

**CURRICULAR PROVISIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIFTED LEARNERS IN SELECTED  
SCHOOLS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

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

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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor:

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## **DEDICATION**

To all my teachers – formal and informal – who believed in me and encouraged me never to give up on education.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Schools can make a difference when it comes to the academic performance of gifted learners yet many schools do not make any curricular provisions to cater for these learners. The study set out to investigate what curricular provisions exist in secondary schools to nurture gifted learners.

The study was conducted in Kiambu County in the Republic of Kenya. A total of 36 respondents from 12 secondary schools formed the sample.

The research instrument employed was a questionnaire while the data collected was analysed using Excel Spreadsheet.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, students in Kenyan secondary schools have engaged in riots where they burn dormitories and other school properties. The traditional response to such acts has been that these are disciplinary problems caused by unruly students. What if this problem has been caused by gifted learners in our schools who are frustrated because the curriculum does not cater for them? Who are gifted learners? Do we even know them? Is it possible that these learners are in our schools and yet we do not recognize them? Recognizing the gifted student is the first area where the education system disadvantages this group (Page, 2010).

One of the characteristics of Kenya's educational system is the intense competition to get high grades. In primary and secondary schools, students are encouraged to work hard, pass exams and outdo their peers. At the university level, the type of competition is different. At the higher levels, learners are conditioned to pursue 'marketable' courses, those that are perceived as having better job prospects and higher pay in the job market. One would expect that such an educational system would make provisions for gifted and talented learners. But is this the case?

Gifted learners are traditionally identified with a higher-than-average score on an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test (Page, 2010). Van Tessel-Baska (2002) defines gifted students as those who possess characteristics such as creativity, precocity, sensitivity, passion to master, matching to their own drummer and low tolerance for frustrations

These learners are in our schools and it is essential to find out what curricular provisions our schools make for them. Gifted learners need special attention and a differentiated attention to their needs if they are to thrive and realize their full potential.

If we are able to identify and cater for talented learners in our institutions, our country would reap the benefits that these people's talents would produce. Yet, there is insignificant amount of research conducted on how school programmes affect the gifted learners in Kenya (Koech Report, 1999, Ngigi and Ndurumo, 2007).

Everyone in the educational system should have an understanding of how gifted students learn, behave and relate with others. "It is crucial for administrators, teachers and others within the school environment dealing with gifted and talented students to know what to expect of them" (Bundotich and Kimaiyo, 2015, 77).

Teachers should be aware that gifted students are active participants in class and they get involved in discussions in which they give their independent input (Shea and Baurerer, 2004). Unfortunately, some teachers brand such children as 'know it all.' In one school that the researcher interacted with, the teachers branded one of such children '*mjuaji*' which is Kiswahili for 'know it all.' The truth is that such branding may come about because the teacher practices teacher centred instruction and does not feel confident to effectively and productively handle the gifted learner.

In places where learners face economic, cultural or social disadvantages, gifted learners are easily overlooked as their performance may be hindered by these challenges. In such cases, the factors challenging educational programming for gifted

and talented among students in an existing education system should be identified and documented (Bundotich and Kimaiyo, 2015).

The picture that emerges from the researcher's interaction with several schools is that Kenyan public schools rarely make provisions for gifted children. This study aimed at collecting empirical data to examine whether Kenyan public schools make curricular provisions for gifted learners. This makes the study's conclusions more valid instead of relying on a casual survey.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Gifted children have special learning needs, which if not met, can lead to frustration, a loss of self-esteem, laziness and underachievement (Crocker, 2004).

There is an urgent need for us to identify gifted learners in our educational system. For one, we will enable them fulfill their potential and keep them away from frustration and mischief. This is because the learners face unique emotional problems. According to Diezmann, Watters and Fox (2001), gifted learners experience:

“socio-emotional problems that include difficulty with social relationships, isolation from peers, pressures to conform, resistance towards authority, refusal to complete routine and repetitious work, and frustration with everyday life” (3)

The Kenyan school curriculum as it currently stands does not serve the needs of gifted learners. For one, the curriculum uses a top-down approach in which schools receive the curriculum from external government bodies such as the Kenya Institute of

Curriculum Development, Teachers Service Commission and the Kenya National Examinations. Schools have little room for flexibility in what they teach.

