.

Cohen, Manion & Marrison (2011) recommends that for educational research, at least 30% of the target population is enough. Therefore, 8 mixed schools were sampled, 2 girls' boarding and day schools and 1 boys' boarding and day school.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

The data was collected using questionnaires, an interview schedule and a document analysis guide. Two sets of questionnaires were prepared for the Academic Heads of Departments and teachers. Apart from seeking to find out personal information, they sought for their responses on instructional strategies used in their various schools for academic achievement.

In-depth interviews were administered to the twelve (12) sampled head teachers of the schools involved in the study which sought to know their views on the effect of instructional leadership strategies on academic achievement.

The document analysis guide focused on the observation of documents that are relevant such as KCSE results analysis, list of responsibilities, school motto, core values and mission, record of work covered books, class attendance registers, schemes of work as well as mark books.

### **3.7 Validity of Research Instruments**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) validity refers to the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences made based on results obtained. It is asking a relevant question framed in the least way. The research adopted the content validity to measure the validity of the instruments to be used. Content validity enables data being collected to be reliable in representing the specific content of a particular concept. The researcher established the validity of the research instruments by presenting them to the experts in the field of education management and leadership at Mount Kenya University, Kakamega Campus for their advice, corrections and recommendations included in the final instruments. Borg and Gall (1993) points out that validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment.

### 3.8 Research Instruments Reliability

Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003) describes reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The researcher did piloting on schools which had not been captured in the sampling. The contents and structure of the instruments were then improved according to the pilot outcome before the researcher went to the field. Cronbach Alpha Reliability coefficient value was computed to determine how items correlate among themselves. The threshold value acceptable in this study was 0.7 and higher (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Cronbach Alpha Reliability for questionnaire for teachers was 0.768 and for HODs was 0.773 hence the questionnaire instrument was reliable as shown in Table 2.

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>			
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Teachers	.768	.778	15
HODs	.773	.777	15

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

### 3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher employed descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data where averages, percentages, medians, frequencies and totals were calculated. The descriptive analysis was deemed to be the best for this study because the study involved the description, analysis and interpretation of responses in the study. Statistical measures like averages, percentages, means, medians, frequencies and totals were used for analysis because the study involved the description, analysis and interpretation of responses in the study. Responses from in-depth interviews were analyzed line per line which was then developed into sub themes then into themes and conclusions were made. The SPSS programme was used to analyze the data. The results of objectives one, two and three were subjected to inferential analysis where correlation was used to study the relationship between each one of them and the independent variable.

## 4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

The question answered here was:

What are the instructional strategies applied to improve academic performance by principals in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub County?

#### 4.1 School categories

This section deals with the categories of schools that were sampled, the gender of the teachers and HODs who responded to the questionnaires and their experience in the respective positions. It further presents information on the categories of schools sampled as well as the age and academic qualifications of the teacher respondents. The schools in Kakamega North sub county were categorized into boys’ boarding, girls boarding, mixed day, girls’ boarding and day and boys’ boarding and day. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the schools per the various categories.

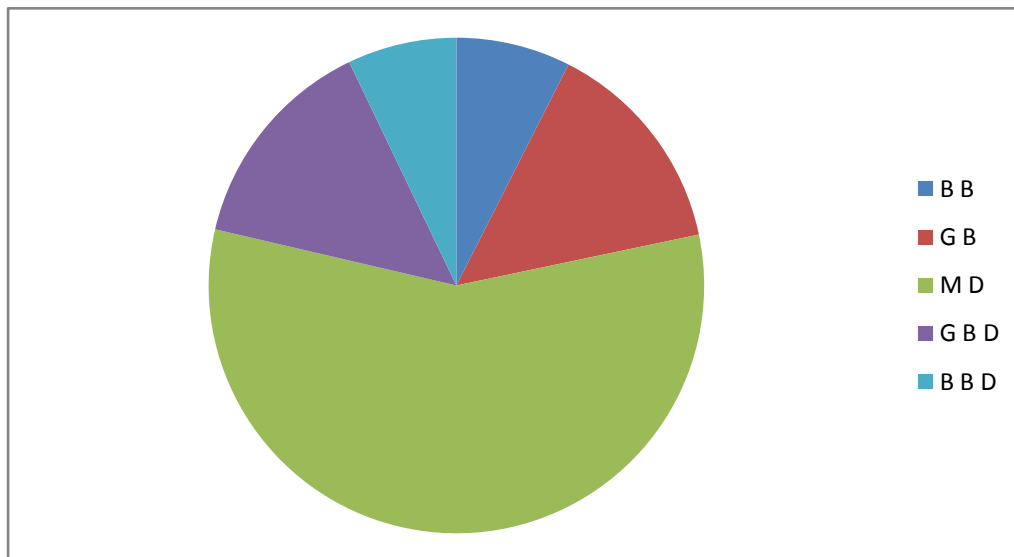


Figure 2: Categories of schools

Key:-

BB- Boys Boarding

GB- Girls Boarding

MD- Mixed Day

GBD- Girls Boarding and day

BBD- Boys Boarding and Day

It is evident from Figure 2 that 57.14% of the schools sampled were mixed day schools which are the dominant schools in the district whereas each of the other categories i.e. boys’

boarding, girls boarding, mixed, girls' boarding and day and boys' boarding and day.

