

**INFLUENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS' STRATEGIC
PLANNING ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN RACHUONYO NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a ward of any degree in any other university

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my wife Emily Akinyi and children Darlin, David, Justine and Mitchell.

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“His divine power has given us everything we need for life”. 2 Peter 1:3. This gives me reason to thank God for enabling me to successfully go through my Masters of Education Degree.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CA	Continuous assessment
HoDs	Head of departments
KCSE	Kenya certificate of secondary education
KESSP	Kenya education sector support programme
KIE	Kenya institute of education
KNEC	Kenya national examination council
MOES&T	Ministry of education science and technology
NECTA	National examination colonial for Tanzania

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya. The study had four objectives; to determine the extent to which schools' mission statement influence students' academic performance, to assess how schools' continuous assessment strategy influence students' academic performance, to determine how schools' benchmarking strategy influence students' academic performance and to establish the extent to which schools' syllabus coverage strategy influence students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District. The study was guided by the education production function theory. The study employed descriptive survey design targeting 43 principals, 301 Head of departments and 2154 form four students. The sample had 23 principals, 120 Head of departments, and 215 students. The research instruments used were mainly questionnaires and interview. Qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the study were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to increase accuracy of results. From the study it is established that; the majority of the schools had mission statement written on walls and entrance of school gates, however they were not always communicated across the school verbally. Another finding is that, a majority of schools who had put continuous assessment program in place in assessing their students' made a considerable value added progress on their students' academic performance. However the timeline was not well stipulated in many schools, this led to a clash of programs. It is further established that benchmarking is among the various strategies used by schools, practiced both internally and externally. Schools which used benchmark as a strategy, the study revealed that it positively influenced students' academic performance. A majority of the respondents indicated that, they use syllabus in lesson preparation and teaching, at the same time a majority of the students indicated that teachers normally inform them in advance about the content from the syllabus, a majority of the HoDs and principals indicated that they set targets for syllabus coverage by mid of June. From the study it is revealed that, early completion of syllabus allow the students to revise, gain confidence hence this influence their academic performance. The study findings have come up with the following recommendations, mission statement should be communicated always across the school and schools to tailor their programs on their school mission statement, schools to mobilize financial resources in order to engage in benchmarking and lastly schools should create more time for effective syllabus coverage in order to boost students' confidence in handling exams. The researcher proposes further research to replicate this study in schools in other districts in the country. A study on the barriers of effective implementation of strategic plan in schools and lastly a study should be carried on strategies for effective benchmarking in schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Education in any country has always responded to the socioeconomic and political objectives of that country. This can be traced back to the ancient civilization of the Nile, Athens and Sparta. In these societies, education was meant to suit the lives and aspirations of the people and achieve goals of the society (Genevieve, 2007). Even today education continues to play a significant role especially in transmitting cultural heritage from different ethnic groups and also determines the career the student will be engaged later in life. For these reasons education institutions needs to set strategies for the provision of education and to make it relevant to its users.

Mintzberg and Quinn (1999), defined a strategy as ‘direction and scope of an organization over the long term which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment to meet the needs of markets and fulfill stakeholders’ expectations’. Strategy is always identified within the institutions’ strategic planning process where they match their strategies with the prevailing environmental factors, thus setting a strategy becomes the core business of planning

A strategic plan in a school set up gives it a focus and a direction for the future by continuously adjusting to academic direction in response to changing academic circumstances (Bryson, 1995), in examining secondary school performance, the main cornerstone used by the MOEST is based upon key challenges which face this sub sector namely; access, quality, completion, retention and relevance (KESPP, 2005). To ensure that these challenges are mitigated schools normally prepare strategic plans that run between 3-5 years out of which they identify key strategies that are relevant for their existence. Among the strategies that are set by schools include the following and especially for this study: formulation of mission statement, continuous assessment, benchmarking, and syllabus coverage to affect students' academic performance.

Mission statement of an organization explains why an organization exists thus its overall purpose. It also states what organization does right now, in the most general sense. In this way, the mission also sets parameters for what the organization, through omission does not do (Mintzberg, 1999). Example of mission statement: Princeton Academy of Sacred Heart in USA "Our mission is to develop young men with active and creative minds a sense of understanding and compassion for others and the courage, to act on their beliefs. We stress the total development of each child, spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical" (<http://www.purdue.edu>) retrieved on 28th March 2013 at 11.05am. There is conformity between the schools' activities and their mission statement for example the school community respect individual child needs', fosters a

caring and creative environment and emphasizes emotional, social, physical and intellectual development of each child.

Osceola High School in Zambia mission statement is: “Our mission is to provide highest quality educational program by promoting the value of learning through Relationships, Rigor, Relevance and Results”. Looking closely the school has managed to build meaningful supportive relationships amongst their students, staff and community and again 70% of their students have the opportunity to proceed to the next level of education. This is a reflection that their activities are tailored on their mission statement (<http://www.ohs.osceola.school/vision-mission-statement.html> retrieved on 16th April, 2013 at 9.25 am). In Kenya, mission statement is both common in the business industry and education sector. For example the Dean of studies Maseno National School Mr. Odayo in his speech posted in the schools’ website (<http://www.masenoschool.sc.ke> retrieved on 27th March 2013 at 10am), reiterated that in true spirit of its vision and mission, Maseno school has proven itself as an institution that nurtures academic excellence and full blossoming of talent, the school has been registering impressive results in academic with over 98% of all the candidates sitting the final KCSE examination gaining entry into universities to pursue education. From all the cases above we can therefore conclude that mission statement has Influence on the general performance in organization and in our case students’ academic performance.

The second element of schools' strategic plan that determines students' academic performance is continuous assessment. Assessment can be defined as appraisal fixing or determining the value of something (oxford advanced learners dictionary). In education it is used to refer to any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, skills and attitude of a learner or a group of learners.

In USA schools there is a continuous evaluation system; a 'cumulative file' or 'folder' is opened and will follow the student throughout his or her educational career. Marks range from 'A' (excellent) to 'F' (failing) in each subject. A student's academic performances depend upon test performance, given at intervals during the year, class participation, homework assignments and independent projects, etc. Generally twice a year the student's parents are sent a 'report card' indicating the grades earned in each subject. The student's overall academic history is recorded in a 'transcript', which is later requested by universities seeking to evaluate the students (<http://www.fulbright.co.uk/eas/studyus/index.html>) retrieved on 17th April 2013 at 2pm.

In other developed countries, CA is carried out on an on-going basis while student are working their ways through a course or major unit. It can take a wide range of forms including periodic tests essays, on-going assessments of practical or studio works or situational assessments (Ellington and Earl, 1997). Several other African

countries, notably, Ghana Nigeria, Libya, Zambia and South Africa have all adopted the CA. Despite differences in details, the policies in all these countries have common features. As defined in the South African context, CA is conceptually similar to alternative assessment, which is a term in wider use in South Africa (Puhl, 1997). CA in the classroom can be characterized as an ongoing informal assessment and evaluation. Prior to the implementation of CA , South Africa relied almost exclusively on a system of national examinations to identify the learner who “passess’. This mean the learner who advances to the next level, receives a qualification, is admitted to a university or other tertiary institution, and even receives a bursary is determined by an examination (Puhl, 1997). The new policy of education in South Africa is aimed at bringing out a paradigm shift in educational assessment. The central characteristic of this shift is the moving of assessment from performing a judgmental role to that of a developmental role (National Education Ministry, 1996). This move reflects evolving ideas on the nature of assessment and its purposes. In the Nigeria context, continuous assessments is defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of students in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of behavior systematically takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling (Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, 1985). From the definition above, it can be seen that CA seeks to build the total man of the student. According to Kukwi (2006), CA in Nigeria came to use with the advent of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1981. Kukwi (2006) pointed out that CA

was tipped to be the bedrock of the new educational policy. In the Republic of Botswana, the syllabus states that CA is to be undertaken by teachers over the course of the three years of Junior Secondary School; however, no reference is made to how much weight the CA is given in the final Science grade (Republic of Botswana Ministry of Education, 2005). Like other African countries CA is being practiced in many Kenyan secondary schools; in many schools, regular testing takes place on weekly, fortnightly, monthly, mid termly, termly and yearly basis. Besides testing assignments and recap exercises, projects are other forms of CA strategies sometimes used in Kenyan secondary schools. In all these cases continuous assessment tests are seen as having strong influence on the students' final grade. The case is also common in Rachuonyo North District where teachers administer CA to students, but how this influence students' academic is what this study contends to determine.