In addition, the Kenyan education system is very demanding and passing examinations is exalted as the means of evaluation for success and advancement in life. Teachers may feel that concentrating in developing talents of gifted learners is a waste of precious time that would distract them from completing the syllabus to ensure exam success for the majority of the students.

Another challenge is that how we identify gifted learners children is based on foreign models since locally we had no models for identifying gifted children. This means that this is specialized knowledge that costs time and resources to acquire, and not many people are willing to invest in such pursuits. In addition, since the bulk of existing literature on gifted learners is Western based, it may not apply to our local realities (Bundotich and Kimaiyo, 2015).

One way that an educational system can cater for gifted learners is through the practice of acceleration where a student can skip classes and join classes higher up than his peers. Acceleration is “matching the level and complexity of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student” (Colangelo, Assouline and Gross, 2004, 66).

However, academically talented students in Kenya are placed in the mainstream with the rest of the students, which makes it difficult to recognize their needs hence making it impossible for them to exercise their academic potential to the full (Bundotich and Kimaiyo, 76).

If the gifted student is not identified, they quickly surpass their non-gifted classmates and become accustomed to a relaxed approach to learning, which can create serious

learning difficulties when confronted with difficult and complex material in higher studies (Diezmann and Watters, 2006).

It is clear that failure to diagnose and cater for gifted learners within the educational system has many demerits.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study were to:

- a) Assess whether teachers in Kenyan public schools are aware of characteristics of gifted children
- b) Identify what curricular provisions exist in Kenyan public high schools to nurture gifted learners
- c) Establish the effectiveness of curricular provisions on the academic performance of gifted learners in Kenyan public secondary schools
- d) Investigate the attitudes of teachers towards curricular provisions for gifted children

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- a) How do various curricular provisions influence the performance of gifted students?
- b) Which resources have schools invested in to contribute to the high performance of gifted students?
- c) What are attitudes of teachers towards teaching gifted students?
- d) What other factors influence the performance of gifted students?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will therefore be significant to:

*Policy makers:* The findings of the study will facilitate educational policy makers as they craft teacher training programs.

*Educational administrators:* The findings will sensitize school heads on how to harmonize curriculum for teaching institutions and teaching policies.

*Students:* The study will help them to improve on their study habits and in their overall academic performance as well as social and emotional adjustment

*Researchers on Gifted Learners:* They will use this study as the basis for further study of gifted learners

*School teachers:* The findings will provide them guidance on the selection of suitable methods and resources for teaching gifted learners

*Parents:* The study will help parents understand their gifted children and give them whatever support they need.

### **1.6 Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumed that:

a) All sampled teachers are professionally trained and will have good knowledge of issues surrounding gifted learners

b) All respondents were cooperative and provided reliable information

c) Respondents truthfully responded to the questions posed to them in the course of data collection

## **1.7 Delimitations**

The target population was teachers in all public secondary schools in Kiambu County. However, due to time and resource constraints, it was not possible for the researcher to reach all the secondary schools in the County. The research was therefore delimited to 12 schools in Kiambu County which formed a representative sample. However, the findings of this research are useful as basis for further educational research in the field of gifted learners.

## **1.8 Definition of significant terms**

**Gifted Learners** - Gifted learners possess the ability to rapidly acquire new content, advanced reasoning, higher maturity than age peers, and heightened awareness of their surroundings and feelings (Deizmann, Watters and Fox, 2001). This is the definition that is used in this paper.

**Curricular provisions** – these are the strategies that schools and teachers put in place to cater for the needs of gifted learners

**Acceleration** - Acceleration occurs when students move through traditional curriculum at rates faster than typical. It means “matching the level and complexity of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student” (NAGC, n.d., 66). This is the definition that is used in this paper.

**Gifted Pull-Out Programs/Specialized Classes** - This involves “pulling out” the gifted learners from the conventional classroom and placing them in a class together with their peers for specialized instruction.

### **1.9 Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, the background and the statement of the problem are discussed. The importance of curricular provisions for gifted learners is established as are the challenges facing these learners in our schools. The Chapter highlights the need to conduct a study in which empirical data was collected for this important topic.