#### 4.2 Gender of sampled teachers and HODs

Figure 3 brings out the numbers and percentages of the teachers and HODs who responded to the questionnaires for the study.

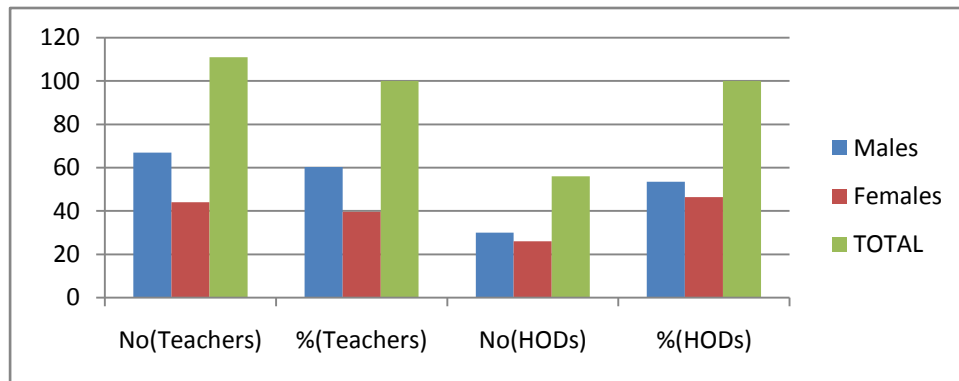


Figure 3: Gender of respondents (Teachers & HODs)

As indicated in Figure 3, a total of 111 teachers were interviewed and out of that 44 were females whereas 67 were males. This translates to 39.63 % females against 60.36% males. This implies that there were more male teachers in study sample compared to the females. On the other hand, the gender proportion of the HODs was almost equal with 26 females and 30 males having a percentage of 46.43 and 53.57 respectively.

#### 4.3 Age of HOD respondents

The researcher sought to know the ages of the respondents because it has an implication on their performance as HODs. They were therefore asked to indicate their ages by ticking in the respective age brackets. The responses are shown in the Figure 4

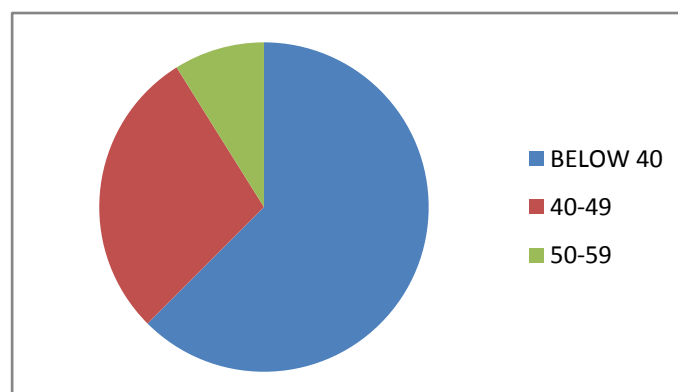


Figure 4: Ages of HODs

Figure 4 indicates that the bulk of HODS in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub County (62.5%) are below the age of 40. This implies that most of the HODs are young professionals who might not be having much experience in departmental management. Ijaiya (2012) conducted a research on failing schools in Niger Nigeria and found out that students can only do well in the hands of experienced teachers.

#### 4.4 Head of Departments Academic Qualifications

The researchers sought to find out the qualifications of HODs in the sampled schools. Their responses are clearly brought out in Figure 5.