Another strategy applied by schools in the education provision to affect students' performance is benchmarking. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia benchmarking is the process of comparing one's business processes and performance metrics to industry bests or best practices from other industries. In UK benchmarking do take place both internally and externally with similar and dissimilar organizations. Camp (1995) points out that truly innovative ideas are probably more likely to be found by looking at key processes outside one's own industry. Coopers and Lybrand (1994) reported that internal benchmarking tends

initially to dominate in UK because of the complexities of establishing partnerships particularly with competitors and also the cost- effectiveness of internal benchmarking. In both cases benchmarking has acted as a source of new ideas or a route to improvement, building on observed best practice. In India, local and international benchmarking takes place between the schools, Kim Bing Wu, Peter Goldschmidt, Christy Kim, Boscardin, Deepa, Sankar (2009), pointed that schools that had benchmarking improved their students academic performance by 45%. In Kenya benchmarking is common in both business industry and in education sector (Ambula, 2010), asserts that the major driving force of benchmarking in Kenyan secondary schools is to improve performance. In Rachuoyo North District benchmarking also take place in schools under various programs some call it subject contest, symposium, congress, debate, name them either within the school, outside the school but within the district or outside the district with schools' perceived as best performers (2013 interschool science congress held at Gendia High School on 5th-7th, February). From the above analysis it is true to conclude that benchmarking in schools do take place in Rachuonyo North District but the extent to which it influence students' academic performance is not very clear in this district, that is why this study seeks to unveil.

Schools also employ syllabus coverage as a strategy for students' academic performance. Syllabus is an outline or a summary of main points of a text, lecture

or course of study. Syllabus coverage is also termed as curriculum implementation. In USA Thomas (2008), asserts in his research dissertation on implementation of a reading curriculum and its effects on students' achievement that the implementation of the curriculum improved the test scores of majority of students. In Canada in study done by Geoffrey Borman and Sam Strongfield (2007), on the implementation and effects of the core knowledge sequence, found out that the core knowledge sequence was implemented successfully in 3 of 4 schools and that consistent relationships existed between improved implementation and improved test scores. In Zambia each biology teacher is given a copy of the national biology as a guide for scope and depth of the content to be taught in each grade, the examiners use the prescribed national biology syllabus as a guide for preparing examinations, this implies covering or not covering the biology syllabus affects the student academic performance (Chabalengula, 2008). In Kenya Shikuku (2009), asserts that students who cover the mathematics syllabus, have a better mean score than those who fail to cover the syllabus, students who cover the syllabus early in the year and spend more time or revision, have an even better mean score than those who cover the syllabus just before KCSE examinations.

However, despite the central role of mission statement, continuous assessment, benchmarking program and syllabus coverage strategies in enhancing the teaching learning process, it is not known to a great deal how schools continuously apply these strategies to enhance students' academic performance in secondary schools

in Rachuonyo North District. This study attempted to find out strategic plans used by secondary schools in Rachuonyo North District in the provision of education. In addition the study examined whether there is any relationship between these plans and students' academic performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There has been low academic performance of students' in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations in Rachuonyo North District for the last three years as compared to the neighboring Homabay District as revealed in the KCSE results released yearly by the Kenya National Examination Council.

Table: 1.1 KCSE mean grade

Year	Rachuonyo north district	Homabay district	Difference
2010	5.1490	5.9753	0.8263
2011	5.4179	6.4463	1.0284
2012	5.5318	6.5722	1.0542

Source Kneec website: <http://www.knec.ac.ke/results> retrieved on 22nd

March 2013 at 2pm

District education office of Rachuonyo North has organized workshops and seminars for principals and teachers on how to develop strategies to mitigate this

poor result (Rachuonyo North Deo's office strategic planning seminar notice: RN/01//02/2010 for all principals and BOGs). This has brought pressure on principals to ensure that examination outcomes for their schools are satisfactory to students, parents and other stakeholders. Indeed in the past, some principals have succumbed to this pressure thus engaging in unacceptable activities with intention of influencing their schools' performance resulting to examination irregularities (Daily Nation, March 27, 2011) .For these reasons this study contended to determine the influence of schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The Specific objectives of the study were:

- i. To determine the extent to which schools' mission statement influences students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District
- ii. To assess how schools' continuous assessment strategy influences students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District

- iii. To determine how schools' benchmarking strategy influences students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District
- iv. To establish the extent to which schools' syllabus coverage strategy influence students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- i. To what extent does the schools' mission statement influence students' academic performance?
- ii. How does schools' continuous assessment strategy influence students' academic performance?
- iii. To what extent does the schools' benchmarking affect students' academic performance?
- iv. How does the schools' syllabus coverage strategy influence students' academic performance?

1.6 Significance of the study

Findings of the study may be used by the school principals to formulate strategies to affect students' academic performance and embrace strategic planning as a tool for effective planning for provision of education. This findings may also be relevant to teachers as they may give them a great insight into the need to use various strategies in the provision of education to students. The policy makers

and education planners may also gain from the information on the need to re-strategize the plans in order to make education more effective and efficient to its users. Scholars and academicians may also use this study as a source for further study.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The major limitation of the study was the inability to get in touch with some HoDs and principals who were not in school for most of the days during the study. To overcome this, teachers and deputy principals were used to give their opinions since it was believed that they had information on their schools' operations.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study was limited to Rachuonyo North District in Homabay County and focused on principals, HoDs and form four students. It considered the influence of schools' mission statement, schools' continuous assessment strategy, schools' benchmarking strategy and schools' syllabus coverage strategy on students' academic performance. These may have not been the only strategies used by schools in the provision for education to affect students' academic performance. Therefore the findings may not be generalized to all schools in other parts of the country.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The study was based on the following assumptions:

- i. That all the schools had strategic plans for education provision
- ii. That all the schools implement their strategic plans

1.10 Definition of significant terms

Academic performance: refers to the final grades awarded to a student after doing an examination on a course of study.

School Mission: refer to the reason for existing or unique purpose that sets it apart from other schools of its type and identifies the scope of its operations.

Stakeholders: refer to parents/guardians, staff, the government and any party that is involved in school affairs.

Strategic planning: an approach to establishing the long- term future of a school and then moving that school in an appropriate direction to achieve the future state to which its members aspire.

1.11 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, basic assumptions of the study, definition of significant

terms and organization of the study. Chapter two consists of a detailed review of related literature as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study. Chapter three includes the research methodology detailing the research design, study sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and data analysis methods. Chapter four consists of data presentation and analysis where tabular presentation and narrative discussions of the data. Chapter five includes the summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study, which were drawn from the data analysis done in chapter four.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed the existing literature on the schools' strategies that influenced students' academic performance. It draws on previous works carried out by other researchers and relates it to the present study.

It focuses on the mission statement, continuous assessment; benchmarking and syllabus coverage as strategies influencing students' academic performance. It also has the summary of gaps that the study intended to fill, the theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

2.2 Influence of mission statement on students' academic performance

Mission statements are widely believed to be antecedents to any strategy formulation effort (Thompson and Strickland, 1996). More fundamentally, mission statements are supposed to capture the overriding purpose of an organization in line with the values and expectations of stakeholders and should typically answer the questions; what business are we in? and what is our business for?

Mullane (2002) explained that it is not the contents of the mission statements that stirs debate, rather it is the process used to prepare the document and how the finished document is employed in the organization. The body of literature and

research supporting the relevance of mission statement to organization however far outweighs the opposing views. In study of USA, Japanese and European business motivation and inspiration of employees strongly featured as the second most important objectives for mission statement (Bartkus, 2004). The length and content of mission statement may vary, some broad others narrow. Fundamentally a mission statement includes and captures a myriad of stakeholders' values and expectations; more importantly how the organization creates value for its stakeholders (Johnson, 2008)

Education institutions like any other organization has a mission statement and many also have a statement of values often these are plastered on large signs, printed on school stationery and in school magazines, for example Westwood high school in (USA) mission statement "To provide excellence in education through rich and diverse learning opportunities, enabling students to exercise intelligent control of their future". The findings reveal that the school values individual child empower students to be productive, organized and responsible self directed individuals and also instill an awareness and appreciation of global community and environment (<http://www.wwrsd.org/domain/152>, retrieved on 16th April ,2013 at 11.20 am)

Another example can be drawn from Library and Archives Canada (<http://www.laws.Justice.gc.ca/en/showstdm/cs/N-12> retrieved on 23rd March, 2013 at

10am). There is conformity between the services offered by the library with their mission statement. In Nigeria mission statement is used in education institutions to serve as framework for evaluating both current and prospective activities (<http://imsuni.edu.ng> 23rd march, 2013 at 3.05pm). Coming to Kenya the use of mission statement is both common in the business industry and education. Taking for example St Alfred Alara Secondary in Rachuonyo North District; Mission statement: “To nurture and develop all round empowered gentlemen adaptable to the dynamic world who become dependable, competent and responsible”. In their annual review of the performance indicators revealed that the school accomplishes its mission statement by actively participating in co-curricula and class work activities (staff meeting minute no 03/2/2012). Since mission statement plays a significant role in determining the schools overall activities and more so students academic performance. This strategy is also common in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North District; however its influence on the students’ performance was unknown that is why this study was done.

2.3 Influence of continuous assessment tests on students’ academic performance

According to Obanya (2008), assessment involves the systematic collection of data on all aspects of an educational endeavor. This means that the data collected about students’ academic achievement is used on a continuous basis in a systematic way, to make meaningful decisions on what should happen.