The chapter has also highlights the purpose, objectives, research questions and significance of the study. The scope, limitations and delimitations of the study are also discussed.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses previous literature relevant to this study. The chapter covers the importance of curricular provisions for gifted learners. In addition it considers some approaches that our schools can consider. These include: grouping, acceleration and pull-out programmes. The role of teachers in these programs is also considered.

#### **2.2 The Importance of Curricular Provisions for Gifted Children**

Gifted learners possess the ability to rapidly acquire new content, advanced reasoning, higher maturity than age peers, and heightened awareness of their surroundings and feelings (Deizmann, Watters and Fox, 2001). Any teacher who has been in the profession long enough has most likely come across these types of students; active, engaged, curious and very eager to learn. They liven up the classroom experience and a teacher has to know how to manage them or else they can discourage other less able learners. They themselves also may become bored by learning at everyone's pace and can become mischievous in class and even outside.

Gifted children are vulnerable to frustration and behavioral problems arising from being perfectionist and being misunderstood and therefore not having appropriate learning challenges (Bainbridge 2016). It is possible then that making curricular provisions for gifted learners can help educators to kill two birds with one stone; to engage these learners meaningfully and to ensure that they do not fall into behavioural problems. High schools in Kenya have experienced many disciplinary problems

including drug abuse, strikes and arson. Is it possible that under engaged gifted children could be behind some of these problems? There is therefore need to investigate whether schools are catering for gifted learners in their curriculum.

According to *Handbook for Teachers: Gifted and Talented Students* (2013), 'early identification of gifts and talents is important in order that the young child will be nurtured to his/her fullest potential and does not become an underachiever' (70). This implies that our schools must be in a position to identify gifted learners and nurture them to their full potential for the benefit of our society. Failure to this will lead to waste as the gifted learners become demotivated or even drop out of schooling altogether. This is an important consideration as the Kenyan educational system places too much emphasis on academics, yet students are talented in many other areas such as art, music and dance (Labrador 2013).

Making curricular provisions for gifted learners also has economic returns for the country. Former President of Harvard, Lawrence Summers, among others has linked expansion of university education to the success of the US economy, noting that the current world economy is going to be increasingly dominated by knowledge based industries (Armstrong, 2011). Educational systems in industrialized countries are designed so as to actualize the full potential of learners and not just have people pass exams. Skilled human capital earns these countries a lot of money. For example the GDP per capita of Kenya is 3 000 USD while that of Israel is 35 000 USD (Wikipedia). This means every year on average, an Israeli produces 10 times what a Kenyan produces. The secret lies in tapping their gifted people to the extent that Israel has been called the start up nation (Senor and Singer 2009). Clearly, making

provisions for gifted learners in the curriculum can enable Kenya unlock tremendous wealth for our country by making Kenya a hub of knowledge and innovation.

Making curricular provisions for the gifted and talented is also necessary owing to the transformation of education. This transformation has been brought about by higher expectations from stakeholders, diversity of students and parents who are more informed and concerned about their children's welfare (VanTassel-Baska, J. and Stambaugh, T. 2005). This means that we are living at a time when educators are expected to justify how their programmes add value to students including gifted and talented learners. Society pays a high cost for the education of learners and schools will have to justify this cost by demonstrating that they have curricular provisions for gifted children as well as for every learner to fulfil their potential.

Chris Smith (2006) says:

To allow gifted students to maximise their potential academically and socially much must be done to facilitate this. From the identification process to the coursework that is assigned to them, we must provide stimulating options to allow them to develop academically and to create a positive environment to satisfy their emotional needs. As educators we need to modify the curriculum in a school setting to include the gifted and talented. (130)

The proposed study will examine what schools are doing to help their gifted learners to achieve their full potential.

### **2.3 Challenges in making curricular provisions for the gifted**

There are several challenges that are related to curricular provision for gifted learners. Schools cannot nurture these learners if they do not know how to identify them. Identifying gifted learners requires that teachers be well trained in this area so that diagnosing gifted learners becomes a continuous process and not a once off event (Smith, 2006) and teachers must know that:

Giftedness is not a trait that demands that a child exhibit outstanding abilities in all areas. Children may be gifted or talented in just one area of performance. Some children may be quite talented in mathematics, but not in reading or writing for example (Callahan 2005, 100).