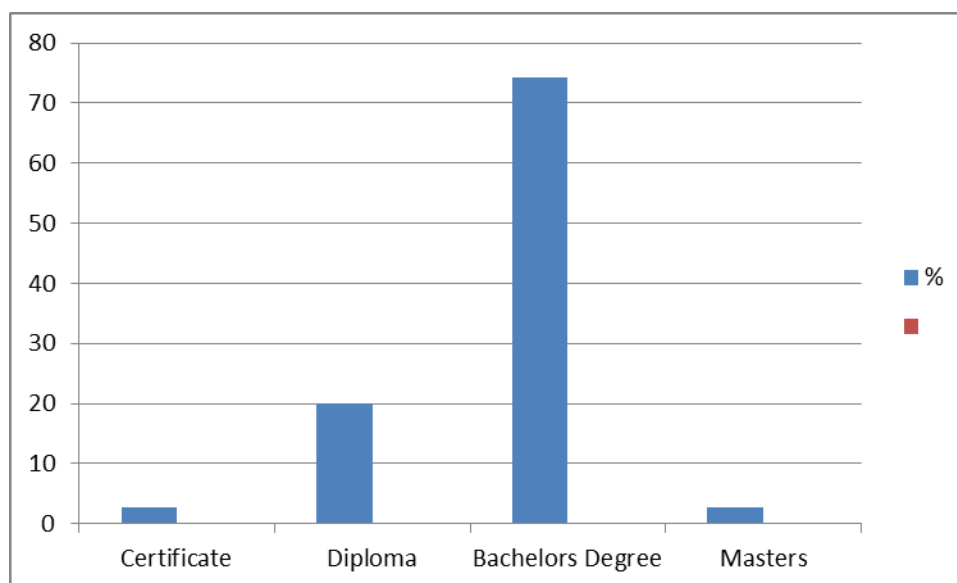


Figure 5: Qualifications of HODs

It was found out as indicated in Figure 5 that 74.3% of the HODs sampled had an undergraduate degree, 20.1% had a diploma, 2.8% had a certificate while 2.8% had a masters degree and above. This is an indicator that most of the teachers in Kakamega North Sub County are well trained for their work. Carruthers (2012) researched on teacher qualification and classroom performance and found out that the academic qualification of a teacher determines the teacher's classroom performance, the higher the qualification of a teacher, the better the performance of the students. This indicates therefore that most of the teachers in Kakamega North Sub County have the basic qualifications.

#### 4.5 Length of Stay of Teachers in their Respective Schools

The researcher sought to find out how long the sampled teachers had stayed in their various

schools and five choices were given for the responded to choose one. Their responses are shown in Table 3.

<b>DURATION</b>	<b>NO. Teachers</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 1 year	56	50.
1-3 years	12	11
4-6years	20	18
7-9 years	4	3.6
More than 9 years	19	17.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3: Length of Stay in the School

The length of stay of a teacher, a HOD and a principal in one station is vital in instructional leadership hence academic performance. As indicated in Table 3 and it was found out that 50% of the teachers had been in the schools for less than a year, 11% between 1 and 3 years, 18% between 4 and 6 years, 3.6% between 7 and 9 years while 17.4% for more than 9 years. It is therefore clear that most of the teacher respondents had not stayed in their respective schools for a long time. This might be a contributing factor to poor performance in KCSE in the study area. Plecket (2006) researched in Washington on the effect of teacher mobility on performance and concluded that in schools where teachers depart so oftenly, learning is disrupted leading to poor performance academically.

#### **4.6 Presence of Instructional Strategies**

The researcher expected to find out if schools were having classroom supervision, inclusive decision making, classroom assessment, principals' involvement in departmental meetings, checking of professional documents as well as students' work. Heads of Departments were asked if instructional strategies existed in their schools and their responses are shown in Figure 6.

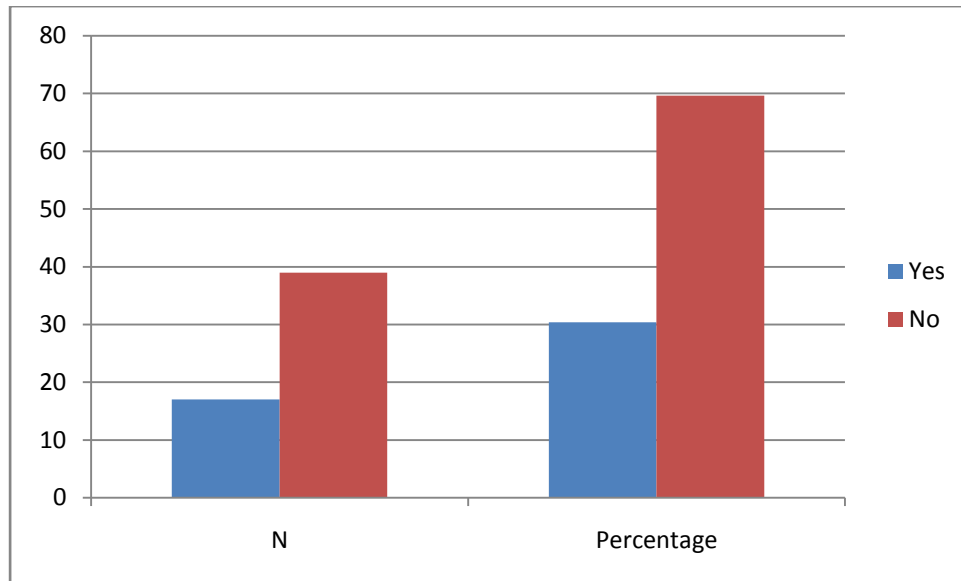


Figure 6: Availability of instructional strategies

In their responses 69.64% said No while 30.36% said Yes as shown in Figure 6 This implied that in most schools in Kakamega North, the instructional strategies were absent. Teaching therefore went own haphazardly without specific instructional strategies. This departs from the researches done by Edmomds (1979), Austin (1979), Jones, (2010), Hallinger & Murphy, (1986) and Musungu & Nasong'o, 2009 who all conquer on the argument that for any school to perform specific strategies or practices should be put in place and properly managed. However, using the document analysis, 85% of the schools had the school vision, mission and motto clearly displayed.