Graume and Naidoo (2011) have also indicated that, “in a global economy, assessment of students achievement is changing mainly because in an ever-changing knowledge based society, students would not only be required to learn and understand the basics but also to think critically, to analyze and to make inference for making decisions. It is therefore critical that CAs could utilize strategies that are able to measure the changing students’ abilities and attitudes. In Nigeria, Omoifo (2006), assessment strategy in many schools is summative, final, administrative rigorous and content driven rather than formative, diagnostic; private, suggestive and goal oriented as such can be regarded as grading”.

In Kenya a study carried by Kwaka, Dennis and Kirima (2012) on teachers assessment practice in enhancing preference mathematics among secondary school students in Mombasa districts, Kenya revealed that: Teachers assessed students mainly for formative and summative reasons and those who used diagnostic assessment produced better scores at the end of term examination, hence recommended that it should be used continually.

However, in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North district CAs are used by teachers to assess the students achievements and the mark is indicated in the terminal report forms students take home, but still students performance in KCSE in the district is still low as compared to the neighbouring district Homabay, the

need exists to investigate whether there is any relationship between continuous assessment strategies being used in secondary and students performance in the KCSE examination.

2.4 Influence of benchmarking on student's academic performance

Benchmarking is an integral part of the planning and ongoing review process to ensure a focus on the external environment to strengthen the rise of factual information in developing plans. Benchmarking is used to improve performance by understanding the methods and practices required to achieve world- class performance levels. Its primary objective is to understand those practices that will provide a competitive advantage; target setting (Camp, 1995).

In UK, some schools do have personal finance education benchmarking whereby schools' with personal finance education in their curriculum are benchmarking with others which do not have, when a study was conducted by national centre for social research(June, 2006) on personal finance education in schools, a UK benchmark; study revealed that schools that teach their students personal finance education were actually doing better financially than those who did not hence created a benchmark program between these institutions to compare their studies.

In India a study by Kim Bing Wu, Peter Goldschmidt, Christy Kim Boscardin, Deepa Sankar (2009) on international bench marking and determinants of

mathematics achievement in two Indian state schools- revealed that grade nine students in the states of Rajasthan and Orissa had an improved performance of 40% and 45% in their grades in mathematics due to the fact that their schools were engaged in international benchmarking with other schools

In Kenya benchmarking is both common in business industry and in education sector. Secondary schools in Kenya do carry benchmarking internally and externally to gauge their performance with other sister schools. Ambula (2010) carried a study on Benchmarking and performance in public secondary schools in Nairobi. Her study revealed that most secondary schools practice benchmarking to a very large extent in areas such as discipline, parental involvement, motivation, leadership, teaching and learning resources which eventually affected the performance of teachers and students especially after the exchange program. There are three critical factors influencing the choice of benchmarking tools, these are: the objectives to be achieved, time and resources available and comparability with local conditions and the schools processes. Since secondary schools in Rachuonyo North district do also have benchmarking practices this study will find out the extent to which these practices influence the students' performance in KCSE.

2.5 Influence of Syllabus coverage on students' academic performance

Barr and Dreeben (1983), outlined the basic content of a teaching syllabus as; topics to be taught at various levels in the school, specific behavioral objectives which should indicate knowledge to be acquired after the teaching of any given topic, content of the topics selected for inclusion in the syllabus and materials and suggested activities for teaching listed topics. The time on task literature indicates that opportunity to learn and student performance are increased in classrooms where teachers maintain the continuity of the lesson (Guice, 2009). Good, Grows, and Beckerman (1978), asserts that the number of textbook pages covered by different fourth-grade mathematics classes is significantly related to achievements gained.

National council for Curriculum and Assessment from Canada carried out a study on syllabus coverage in secondary school in February, 2010 and found that in schools where the content of the syllabus were adequately covered , students performed well. (NCCA, 2010). In Nigeria Allison, Dimka (2011), in their research, time frame and syllabus completion of senior secondary mathematics in Omuku, Nigeria; revealed that time allocation is a strong factor for syllabus completion of mathematics subjects and had a relationship on the students academic performance. In Kenya Shikuku (2009), discovered that content coverage has a major effect on how much children learn in first grade even when

initial aptitude is satisfactorily controlled. The secrets of top KCSE secondary schools in Kenya reveals that many schools work outside of the normal class hours, some schools complete their syllabus as early as January, allowing candidates to revise for KCSE exams for a whole year (Daily nation 28th February 2012). What then are the strategies put in place by secondary schools in Rachuonyo North District to cover the syllabus and how do they influence students' final score in KCSE?

2.6 Summary

Schools' strategic planning entails formulation of mission statement, CAs strategies, benchmarking strategies and syllabus coverage strategies.

It is evident from the studies that there was a relationship between the implementation of these strategies and actual student academic performance.

However in Rachuonyo North District there was no evidence of such research to have been done before and if there was then, it had not been documented. This study filled this gap in the body of knowledge on the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Education Production function Theory proposed by Mace (1979). In the production function theory, education process is looked at as where inputs are converted to outputs. Education is a kind of industry where people enter as raw materials and come out as finished products. The function shows relationship between two or more variables. These variables are mission statement, continuous assessment, benchmarking and syllabus coverage which are part of the schools' strategic plan.

In equation form production function can be represented by:

$A = f(C, D, E, T \text{ and many others})$, where

A= students' academic performance

C= schools' mission statement

D=continuous assessment

E=benchmarking

T=syllabus coverage

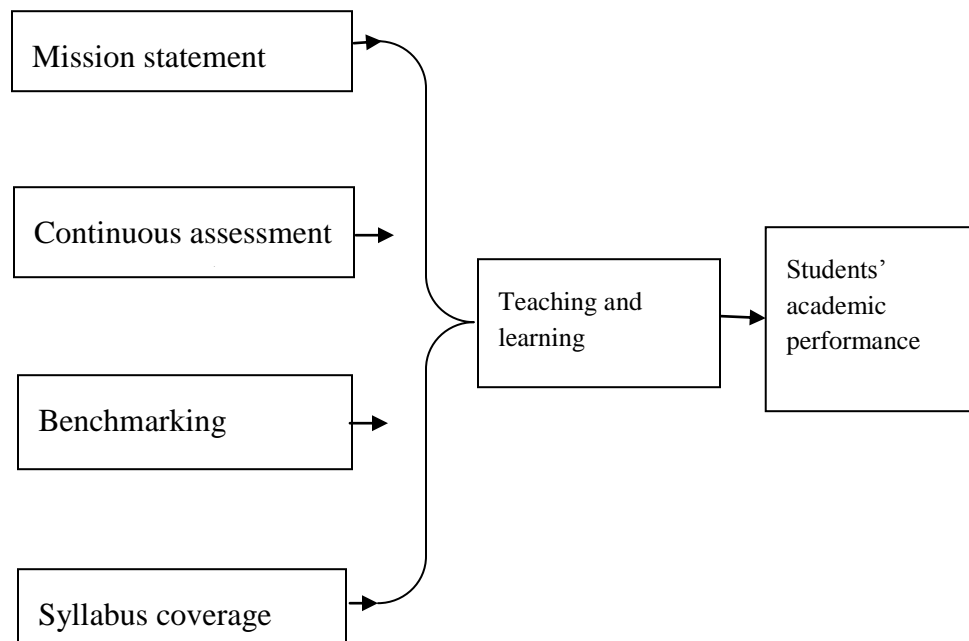
Schools' mission statement, continuous assessment, benchmarking and syllabus coverage are key elements of schools' strategic plan to affect students' academic performance. Many schools are having mission statement which guides their activities and programs especially students' academic performance, continuous assessment as a strategy is also used by many schools to help students familiarize themselves with exams, hence boost their academic performance. Benchmarking

strategy enables schools to compare themselves with others in different academic programs, this makes students to be motivated to work hard hence achieve good academic performance, syllabus coverage as a variable enable the students' to prepare adequately for the final examination hence help them perform better.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shown in figure 2.1 captures schools' strategic plan and their influence on students' academic performance.

Figure 2.1 influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance



The variables mission statement, continuous assessment, benchmarking and syllabus coverage influence students' academic performance in secondary schools. These variables interact in the teaching/ learning process hence influence student academic performance as shown in the figure above.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research design, target population, research instruments and reliability and validity of instruments used as well as data collection and presentation methods.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design gives a description of state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari, 2004). Kerlinger (1993) asserts that survey designs are important in answering research questions by informing social scientist about the current status of a population and also produce statistical information about aspects of education that interest policy makers and educators. This design was deemed suitable for this study since the study through data collection from respondents; assessed attitudes, opinions on the influence of schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance.

3.3 Target Population

All people under consideration in any field of inquiry constitute a universe or targeted population (Kombo, 2006). The study targeted 43 secondary schools in Rachuonyo North District that comprised of 43 principals, 301 head of

departments (HoDs) and 2154 students from four students. The principals were targeted because they are key members of strategic planning while HoDs could explain how their departments executed the strategies. The form four students were considered suitable because they had been learning in the institutions for the last three years and were likely to be more knowledgeable about the influence of strategic planning on students' academic performance.