Together with teacher training, the system in which they work also matters. Schools should be supportive of teachers' efforts in nurturing gifted learners. The Kenyan system is overly preoccupied with academic performance to the exclusion of other areas of learner performance. The system is framed in such a way that teachers spend almost all their time in school working on how to complete the syllabus and get learners ready for examinations. This situation leaves teachers with no time or motivation to make curricular provisions for gifted learners.

The issue of resources is another challenge. We live in a world of egalitarian values where we want to distribute resources equitably. There are people who wonder why resources should be used in nurturing the gifted instead of being invested in weaker students. In some countries, there are not enough financial resources for providing education leave alone investing in gifted learners.

## **2.4 Some approaches that our Schools can consider**

### *Grouping*

Grouping often is the “most effective and efficient means for schools to provide more challenging coursework, giving these children access to advanced content and providing them with a peer group” (NAGC, n.d. 4).

Grouping involves a teacher putting learners who are similarly gifted into similar working groups. For example, in a Mathematics lesson, the teacher can group the gifted learners to work on a concept together. As they are doing this, the teacher can be assisting the weaker students to understand the concept.

The concept of grouping is distinguished from tracking, which involves putting all the gifted and high achieving learners in one stream all through. They are different.

“Grouping is flexible, targeted, and not permanent; tracking historically refers to an inflexible approach to placing students in tracks from which they could not move. Tracking is unquestionably bad; ability grouping is arguably good” (NAGC, n.d. 31).

Several benefits are realized by the use of grouping for gifted learners. The learners are more involved as they become engaged with peers of equal ability. This promotes their interest and they are likely to achieve more learning. This method also gives the teacher more time to concentrate on the weaker students and makes it more likely that they will understand what they are being taught. Grouping should be flexible so that learners can move among groups depending on their ability. For example, a student gifted in Maths may not be in the same group for History because he may not be gifted in that subject. For this to happen, the school must be involved in making curricular provisions for the gifted learners as opposed to where these strategies are used in some classes and not in others.

### *Acceleration*

Acceleration is one way of engaging gifted learners so that they do not become bored by restricting them to age-related grades. The normal practice in Kenyan 8-4-4 education system is that it does not make allowance for acceleration and learners are expected to go through all classes regardless of their ability and motivation.

There are other educational systems such as the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) and the British and American systems which are practiced in Kenya. The ACE is actually based on accelerating learners and placing them at their level of ability and motivation. This research will investigate whether such a provision occurs in the British system in education.

### *Gifted Pull-Out Programs/Specialized Classes*

Another curricular provision for gifted children is through special classes known as gifted pull-out programmes, “pulling out” the gifted learners from the conventional classroom and placing them in a class together with their peers for specialized instruction.

It is clear that Kenyan schools are not using this approach to cater for the needs of gifted learners. However, teachers are pressure to finish a demanding curriculum and many may have no time for engaging in pull-out programs. However, a school head can explore whether these pull-out programs can be done on a weekend when teachers are not in class. Many gifted learners are motivated when they are doing what they like and the teacher’s role may be more of facilitation and guidance. In the US, different states have special state schools (such as Academies of Science) or various after school programmes which provide an enrichment curriculum for gifted and talented learners.

Although Kenya may not have these programmes, parents of gifted children may explore which ones can help their children. For example, the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth offers distance learning programmes for learners all over the world and their certification can open doors for more opportunities such as scholarships to top universities.

## **2.5 Teachers' Role**

Teachers are more or less the gatekeepers who largely determine whether a gifted learner will thrive or not. If the teacher correctly diagnoses giftedness in a learner and takes time to challenge and motivate that individual, the learner is likely to thrive. If the teacher is indifferent or unaware of how to nurture the gifted learner, the learner's performance may go down.