#### 4.7 Presence of school motto, vision, mission and core Values

The document analysis sought to find out if the target schools had displayed clearly the school motto, mission, vision as well as core values. The results are brought out in Table 4.

	PRESENT		ABSENT	
	N	%	N	%
Motto	10	71.43	4	28.57
Vision	8	57.14	6	42.86
Mission	8	57.14	6	42.86
Core Values	3	21.43	11	78.57

Table 4: Presence of motto, mission, vision and core values

Table 4 demonstrates that most schools sampled had the school motto, vision and mission although it evident that there are some which had none at all. This is in consistent with Hallinger & Murphy (1986) who found out in their study that an effective instructional leader should be able to define a clear direction for the school and motivate others to join in the achievement. They emphasize the importance of vision, goals and mission for schools which are to succeed. However, only 21.43% of the schools had core values an indicator that most of them did not have the values to guide them.

#### 4.8 Inclusive Decision Making

The question responded to by the teachers was: Does your school have inclusive decision making? The responses from the teachers who responded to the questionnaires were as shown in Figure 7.

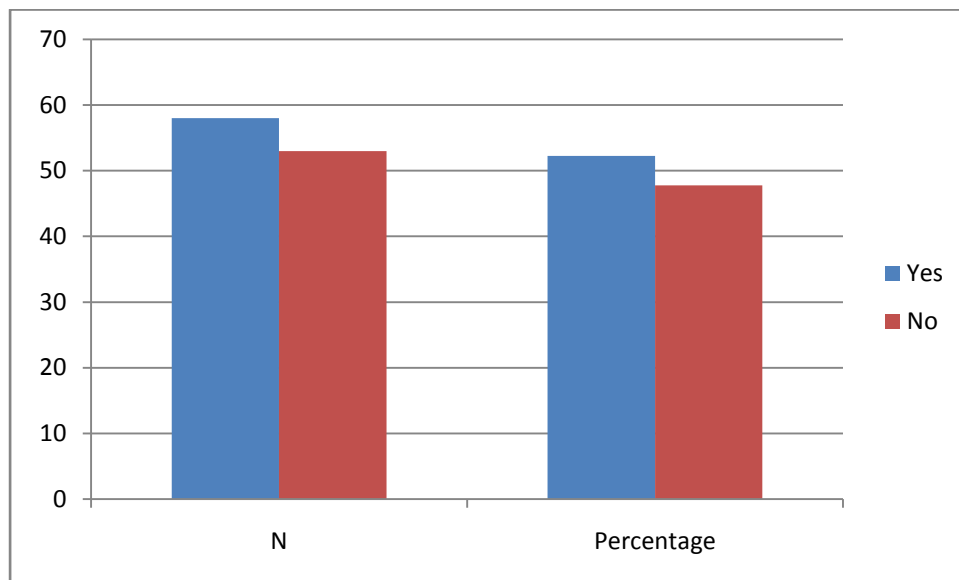


Figure 7. Inclusive decision making

Further, the HODs were asked to appraise the various areas they were involved by their principals in decision making and their responses are shown in Figure 4.10.