Table 3.1 Target Population

Respondents	Mixed day school	Girls boarding school	Boys boarding school	Totals
Principals	37	4	2	43
HoDs	259	28	14	301
students	1550	256	348	2154
Totals	1846	288	364	2499

Source: MOE monthly return January 2013 Rachuonyo North Deo's office (2013)

3.4 Sample size and Sampling Procedures

According to Orodho (2008), sampling is a technique where the investigator seeks knowledge or information about a whole population, objects or events by observing a sample and extending the findings to the entire population. The school category served as the stratum. Kombo (2006) argued that a representative

of 10% and above is enough for providing the required information. On this strength, the researcher took a sample of 23 secondary schools out of the 43 secondary schools, which is 53.5% of the total schools. Two more schools were used for pilot study. Stratified random sampling was used to select 19 schools from the 37 mixed day schools, two from the girls 'boarding schools and two from the boys 'boarding schools. The sample had 23 principals, 120 HoDs and 215 form four students. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) opined that the sample must be large enough to represent the salient characteristics of the accessible population; this minimized the sampling error. The sample chosen in this research was considered representative enough to the target population.

Table 3.2 sample size targeted for the study

No category	Target population	%	Sample size
Principals	43	53.5%	23
HoDs	301	40%	120
Form4 students	2154	10%	215
Total	2499	14.3%	358

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires and interview schedule as the instruments for the study. A questionnaire is an instrument used to gather data, which allows measurement for or against a particular viewpoint (Orodho, 2009). He adds that a questionnaire has the ability to collect a large amount of information in reasonably quick space of time. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend the use of questionnaires as the most commonly used instruments in social sciences research. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data from students and HoDs. The questionnaires had both closed and open ended questions. An oral interview guide was used to gather information from the principals, since they were in a position to give information on the influence of their schools strategic planning on students' academic performance being the administrators (Kombo and Tromp, 2005).

3.5.1 Validity of Research Instruments

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. Orodho (2008) ascertains that content validity is the degree to which the empirical measure or several measures of the concepts, accurately measure the concept. He further argues that content validity is a non- statistical method used to validate the content employed in the questionnaire. The researcher prepared the instruments in close consultation

with supervisors in order to ensure that the items in the questionnaire covered all the areas under investigation. Best and Khan (2002) observed that, content validity of the research instruments could be enhanced through expert judgment. The researcher's supervisors, as experts, helped to assess the validity of the instruments.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability refers to consistence of measurement thus the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection and the extent to which measures are free from error (McMillan and Schumacher, 2009). The researcher used test- re- test method to determine the reliability of the research instruments. The developed questionnaires were administered twice to the same respondents at an interval of one week. Pearson's Product Moment Formula was used to calculate the correlation coefficient between the readings of the two tests. The formula used for calculating Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation Coefficient was:

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where r = Pearson's Coefficient of Correlations Coefficient

N = The number of respondents completing questionnaires

X = The scores of the first administration.

Y= The scores of the second administration after one week.

A coefficient correlation (r) of about 0.75 and above was considered high enough to judge instrument reliability (Orodho, 2008). A coefficient of 0.87 was attained. The instruments were thus adopted for use in the study since the coefficient was higher than 0.75.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

After getting introductory letter from the University of Nairobi, the researcher sought for a research permit from National Council for Science and Technology. The researcher thereafter visited Rachuonyo North DEO's office to request for an introductory letter to target respondents. The researcher then visited the sampled secondary schools and briefed the principals on the purpose and objective of the study hence booked appointment to visit and administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were then administered and were collected immediately after they had been filled.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected raw data was inspected to ensure it was complete and accurate. Questionnaires were organized and classified according to the study objectives. Qualitative data was classified and coded into themes and concepts for analysis

based on objectives of the study. Quantitative data was analyzed using computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to enable mathematical computations since analyzing of data manually would have been tedious and would lead to errors. The analyzed data was presented using both frequencies and percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The data analysis in this chapter was aimed at addressing the purpose of the study, which was to determine the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.

The chapter begins with the demographic information of the respondents followed by presentations, interpretation and discussion of research findings based on the research questions.

4.2 Instruments return rate

The questionnaire response rate is the proportion of the sample that participated as intended in all the research procedures. The returned questionnaires were from 23 principals, 110 HoDs and 215 form four students who were key informants. Analysis and interpretation is based on these returns.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire return rate

Target respondents	Sample size	Response	Return rate %
Principals	23	23	100
HODs	120	110	91.67
Students	215	215	100
Total	358	348	97.21

From Table 4.1, the return rate represents 97.21 % of the total respondents. Mulusa (1990) stated that 50 % return rate was adequate, 60 % good and 70 % very good. The return rate was hence considered good to provide required information for the purpose of data analysis.

4.3 Demographic information of respondents

The demographic information of the respondents was based on length of stay in the current school, academic progress and length of service in the current school.

4.3.1 Demographic information of the students

Demographic information of the students was based on the length of stay in the current secondary school.

Length of stay

Students were asked by the researcher to indicate the length of time they had stayed in their current secondary schools since they joined. In response to this question, the results are as shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Students length of stay their current school

Length of stay	Frequency	Percent
Below 1 year	16	7.4
1-2 years	30	14.0
3-4 years	169	78.6
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.2, 78.6% of the students indicated that they had stayed in their current school between 3-4 years. The majority having stayed for long in their current schools are capable of providing relevant information on the study.

4.3.2 Demographic information of HoDs

The demographic information of HoDs was based on the years of service in the current school.

Years of service by HoDs

The HoDs were asked to indicate their years of service in their current schools.

The results are as shown in table 4.3

Table 4.3 HoDs years of service

Years of service	Frequency	Percent
1-2 yrs	17	15.5
3-5 yrs	55	50.0
6-10 yrs	31	28.2
Above 10 yrs	7	6.4
Total	110	100.0

From table 4.3, the HoDs who have served 3 years and above are 84.5 %. This implies that 84.5 % of the HoDs have stayed long enough in their current schools and therefore are capable of providing needed information.

4.3.3 Demographic information of the principals

The principals were asked to state the years they had served in their current work stations in an oral interview by the researcher. A majority 73.5% Of the principals noted that they had stayed in their current station for 3years and above. This was rated as good enough since a majority of them could provide relevant information about strategic planning in their schools for a period not less than 3years KESSP (2005) suggested that strategic plan for schools should run for between 3-5 years.

4.4 Influence of mission statement on students' academic performance

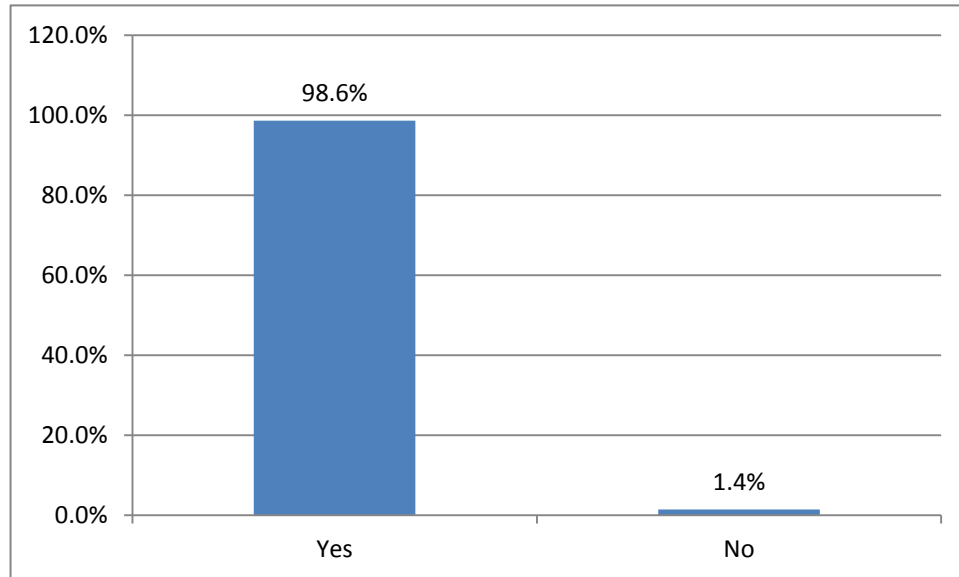
The first objective of the study was to determine the extent to which schools' mission statement influences students' academic performance. The findings from the field are presented in this section.

Mission statement is the reason for existing or unique purpose that sets a particular school apart from other schools of its type identifying the scope of its operation. This study sought to examine how schools' mission statement influence students' academic performance. The students and HoDs were asked to indicate the existence of mission statement in their schools, whether written or not written, how it is communicated across the schools and its influence on students' academic performance.

The response of existence of mission statements in schools from students respondents are recorded in figure 4.1.

4.4.1 Existence of school mission statement

Figure 4.1 Students' response on existence of school mission statement



From figure 4.1, 98.6% of the students indicated that their schools have mission statements. This information is relevant for the study since the researcher wanted to determine the influence of such a statement on students' academic performance.