Teachers must know the balance to strike; they should accommodate gifted learners without neglecting the less able learners. One of the challenges that teachers face is that of giving extra material to gifted learners who may then move too ahead of the average and weak students (Smith, 2006).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Curricular provisions such as acceleration, grouping and pull-out programs are some of the ways that educators can nurture the performance of gifted learners. It is clear that teachers have a critical role to play in the development of gifted learners. However, teachers cannot make it alone. They need the support of the whole system – from teacher training institutions to government support in terms of funding and adjusting the syllabus to give teachers time to also concentrate on gifted learners.

This proposed study is interested in how schools make curricular provisions for gifted learners and how that influences their academic performance. The research was conducted in selected schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology to be used in the proposed research



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

‘The methods section is the most important part of a research paper because it provides the information the reader needs to judge the study’s validity’ (Kallet 2004, 1232). Educators will gain insights on how they can make effective curricular provisions for gifted learners especially after this research demonstrates its validity and reliability.

The chapter comprises various sections: research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research utilised a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative data was collected through the use of questionnaires on the sample population. This is an ideal approach as observed by Kothari (2004):

Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis (4).

### **3.3 Target Population**

Mugenda (2003) defines population as “an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics” (9). The study population consists of all the schools in Kiambu County, whether they are primary, secondary, private or public.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

This study targeted 36 respondents who were carefully selected to provide a representational picture of the target population in order to get the desired information. There were 12 schools and each contributed 3 respondents coming from different teaching subjects.

This was to ensure that data was collected from a wide representation of the subjects taught in secondary school.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instrument**

Questionnaires were the main data collection instruments in this proposed study.

These questionnaires contained unstructured questions (open ended questions) and unstructured (closed ended questions). The unstructured questions offered respondents more flexibility in providing their answers.

Questionnaires are useful because one can reach a wider number of respondents and because of their promise of anonymity. Questionnaires allow a more objective analysis which leads to results that are relevant to the situation at hand. Furthermore, questionnaires save time and costs.

### **3.6 Validity**

Validity refers to the believability of the research (<http://psc.dss.ucdavis.edu>). One way of ensuring the validity of research findings is through the use of triangulation. The researcher confirmed some of the respondents' answers through informal interviews with school heads and teachers as well as personal observation of the existing curricular provisions in the schools.

Informant honesty is a factor in promoting validity (Shenton 2004). Informants were clearly asked to remain anonymous and have the freedom to leave the data collection at any stage without giving reasons. It is hoped that these measures encouraged participants to be more honest when giving their answers.

### **3.7 Reliability**

Reliability is concerned with whether the same outcomes would be arrived if the research was repeated in the same conditions and with the same informants (Shenton 2004). This includes the use of methods that overlap as in this research where questionnaires were corroborated with secondary sources.

In addition, detailed description of the data collection enables any reader to ascertain that scholarly methods were utilized to enhance reliability.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

After collection, the researcher organized and analyzed the data using excel spread sheet. This involved presenting using frequency distribution tables and percentages. This enabled a clear picture to emerge of what curricular provisions exist for gifted learners.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher obtained clearance from the Dean, School of Education at University of Nairobi (Kikuyu Campus) for data collection. Since the schools had closed as it was KCSE national examination time, data collection was done online. The questionnaires were sent to the respondents by email for filling and sending back.

The participants were informed on the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2010), informed consent means that individuals to be sampled in a study are first informed about the study to comprehend its aims and benefits to them before consenting to take part. This was done through telephone calls to the respondents.

Generally, the respondents remained anonymous during the interviews and are only identified in numerical form - Interviewee 1 to interviewee 36.

Moreover, the study participants were in a position to withdraw at any stage from participating in the study at their own will and convenience.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

The chapter has described the research design and the variables to be employed. It has also pointed out the location of the study, the target population and sampling techniques and sample size. Similarly, it has highlighted the research instruments, data collecting procedures and ethical considerations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This research focused on curricular provisions and their influence on the academic performance of gifted learners in selected schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results are presented and discussed in accordance with the research objectives and questions stated in the previous chapters.

#### **4.2 Data Analysis**

The collected data were organized and analyzed using excel spread sheet. Generally, the data obtained was presented using frequency distribution tables and percentages. The 12 secondary schools on the sample comprised of 5 Girls, 4 Boys Only and 3 Mixed Schools.