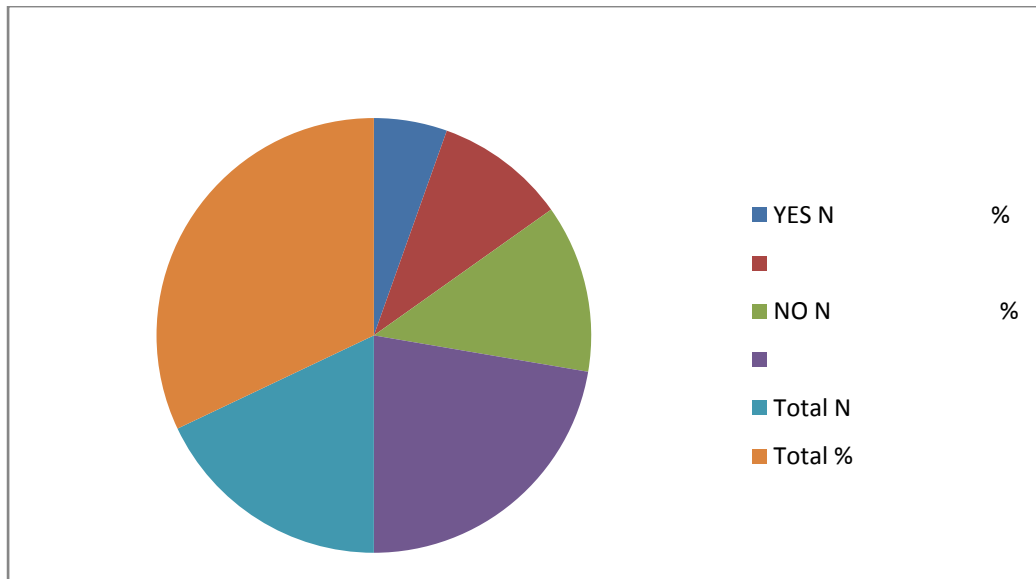


Figure 7: HODs involvement in decision making

As seen in Figure 7 more than a half the teachers who responded to the questionnaires responded that inclusive decision making was absent. This was brought out by the HODs who responded to the specific questions on it or not they are consulted in specific areas and in all of them the negative responses are common. This therefore indicates that in the study area, teachers and HODs are rarely consulted while principals are making major decisions concerning their various areas. This differs with Glew, et.al (1995), Jewell, (1998), Mullins, (2005), Awotua-Efebo, (1999) Ndiku, et, al.(2009), Wanjiku, (1985) and Mwangi (1986) who concludes that for a school to perform academically, the teachers must be involved in decision making so that the own it up.

#### 4.9 Effect of Decision Making Style on Students' Academic Performance

To establish the position of the teachers on the implication of decision making style on the academic performance of the students, a statement, decision making style greatly affects students' academic performance was posed and their responses are brought out in Figure 8.

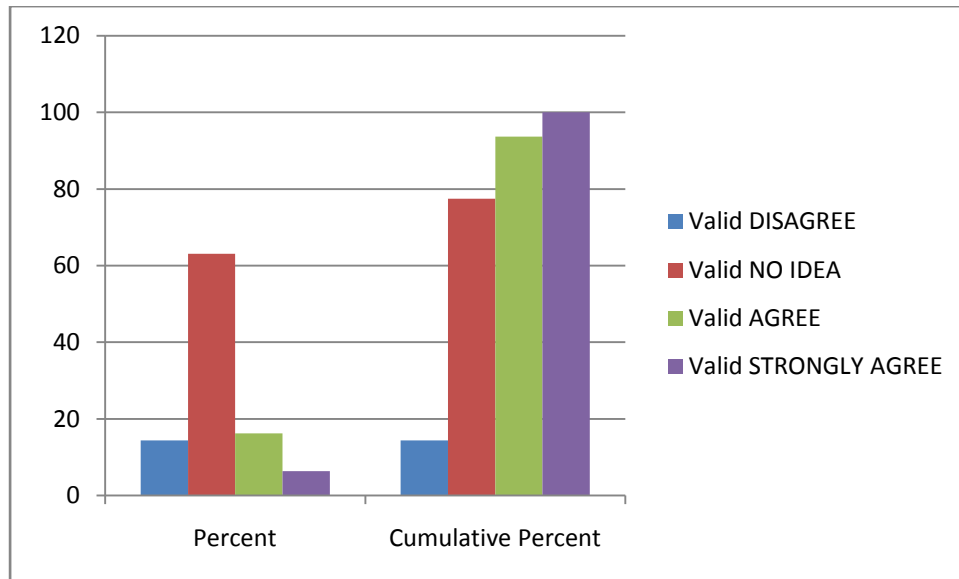


Figure 8: Effect of decision making style on academic performance

In their responses, 14.41% disagreed, 63.03% had no idea, 16.22% agreed and 6.31% strongly disagreed.

#### 4.10 Checking of students' note books

Teachers were given a statement that the principal oftenly checks students' note books and Table 5 shows the responses

RESPONSE	N	%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	56	50.45
DISAGREE	19	17.12
NO IDEA	9	8.1
AGREE	11	9.9
STRONGLY AGREE	16	14.43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5: Responses on checking students' note books

In Table 5 it is evident that 50.45% a relatively large percentage tend to disagree strongly with the statement pointing to the fact that in most schools principals don't normally check students' note books. 17.12% disagrees, 8.1% have no idea, 9.9% agree whereas only 14.43% strongly agree.

#### 4.11 Checking of Schemes of Work

Teachers were asked how often their principals checked their schemes of work. The statement posed was, principals check schemes of work oftenly, the responses are shown in