Findings from HoDs' on the existence of mission statement in schools are in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Presence of mission statement according to HoDs

Presence of mission statement	Frequency	Percent
No	2	1.8
Yes	108	98.2
Total	110	100.0

From the table 4.4, the results revealed that 98.2 % of the HoDs indicated that there are mission statements in their schools. This implies that schools therefore have a unique reason for their existence and therefore have a roadmap to draw their programs. This agrees with Mintzberg (1999) who recommended every organization should have a mission statement thus explains why an organization exists and what it does right now and in the future.

4.4.2 Communication of mission statement across the schools

The students were asked by the researcher to indicate how frequent is the mission statement was communicated across the school. Results are recorded in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 students' response on communication of mission statement across the school

	Frequency	Percent
Always	61	28.4
Very often	40	18.6
Often	54	25.1
Sometimes	50	23.3
Never	10	4.7
Total	215	100.0

The result from table 4.5 shows that most students, a 28.4 % indicated that the school mission statement is always communicated across the school through word of mouth. This is a very small percentage an indication that teachers and school administrators rarely talk a bout their school mission statement.

Table 4.6 HoDs' response on communication of mission statement across the school

	Frequency	Percent
Posters	76	69.1
Word of mouth	7	6.4
Circulars	22	20.0
Others	3	2.7
Total	108	98.2
No response	2	1.8
Total	110	100.0

From table 4.6 there are many methods of communicating the mission statement across the school, but the most common method is through posters with 69.1 %. This is done by either writings on the walls, school gates or printed papers pasted on the walls. Verbal communication of the mission statement is hardly used as indicated by the HoDs, clearly indicating that teachers and the administrators hardly make a mention of the statement, hence may be well written, but not properly used.

From the principals' interviews 100 % indicated that there was a mission statement for their schools, which was either pasted in the office or painted on walls and gates of the schools. The majority 60.38 % of the principals' noted that their current mission statement was either developed by themselves or they have amended the wordings in the statement to suit their aspiration and to make it relevant. The principals asserted that they normally use the key words in their mission statement when addressing students, teachers and other key stakeholders, this contradicts the findings from the students and HoDs who said that administrators hardly speak a bout their schools' mission statement. Eighty percent of the principals reiterated that their schools' mission statement acts as the driving force for their programmes and greatly influences student academic performance. These results agrees with Johnson (2008) who noted that mission statement includes and captures a myriad of stakeholders, values and expectations.

4.4.3 Extent of how mission statement influences students' academic performance

Students, HoDs and principals were asked to indicate their opinion on how their schools mission statement influences students' academic performance.

Students' performance in the last three exams

The students' were asked to indicate their academic performance in the last three exams they had done. The responses are as in table 4.7

Table 4.7 student academic performance

Exam	Mean score	Deviation
CAT 1	4.8635	-
CAT 2	5.0236	0.1601
CAT 3	5.4137	0.3901

From Table 4.7 there is value added progress that can be seen from the mean scores attained by students from CAT 1- CAT 3. The students' academic performance seems to be improving where a positive deviation of 0.3901 has been realized between the second and the third CAT.

Table 4.8 Students' response on the influence of mission statement

Extent of influence	Frequency	Percent
Very great extent	93	43.3
Great extent	69	32.1
Moderate extent	48	22.3
No extent at all	3	1.4
Total	213	99.1
No response	2	.9
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.8, 43.3% of students noted that mission statement very greatly influences their academic performance. This relates to their academic performance progress shown in table 4.7 which reveals improved academic performance from CAT 1- CAT 3. This implies that a majority of the students are inspired to work hard in academic by their schools' mission statement.

The findings from HoDs revealed that 93.6 % of the teachers indicated that their schools' mission statement influence their students' academic performance as reflected in the students' progress record in table 4.7 while a minority of HoDs a 6.4% indicated that it does not influence students' academic performance. The statement reminded the students to always up their game in academics, it is a point of reference for students and allow them to be focussed on their objectives and also the catchy words in the mission statement always inspires the students to perform well in academic. The findings are in agreement with those of Thompson

and Strickland (1996) who pointed out that, a mission statement is supposed to capture the overriding purpose of an organization and expectations of stakeholders.

From the principals' interview schedule, 96.3 % asserted that their schools' mission statement influenced students' academic performance because it creates a change of attitude for academic excellence and those who perform better identify with it easily. This concurs with Bartkus (2004) who found out that 60 percent of students' motivation and inspiration are strongly influenced by mission statement.

4.5 Influence of continuous assessment (CA) on student academic performance

The second objective of the study was to assess how schools' continuous assessment strategy influences students' academic performance. The findings from the field are presented in this section.

The researcher wanted to know from the students, HoDs and principals whether schools had a program for administering CA to students in schools, the type of tasks given to students in those CAs and how this contributed to the students academic performance.

4.5.1 Timeline for conducting CA in schools

The researcher asked the students to indicate how often CAs were done in their schools. The results are recorded in table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Students' response on how often CA is conducted

Timeline	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	92	42.8
Termly	82	38.1
Others	41	19.1
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.9, 42.8% of the students indicated that CAs are conducted on monthly basis. This implies that most schools prepare their students psychologically to sit for exams on monthly basis.

Table 4.10 HoDs' response on how often CA is conducted in schools

Timeline	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	38	34.5
Monthly	64	58.2
Termly	7	6.4
Others	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0

From table 4.10, 58.2% of the HoDs indicated that CAs are conducted monthly. This result reveals that most schools have monthly tests administered to students, however other arrangements are also there as reflected in the table.

Principals' response on how often CA is conducted in schools

From the interviews of principals, a 100% of them agreed that they have a set program for conducting CA in their schools which included weekly, fortnightly, monthly and termly programs.

4.5.2 Tasks given during CA

The researcher further asked students, HoDs and principals to indicate common tasks given in the CAs. The tasks are various types of assignments or work which students are given by their teachers in class or out of class. Students' responses are shown in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Students' response on the type tasks given during CA

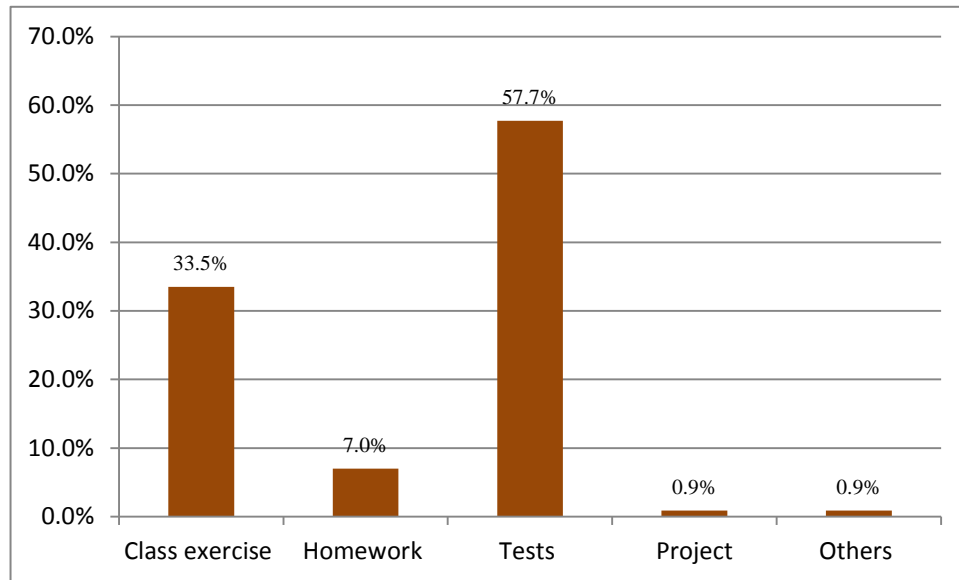
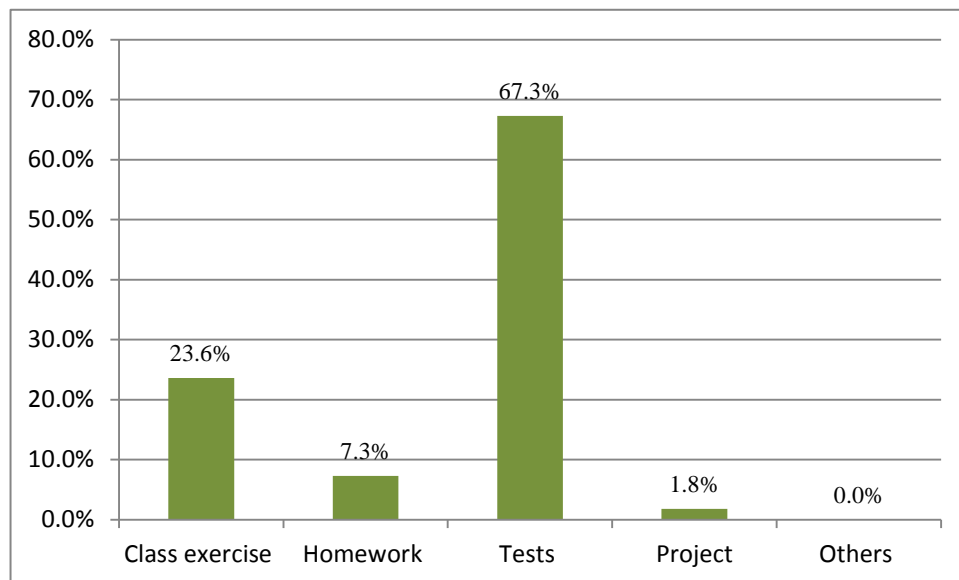


Figure 4.2 indicated that 57.7% of the students noted that test is the most commonly used task during the administration of CA. Other tasks are also given which includes class exercise, homework, project and at the end of topic exam.