The distribution of these school types is shown in Table 4.1.

*Table 4.1 Categories of Sampled Schools*

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mixed Schools	3	25%
Boarding Boys	4	33%
Girls	5	42%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.2 shows the gender of the teachers sampled in the research. There were 20 female and 16 male teachers.

*Table 4.2 Gender of sampled teachers*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	20	56%
Male	16	44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is clear from Table 4.3 below that a majority of the respondent teachers (50%) have teaching experience of between 5 to 10 years in the profession while those with less than five years experience comprised only 17% of the sample. This is an ideal situation for the research given that the more experienced teachers were more likely to be aware of curricular provisions for the gifted children.

*Table 4.3: Teachers' experience in the teaching profession*

<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS</b>			
	<b>Less than 5</b>	<b>5 to 10</b>	<b>More than 10</b>
	6 (17%)	18 (50%)	12 (33%)

### **4.3The Research Findings**

This section presents the findings of the research under the following subtopics:

Identification, existence of curricular provisions for gifted learners, school support for gifted children, attitude of teachers' attitudes and other factors.

Each of these subtopics is discussed as it links to a research question. Table 4.4 below shows what subtopic responds to what research question.

Table 4.4: Subtopic relationship with research questions

Subtopic	Corresponding Research Question
-Identification of Gifted Learners -Curricular Provisions for Gifted Learners	a) <i>How do various curricular provisions influence the performance of gifted students?</i>
-School support for gifted children	b) <i>Which resources have schools invested in to contribute to the high performance of gifted students?</i>
-Attitudes of Teachers	c) <i>What are attitudes of teachers towards teaching gifted students?</i>
-Other Factors	d) <i>What other factors influence the performance of gifted students?</i>

#### 4.4 Identification of Gifted Learners

Questions 1 and 2 (A) in the data collection questionnaire were about identifying the gifted learners in the classroom contexts. Table 4.5 shows a summary of their responses.

Table 4.5 Summary of responses

Ability	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Very Well	20	55%
Quite Well	5	14%
Fairly Well	5	14%
Not Well	6	17%

<b>TOTAL</b>	36	100%
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A large segment of teachers at 55% indicated that they were able to identify gifted learners in the classrooms. Only 6 teachers (17%) said that they could not identify gifted learners very well. The ability to diagnose giftedness in learners is likely to be a positive indicator towards using curricular provisions that can help gifted learners to thrive academically.

#### **4.5 Existence of curricular provisions for gifted learners**

The responses of the teachers regarding whether curricular provisions for gifted learners exist in their schools is shown below.

*Table 4.6 How often are curricular provisions used in schools?*

<b>PROVISION</b>					
	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often	Always
Grouping			<b>17 (47%)</b>		
Acceleration	<b>0 (%)</b>				
Pull-Out Programs		<b>12 (33%)</b>			
Others		<b>7 (20%)</b>			

The responses indicate that grouping is the most common curricular provision for gifted learners employed by teachers (47%) while 0% of the respondents do not have acceleration in their schools. This is not surprising given that the Kenyan educational system does not have a provision for accelerating gifted children.



#### 4.6 School support for gifted children

This one sought to address the Research Question: *Which resources have schools invested in to contribute to the high performance of gifted students?* The aim was to investigate the kind of support secondary schools in Kiambu County have put in place to support the high academic performance of gifted students. The results are shown below:

*Table 4.7 Support available in schools to nurture Gifted Learners*

Support Type	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often	Always
Mentoring / Guidance			14 (39%)		
Peer Support			10 (28%)		
Special Clubs		3 (8%)			
Learning Trips			9 (25%)		

Table 4.7 shows that according to the teacher respondents, schools in Kiambu County are likely to use three methods of support for gifted learners. These are mentoring/guidance (39% of the schools), peer support (28%) and learning trips (25%). None of the schools sampled uses special clubs to nurture the gifted children. It is possible that schools use the facilities available in the schools e.g. guidance and counselling because it is also available to all the students and it is not too expensive to set up for gifted children only.