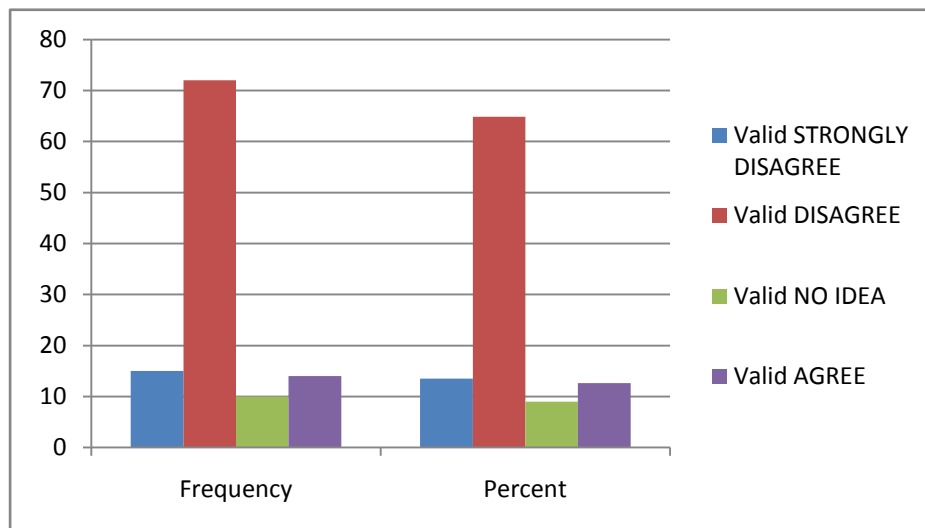


Figure 9: Frequency of checking schemes of work by principal

As indicated in Figure 9, 13.51% strongly disagreed while 78.38% disagreed. This was a clear indicator that large percentage of head teachers never checked the schemes of work of the teachers oftenly. 9% respondents had no idea while only 12.62% disagreed.

#### 4.12 Checking of Record of Work

The statement, the principal oftenly checks records of work was posed to the teachers; their responses are displayed in Figure 10.

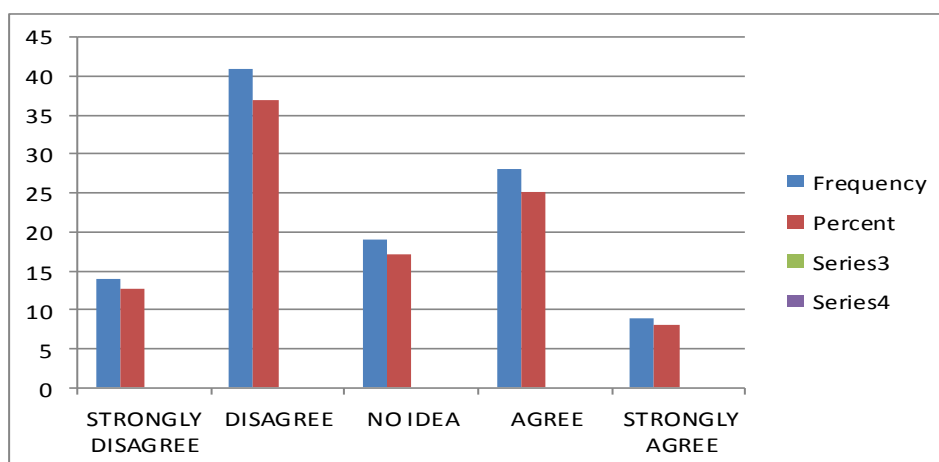


Figure 10: Frequency of principal checking record of work covered

In their responses, 12.61% of the teachers strongly disagreed, 49.55% disagreed, 17.12% had no idea, 25.23% agreed and 8.1% strongly disagreed as shown Figure 10. The same statement was posed to the HODs and their responses are brought out in Figure 11.

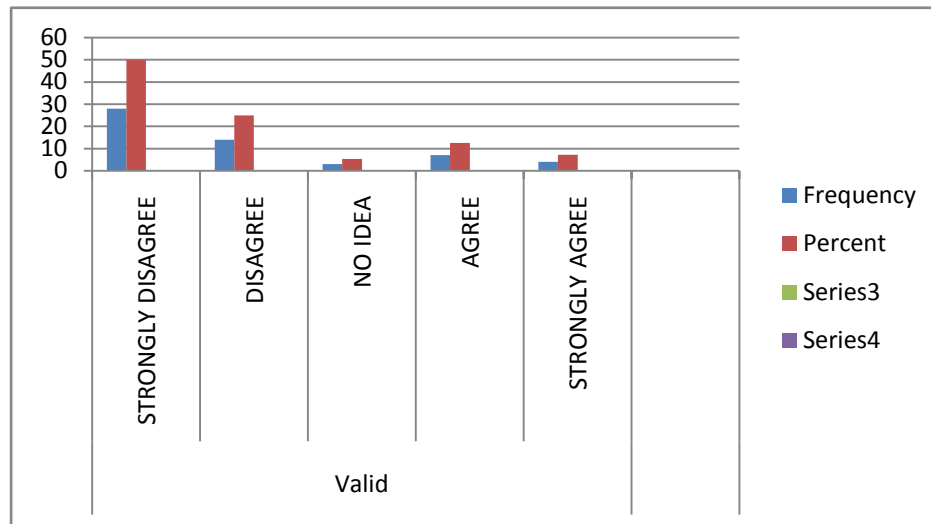


Figure 11. Frequency of principal checking record of work

It is important to note that 50% of the Heads of Departments strongly disagreed, 25% disagreed, 5.36% had no idea, 12.5% agreed while 7.14% strongly disagreed. This implies that according to the Heads of Departments most of the principals do not check record of work covered which might lead to laxity and therefore poor performance.

