

Abstract

Leadership has small but educationally significant indirect influence on students learning outcomes. Conversely, teachers account for significant variance of students' academic performance. Principals' leadership styles can increase teachers' capacities and commitments and thus increase their output which can be reflected in improved students' academic performance. Transformational leadership practices have been shown to increase employee capacities and commitments. The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between principals' involvement in developing teachers and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study targeted all the 331 principals and 3,006 teachers in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Using simple random sampling, a total of 100 principals were selected and five teachers equally selected from the schools with the sampled principals making a total of 500 teachers. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for principals, questionnaires for teachers and document analysis checklists. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistical tools used were frequencies, percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation while inferential statistical tools such as ANOVA and regression analysis were used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically through content analysis and the responses were presented in narratives. Tables and figures were used to present the analyzed data. The results revealed that there was statistical relationship ($p < 0.05$) between principals involvement in teacher development and students' academic performance which was positive but moderate ($R = .671$). Based on the results, it was concluded that transformational leadership practices influence students' academic performance. The study recommends principals to increase transformational leadership practice of developing teachers since it influences students' academic performance.