Figure 4.3 HoDs' response to the type of task given during CA



From figure 4.3, 67.3% of the HoDs indicated that test is the most common type of task given to students during CA. This implies that a majority of teachers do prepare tests that are administered to students during their usual assessment. The findings are in line with the argument of Ellington and Earl (1997) who indicated that CA assessment can take many forms including periodic tests, on-going assessment of practical or situational assessments.

Principals' response on tasks given during CA

The study findings from the interview schedule revealed that the majority of the principals (83.5%) pointed out that tests are the commonly used assessment tools as continuous assessment tests (CATs) which are properly scheduled and managed by dean of studies, HoDs and subject teachers.

4.5.3 Criteria for doing the assignment

The researcher further sought out how students' worked on the assignment given to them. They were to indicate either in groups, a whole class or on individual basis. The response per method was recorded as follows.

Table 4.11 Criteria for working on the assignments

	Frequency	Percent
In groups	58	27.0
On individual basis	157	73.0
Total	215	100.0

From the results 73.0% of the students indicated that they worked individually on the assignments given to them.

HoDs were asked by the researcher to give their comment on how often they mark and provide feedback to students on various tasks they give them. Their responses are recorded on table 4.12.

Table 4.12 HoDs' response on how teachers mark and provide feedback

	Frequency	Percent
Always	71	64.5
Often	36	32.7
Sometimes	3	2.7
Total	110	100.0

From table 4.12, 64.5% of HoDs indicated that teachers always marked and provided feedback to students. From the findings teachers mark and provide feedback promptly to students, hence are able to track the progress of their students.

4.5.4 Opinion on contribution of CA on students' academic performance

The researcher further sought to find out the opinion on the contribution of CA to the students' academic performance. This was to provide information on the extent to which continuous assessment influenced student academic performance.

Figure 4.4 Students' response on the influence of CA on academic performance

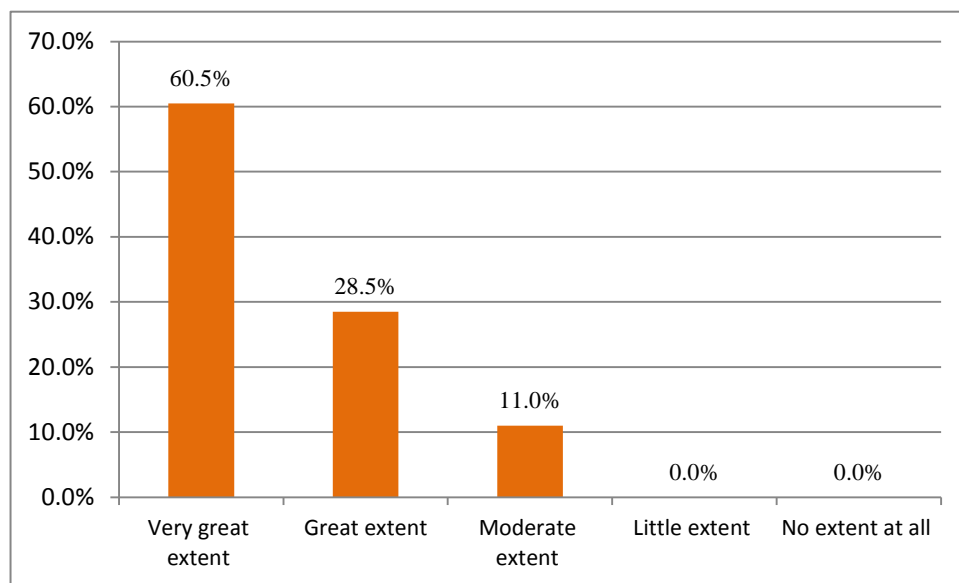


Figure 4.4, 60.5% of the students indicated that the CAs very greatly influences their academic performance. This is also justified by the students' progress record in table 4.3.

HoDs' response on the influence of CA on academic performance

From the HoDs item, the majority of the HoDs 97.3% indicated that CA contributes positively to students' academic performance while a minority 2.7% indicated that it does not influence students' academic performance. They asserted that it boosts memory relating the task and learnt material, gives them confidence in handling major exams and creates an opportunity for continuous revision. They also reiterated that it makes the students to familiarize themselves with most tested questions, thus prepare them to the main exam. This too can be seen from the students' progress record in table 4.3 above.

Principals' response to the influence of CA on academic performance

From the principals' opinion the majority 98.7% indicated that CA immensely influence students' academic performance, they pointed out that it creates confidence in the students in tackling and handling examinations, make them revise continuously, enable them to evaluate the value added progress in students, thus make necessary intervention which eventually leads to better academic performance. These findings is in line with Kwaka, Dennis and Kirima (2012) who carried out a study on teachers assessment practice in mathematics among secondary school students in Mombasa districts Kenya, they revealed that those who continuously assessed their students produced better scores at the end of term examination by 30%.

4.6 Influence of Benchmarking on students academic performance

The researcher sought to determine how schools' benchmarking strategy influences students' academic performance. The respondents were asked to indicate responses that would inform the study.

4.6.1 Presence of benchmarking program in schools

The researcher asked students to indicate there was a benchmarking program in their schools or not. The results are recorded in table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Students' response on presence of benchmarking program in schools

	Frequency	Percent
No	88	40.9
Yes	127	59.1
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.13, 59.1% of the students indicated that there is a benchmarking program in their schools. This percentage is low an indication that it is not a common practice in most schools and if it is there then students are not majorly involved.

Table 4.14 HoDs’ response on presence of benchmarking program in schools

Presence	Frequency	Percent
No	25	22.7
Yes	78	70.9
No response	7	6.4
Total	110	100.0

From table 4.14, 70.9% of the HoDs indicated that there is benchmarking program in schools. It is evident from these findings that most HoDs are involved in benchmarking exercise.

4.6.2 Organization of benchmarking in schools

Table 4.15 Students’ response on organization of benchmarking

	Frequency	Percent
Internally	41	19.1
Externally	42	19.5
Both	44	20.5
No response	88	40.9
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.15, 59.1% of the respondents indicated that benchmarking is organized both internally and externally. This percentage is low a reflection that benchmarking is not a common practice in many schools sampled.

Table 4.16 HoDs’ response on organization of benchmarking

	Frequency	Percent
No	1	0.9
Yes	79	71.8
No response	30	27.3
Total	110	100.0

From table 4.20, 71.8% of the HoDs indicated that briefing is done after the benchmark exercise. Teachers and students give a report and comparison of the education programs in the schools or places visited.

Principals’ response on organization of benchmarking

The majority of the principals 66.7% noted that they had a benchmarking program in their schools both internally and externally. They also reiterated that these programs existed in joint exams, symposiums, student leadership and PTA/BOG strategies of management among many other programs. Thirty three point three percent of the principals stated that they have not considered this strategy due to cost implication, they pointed out that their schools do not have adequate financial base to enable them engage in benchmarking programs.

4.6.3 Opinion on the influence of benchmarking on students' academic performance

The researcher further sought for opinion of respondents on the influence of benchmarking on student academic performance.

Table 4.17 Students' response on the influence of benchmarking on academic performance

	Frequency	Percent
Very great extent	71	33.0
Great extent	48	22.3
Moderate extent	10	4.7
A little extent	10	4.7
No extent at all	21	9.8
Total	160	74.4
No response	55	25.6
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.17, 33.0% of the students indicated that benchmarking very greatly influence their academic performance. From the results only a small percentage of students have realized the influence of benchmarking program on their academic performance. Those who did not respond were an indication that they had not been exposed to the program and therefore had nothing to say about it.

Table 4.18 HoDs' response on students' academic performance before and after benchmark

	Results before	Results after
2010	4.436	4.673
2011	5.125	5.223
2012	4.896	5.167

From table 4.18 the results of students' academic performance in exams seem to be improving after benchmark program in schools which engage their students in the program. This results clearly indicates that benchmarking program positively influence students' academic performance. HoDs also postulated that students learn different approaches to improving their academic performance, benchmarking initiates them to work harder and leads to knowledge-pooling which makes students have the most appropriate facts.