#### 4.13 Checking of Mark Books

Teachers were also given the statement, mark books are checked by the principals oftenly. Their responses are displayed in Figure 12

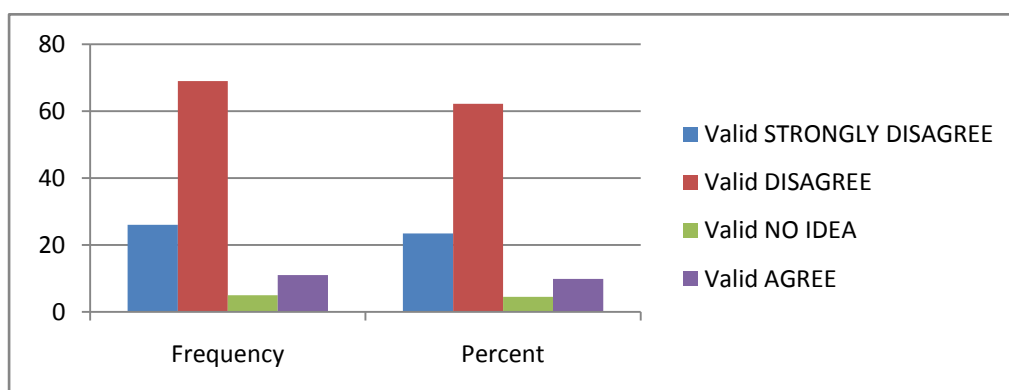


Figure 12: Principals' checking of mark books

As indicated in Figure 12 that 23.42% strongly disagreed and 62.16% disagreed. This implies that in most schools sampled, principals do not check the mark books. 4.5% of the respondents had no idea while 9.9% agreed.

#### 4.14 Departmental Meetings

To establish how often departments meet, HODs were given the statement, departmental meetings are held oftenly. Their responses are shown in Figure 13

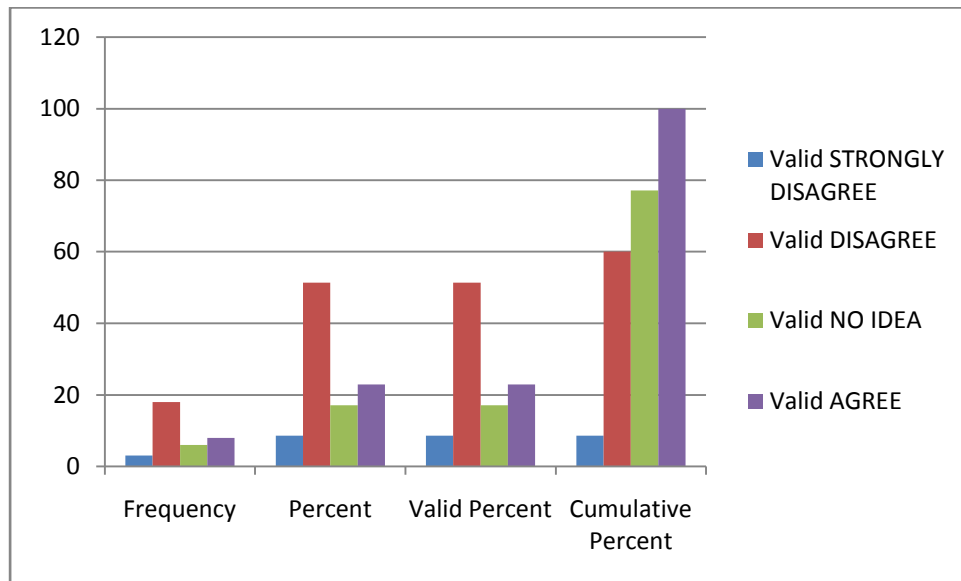


Figure 13: Frequency of departmental meetings

In their responses, 8.6% disagreed strongly, 51.4% disagreed, and 17.1% had no idea while 22.9% agreed. Their responses are tabulated in table 4.17. As seen in their responses, a relatively higher percentage disagreed strongly implying that in most of the schools the meetings are rarely held. Jones (2010) puts weigh on this issue by reinforcing the fact that for a school to perform well there should be frequent staff meetings.

To find out if the principals as instructional leaders attend meetings, the statement principals always attend departmental meetings was given and their responses are displayed in Figure 14.

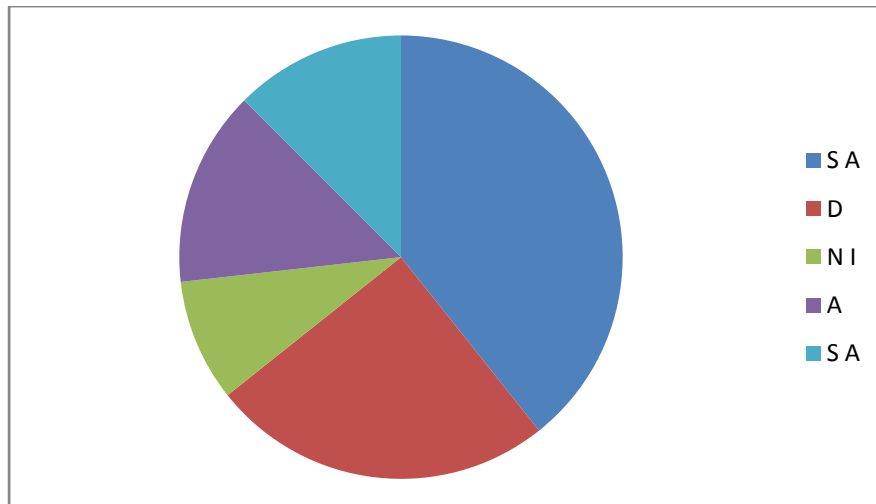


Figure 14: Frequency of principal's attendance of meetings

As seen in Figure 14, 39.29% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 25% disagreed, 8.92% had no idea, 14.29% agreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed. These points to the fact that in most cases principals don't attend departmental meetings.

#### 4.15 Effects of Instructional Strategies on Performance

A statement, instructional leadership affects a schools' academic performance, was given to the teachers in the questionnaires and they were to give their responses. Figure 15 displays their responses.

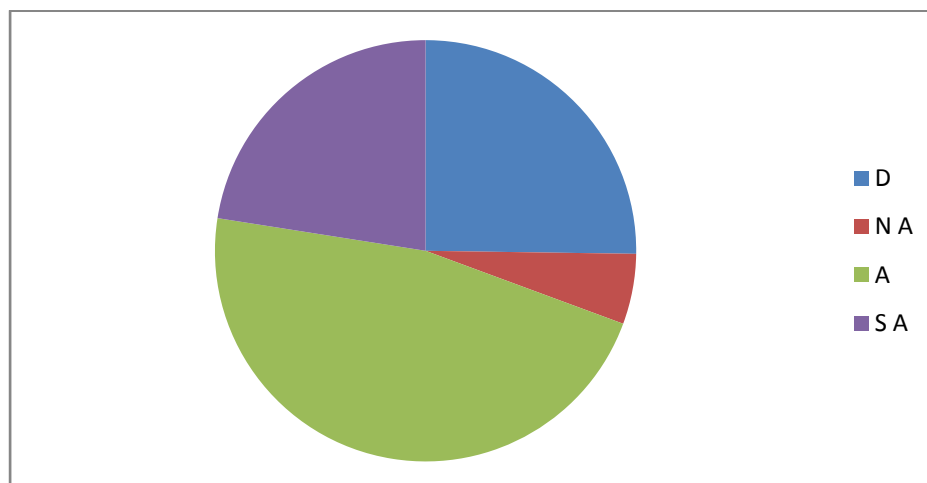


Figure 15: Effect of instructional strategies on academic performance

The above responses indicate that 46.85% agreed and 22.52% strongly agreed implying that most of the teachers interviewed concurred that instructional strategies had a strong correlation to performance. On the other hand, 25.23% disagreed and 5.4% had no idea.

HODs conquered when given the same statement as shown in Figure 15 where 3.57% disagreed, 19.64% had no idea, 53.57% agreed while 23.2% strongly disagreed. This implies that a higher percentage supported the fact that instructional leadership affects academic performance. This agrees with the findings of Cotton, 2003 who did a research on principals and student achievement as well as Quinn (2002) who researched on the impact of principal leadership on behavior on instructional practice and engagement and both found out that instructional leadership has a significant impact on creating more effective schools leading to higher levels of student achievement

## **5. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study was aimed at finding out the implications of instructional strategies on academic performance in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub County.

The study found out that in a few of the schools which were performing well had instructional strategies. These included involving teachers and HODs in academic decision making, classroom assessment, checking of both teachers and students records which included schemes of work, lesson notes, mark books and record of work covered. These schools had also the vision, mission, motto and core values of the schools displayed. On the other hand, the research found out that a higher percentage of the principals had not put instructional strategies in place hence poor performance.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The following conclusion was made based on research question. That the instructional strategies that affected performance in secondary schools included target setting, inclusive decision making, classroom supervision and checking of teachers and students' records.

The findings of this research led to the following recommendation:

That In order for schools to perform better in academics, deliberate efforts should be made by the school principals to put instructional strategies in place to guide the academic development of the schools. These strategies may include setting the school motto, vision and mission, constant meetings between the principal and teachers and academic targeting.

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