Principals' response on the influence of benchmarking on students academic performance

From the interviews of the principals the majority 78.9% said that benchmarking program greatly influence students' academic performance. They pointed out that those who participated have been able to adopt a positive attitude towards academics and their grades have improved and benchmarking have enabled them to merge their programs with those of performing schools this could be seen in the academic reflective charts in those schools which showed results before

benchmark and results after benchmark to have improved as in table 4.18. These results agrees with (Kim Bing Wu et al, 2009) who noted that grade nine students in the states of Rajasthan and Orissa had improved performance of 40% and 50% in their grades in mathematics due to the fact that their schools were engaged in international benchmarking with other schools.

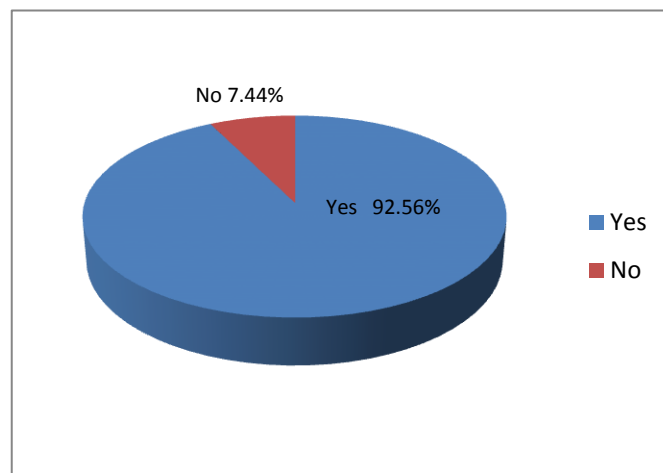
4.7 Influence of syllabus coverage on students academic performance

The researcher sought in the study to establish the extent to which schools' syllabus coverage strategy influence students' academic performance.

4.7.1 Presence of syllabus in schools

The students were asked to indicate whether teachers inform them about the content to cover in each subject area from the syllabus. This was to validate the presence of the syllabus in the school. The responses are shown in figure 4.5

Figure 4.5 Students' response on the presence of syllabus in their schools



From figure 4.5, 92.56% of the students indicated that teachers inform them about the content of work in each subject area from the syllabus. This was a clear indication that there was a syllabus guide in most schools known to the students. Students also indicated that their teachers normally inform them about the content mostly at the start of a new class. The outline normally helps them read a head of their teachers and for adequate preparation to face the exams.

HoDs' responses on the availability of syllabus guide in their department.

A hundred percent of the HoDs' responses indicated that there was syllabus guide in their department. This finding is important because it revealed that all the schools had a guide that informed teaching and learning.

4.7.2 Rating of syllabus coverage in schools

The students were further asked to indicate on average the present syllabus coverage in all subjects in their current class. They were to give their opinion on what has been covered in comparison to what is to be covered. The findings are tabulated in table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Students' response on rating of syllabus coverage

Coverage	Frequency	Percent
40% and below	21	9.8
50%-60%	125	58.1
70% and above	69	32.1
Total	215	100.0

From table 4.19, 58.1% of the students indicated that their present syllabus coverage was moderate. These implied that most of the teachers were half way with content coverage from the syllabus.

The researcher further asked the HoDs to indicate whether they had set a target for syllabus coverage in the current year and also indicate their set mean score target. The responses were as in table 4.20.

HoDs' response on target for syllabus coverage

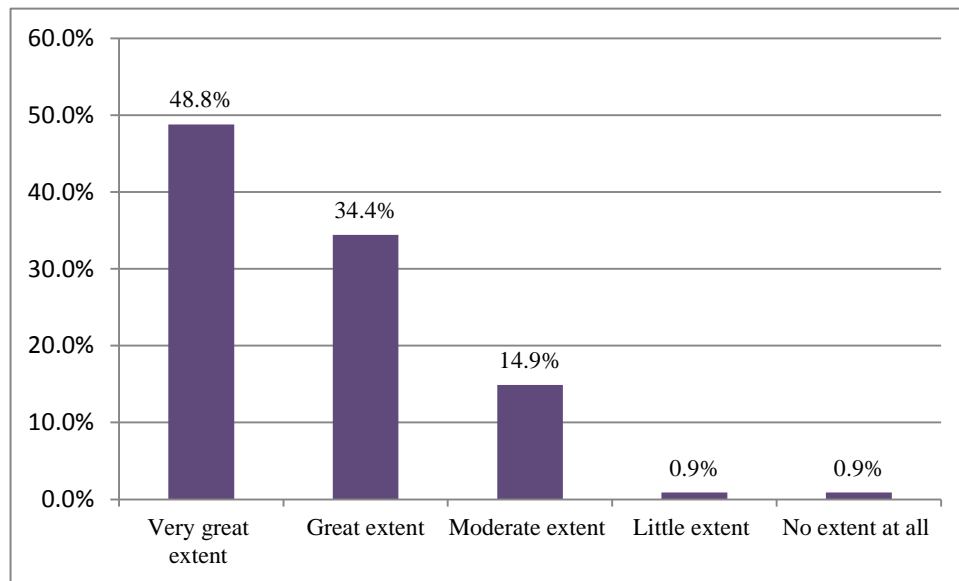
A majority of the HoDs, a 99.1% indicated that they had set targets for syllabus coverage within departments. A majority indicated that they to complete by mid of June and a few indicated by September. The HoDs also indicated their subjects mean score target for 2013 which ranged from 5.00-10.68.

The researcher interviewed the principals on the strategies they have set up in their schools for syllabus coverage. Among the strategies highlighted by the respondents was creation of more time, strict class attendance, tropical timetable

starting from as early as 6.30 am in the morning, afternoon remedial and weekend remedial and giving outlines to students for self study. They further asserted that they use motivational speakers and subject specialist.

The researcher further asked the students to indicate their opinion on the influence of syllabus coverage on their academic performance. The findings are as in figure 4.6

Figure 4.6 Students' opinion on the influence of syllabus on their academic performance



From figure 4.6, 48.8% of students' indicated very great extent. These results therefore revealed that a majority of the students indicated that syllabus coverage has influence on their academic performance which is also proved by their progress report in table 4.7 on page 41.

From the HoDs questionnaire a majority expressed their opinion on the influence of their departments' syllabus coverage strategy on students' academic performance. Most of them remarked that the set strategies ensure early coverage which creates confidence, gives room for revision and increased their performance.

From the principals it was noted that the principals ensures that the strategy for syllabus coverage is adhered to by teaching to the set target in order to set the pace for the rest, they supervise the curriculum implementation through inspecting students note books and provide the necessary resources to the teachers and students. They again asserted that their schools' syllabus coverage strategies greatly influence students' academic performance by ensuring adequate time for revision creates confidence on students' thus good academic performance. These findings concurs with (Guice, 2009) who said that the number of textbook pages covered by different fourth grade mathematics classes was significantly related to the achievements gained.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief summary of the study findings, conclusions, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further study. The study was to determine the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.

The objectives of the study were to: determine the extent to which schools' mission statement influence students, academic performance, assess how schools' CA strategy influence students' academic performance, determine how schools' benchmarking strategy influence students' academic performance and to establish the extent to which schools' syllabus coverage strategy influence students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District.

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study targeted principals, HoDs and students in all 43 secondary schools in Rachuonyo North District. The target

population was 43 principals, 301 HoDs and 2154 form four students. Stratified random sampling was used to classify schools according to the categories of schools. 19 schools from the 37 mixed day schools, 2 from girls' boarding school and 2 from boys' boarding schools were selected respectively.

The research instruments used were questionnaires and interview schedule. The raw data was coded into themes and concepts and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for effective analysis. Data are presented in frequency tables and percentages. The findings from the frequency tables and percentages enabled the researcher to establish the recommendations of the study.

5.3 Summary of the study findings

The report on study findings are guided by the study research questions set.

On the extent to which schools' mission statement influence students' academic performance the study established that the majority of the students 98.6% indicated that their schools had a mission statement, 98.2% of the HoDs also indicated the same. The majority 69.1% of the HoDs indicated that mission statements is commonly communicated through posters. This is a clear indication that students are rarely reminded a bout their schools' mission statement. This situation paves way for lack of ownership and sense for direction by students and teachers hence could easily lead to students' low academic performance.

From the influence of CAs strategy on students' academic performance, the study revealed that the majority 42.8% of the students indicated that CA is done monthly while 58.2% of the HoDs indicated that CAs are given monthly. The results revealed that this was a common practice in many schools, hence had great influence on students' academic performance as shown also in table 4.8 on students' performance in three exams.

The findings on the influence of benchmarking on students' academic performance, the study revealed that 59.1% of the student respondents indicated that there was a benchmarking program. On the side of HoDs the results showed that students' performance improved after engaging in benchmark program. From the principals some indicated that they have not been participating in benchmarking exercise due to cost implication involved in it. From the schools which had the program the results revealed that it has positive influence on students' academic performance.

The study on the influence of syllabus coverage on students' academic performance, revealed that 92.56% of students indicated that teachers inform them about the contents in the syllabus at the beginning of a new class, 100% of the HoDs indicated the presence of syllabus which is used as a guide for lesson preparation. The principals indicated that they ensure there is syllabus coverage by being role models in coverage; inspecting students note books and provided

necessary materials to teachers and students for effective syllabus coverage. Ninety nine percent of HoDs indicated that they had set targets for syllabus coverage which mostly was to complete by mid of June. This strategy immensely influence students' academic performance as indicated by respondents and as revealed by students' progress record in table 4.3 that as the students are exposed more to the content of the syllabus their scores improves.

5.4 Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the study

Schools' mission statement does not itself influence the students' academic performance but helps the schools to tailor their programs towards it, hence influence student academic performance. Lack of constant pronouncement of schools' mission statement lowers the self esteem of the teachers and students hence lead to lack of ownership and sense of direction. The school administrators and teachers should strive to speak about their mission statement in most of the forums they have gatherings. This could positively influence students' academic performance.

Continuous assessment strategies used by schools enable students to develop self confidence and acquire necessary skills for tackling questions. This strategy greatly influences students' academic performance as indicated by most respondents.

Benchmarking program influence students' academic performance as revealed in the students academic performance before and after benchmark, but was not commonly used as a strategy in quite a number of schools sampled.

Syllabus coverage strategy is a common practice in most schools as revealed by the findings. Many schools have placed a lot of interventions for syllabus coverage, this is a good gesture. However the present coverage was moderate as indicated in the study findings, it should be improved for better student academic achievement.

5.5 Recommendations from the study

- i. School mission statement should always be communicated across the school and the schools' programs should be tailored towards it.
- ii. Schools should mobilize financial resources in order to engage in benchmarking program that will enable them compare what they offer with what others offer.
- iii. Schools should create more time for effective syllabus coverage in order to boost students' confidence in handling exams.

5.6 Suggestions for further study

- i. This study needs to be replicated in both public and private schools in other districts in the country in order to compare the results on how to mitigate the problem of low students' academic performance.
- ii. A study on the barriers to effective implementation strategic plan in schools.
- iii. A study should be carried out on strategies for effective benchmarking in schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION LETTER

GEORGE OKODE

P.O BOX 307-40300,

HOMABAY.

THE PRINCIPAL

.....SCHOOL

Dear Sir,

**RE: RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOLS' STRATEGIC
PLANNING ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a course leading to the award of masters degree in Educational Planning. As part of fulfillment for a ward, I wish to conduct a study on the above topic in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North District. Your school has been identified to participate in the study.

I request for assistance and co-operation to enable the study come up with accurate findings. Be assured that utmost confidentiality will be maintained and the information obtained will only be used for research work.

Thanks in advance

Yours in service,

George Otieno Okode

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDENTS

This study seeks to investigate the influence of schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District. Given the significance of the topic, I consider you to be very important in achieving the study objectives. In this regard, I would be so grateful if you spare your time in informing this study by answering the following questions.

PART1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Length of stay in this school below 2years(), 2-3 years() and 3-4years()
2. What was your score in first _____, second_____ and third _____ exams this year?

PART 2: MISSION STATEMENT

1. Does your school have a mission statement? Yes () No ()
2. Is it written? Yes () No ()
3. How often is it communicated at parade, class and other ceremonies in school
Always () Very often () Often() Sometimes () Never ()
4. To what extent does your school mission statement influence your academic performance?

Very great extent (), Great extent (), Moderate extent (), A little extent (), No extent at all ()

PART 3: CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (CA)

1. How often is CA conducted in your school? Weekly () termly () yearly ()
Others (specify) _____.
2. What type of tasks are you given? Class exercise () homework () test ()
project () others (specify)_____
3. How do you work on the exercises given to you? In groups (), a whole
class (), on individual basis ()
4. To what extent does CA contribute to your academic performance?
Very great extent (), Great extent (), Moderate extent (), A little extent ()
, No extent at all ()

PART 4: BENCHMARKING

1. Does your school have a benchmarking program? Yes () No ()
2. If yes, how is it organized? Internally (), externally (), both ()
3. How often is the review done after the benchmark? Always (), very often
(), sometimes (), rarely (), never ()
4. To what extent does benchmarking program influence your academic
performance?
Very great extent (), Great extent (), Moderate extent (), A little extent (), No
extent at all()

PART 5: SYLLABUS COVERAGE

1. Do your teachers inform you about the content to be covered in each subject area from the syllabus? Yes (), No()
2. When do they inform you? Beginning of the year () middle of the year () end of the year ()
3. How do you averagely rate the present syllabus coverage in all subjects in your class? Low (), Moderate (),High ()
4. To what extent does syllabus coverage contribute to your academic performance?
Very great extent (), Great extent (), Moderate extent (), A little extent (), No extent at all ()

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE HoDs

This study seeks to investigate the influence of schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in KCSE in Rachuonyo North District. Given the significance of the topic, I consider you to be very important in achieving the study objectives. In this regard, I would be so grateful if you spare your time in informing this study by answering the following questions.

PART1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Number of years of service at the school _____

PART 2: MISSION STATEMENT

1. Does your school have a mission statement? Yes (), No ()
2. Is it written? Yes (), No()
3. How is it communicated across the school?
 - a) Posters ()
 - b) Word of mouth ()
 - c) Circulars ()
 - d) Others (specify) _____
4. In your own opinion how does your school mission statement contribute to the students academic performance _____

PART 3: CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (CA)

1. How often do you conduct CA in your department? Weekly () monthly () termly () yearly() others (specify)_____
2. What type of task does your department normally give students? Class exercise () homework () test () project () others (specify)_____
3. How often do teachers mark and provide feedback to students?
Always (), often (), sometimes (), seldom (), never ()
4. In your own opinion how does CA contribute to the academic performance of the students? _____

PART 4: BENCHMARKING

1. Does your school have benchmarking program? Yes () No ()
2. Is there de-briefing done after the benchmark? Yes() No ()
3. If yes, how is it done? _____
4. What was your students' academic performance before and after benchmark in the year (2010-2012)? In your own view how does benchmarking program in your school contribute to the students' academic performance? _____

PART 5: SYLLABUS COVERAGE

1. Is there a subject syllabus in your department? Yes () No ()
2. If yes, how is it used? _____
3. Do you have a target for syllabus coverage in your department for this year?
Yes () No ()
4. If yes, what is your target this year? _____
5. How does syllabus coverage strategy in your department contribute to students' academic performance? _____

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. How long have you served as a principal in this school? _____

PART 2: MISSION STATEMENT

1. What is your school mission statement?
2. When was it developed and by who?
3. How is it communicated a cross the school?
4. What is the influence of your school mission statement on the students' academic performance in KCSE in the past three years?

PART 3: CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TESTS

1. Is there CA in your school?
2. What are some of the CA strategies used in your school?
3. How are they carried out?
4. What is your view on the contribution of CA to students' academic performance in the last three years?

PART 4: BENCHMARKING

1. In which academic areas does your school participate in benchmarking program?
2. Which schools do you have such a program with and for how long?
3. What do you consider to be the strengths and weakness of these schools?
4. What is the contribution of benchmarking program on the students' performance in KCSE in the past three years?

PART 5: SYLLABUS COVERAGE

1. What strategies do you have in your school for syllabus coverage?
2. What is your role in ensuring that the strategies are met?
3. In your own assessment how can you rate the present syllabus coverage in your school?
4. What is the contribution of timely and adequate syllabus coverage on the students' performance in KCSE in the last three years?

APPENDIX 5: WORK PLAN

No.	Activity	August 2012 To November 2012	Dec 2012 To Jan 2013	Feb.2013 To Aug. 2013
1	Confirmation and approval of research proposal			
2	Writing of research proposal			
3	Drafting and correction of first draft of proposal			
4	Piloting and data collection			
5	Analysis of data and final research report writing			
6	Presentation of the project report to the supervisors			

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/013/557**

Date: **3rd May, 2013**

George Otieno Okode
University of Nairobi
P.O BOX 92-0902
Kikuyu

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application dated **22nd April 2013** for authority to carry out research on **“Influence of secondary schools strategic planning on students’ academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.”** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nyanza Province** for a period ending **30th July, 2013.**

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer, Rachuonyo North District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


SAID HUSSEIN
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
The District Education Officer
Rachuonyo North District

“The National Council for Science and Technology is Committed to the Promotion of Science and Technology for National Development”.

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/013/557

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Date of issue

3rd May 2013

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution

Fee received

KSH.1000

George Otieno Okode

Of (Address) University of Nairobi

P.O BOX 92-0902

Kikuyu

Has been permitted to conduct research in

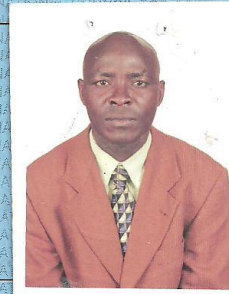
Rachuonyo North

Location

Nyanza

District
Province

On the topic: Influence of secondary schools strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District, Kenya.



(Signature)

Applicant's
Signature

(Signature)

Secretary
National Council for
Science and Technology

For a period ending: 30th July 2013.

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed with-out prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

REPUBLIC OF KENYA
RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

GPK605513mt10/2011

(CONDITIONS—see back page)