#### 4.7 Attitudes of Teachers

Research question number 3 was: *what are attitudes of teachers towards teaching gifted students?* There were four (4) questions designed to elicit teachers' answers on their attitude towards gifted learners. The responses are shown below

*Table 4.8: Teachers' attitude towards gifted learners*

ATTITUDE						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly disagree	TOTAL
Catering for gifted learners in class is difficult	1(3%)	2(6%)	1(3%)	23 (64%)	9 (25%)	<b>36 (100%)</b>
I would not like to have a gifted learner in my class	1(3%)	1(3%)	1(3%)	3(8%)	30 (83%)	<b>36 (100%)</b>
Having curricular provisions for gifted learners is useful for their academic excellence	29 (81%)	2(6%)	2(6%)	1(3%)	2(6%)	<b>36 (100%)</b>
Teaching gifted learners is fascinating	26 (72%)	3(8%)	2(6%)	4 (11%)	1(3%)	<b>36 (100%)</b>

From the table 4.8 above, it is clear that majority of the teachers (64%) strongly disagree that catering for gifted learners in class is difficult. This correlates with the number of teachers (1%) who strongly agree that catering for gifted learners in class is difficult. A low number of respondents (3%) strongly agreed that they would not like to have a gifted learner in their class.

As for whether having curricular provisions for gifted learners is useful for their academic excellence, 81% strongly agreed while a significant number 72% indicated that teaching gifted learners is fascinating.

#### **4.8 Teachers Suggestions**

The research also sought to elicit teachers' views on what approaches can be used to boost the academic performance of gifted learners in secondary schools. The teacher respondents were given five suggestions and asked to rate each of them according to their preference.

Regarding whether to train teachers to handle gifted learners, 55% strongly agreed while those who just agreed were 45%. No teacher among those survey disagreed with this approach.

The suggestion that teachers do more to identify and motivate gifted learners elicited a strongly agree response from 61% of the respondents while 12 (33%) of the teachers just agreed while 16 (44%) and 14 (39%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed to the idea of starting special classes for gifted learners in secondary schools. While 61% of the respondents strongly agreed to the idea of inviting external facilitators, another 24 (67%) strongly agreed to the proposal to link gifted learners with external opportunities for growth.

Overall the proposal that elicited the strongest support among teachers was linking gifted learners with external opportunities for growth which was supported by 67% of the respondents. Training teachers to handle gifted learners and linking gifted learners with external opportunities for growth got 0% teachers who strongly disagreed.

These findings are highlighted in table 4.9 below.

*Table 4.9: Suggested approaches to nurture gifted learners*

<b>SUGGESTED APPROACHES</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Train teachers to handle gifted learners	20 (55%)	16 (45%)	0	0
Teachers do more to identify and motivate gifted learners	22 (61%)	12 (33%)	1(3%)	1(3%)
Start special classes for gifted learners	16 (44%)	14 (39%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)
Invite external facilitators	22 (61%)	10 (28%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)
Link gifted learners with external opportunities for growth	24 (67%)	11 (31%)	1(3%)	0

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings after which conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research are made.

### **5.2 Summary of the Research Findings**

The purpose of the study was to identify and investigate the curricular provisions and their influence on the academic performance of gifted learners in selected schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Below is a summary of the findings based on the research questions of the study.

### **5.3 Identification of Gifted Learners**

The study found that:

- i. Most of the sampled teachers (55%) are able to identify gifted learners very well.
- ii. A third of the teachers sampled said that they can identify gifted learners fairly well and not well.

### **5.4 Existence of curricular provisions for gifted learners**

The study found that:

- i. Many secondary schools do not have curricular provisions for gifted learners.
- ii. Most of the teachers rarely use the four curricular provisions being investigated.

## **5.5 School support for gifted children**

The study found that in regard to school support for gifted children:

- i. Schools in Kiambu County are likely to support gifted learners through mentoring/guidance, peer support and learning trips

## **5.6 Attitudes of Teachers**

In regard to teachers attitudes' the study found that:

- i. Majority of the teachers do not agree that catering for gifted learners in class is difficult.
- ii. A few teachers would not like to have a gifted learner in their class.
- iii. Most of the sampled teachers indicated that having curricular provisions for gifted learners is useful for their academic excellence

## **5.7 Suggestions by Teachers**

- i. Most of the teachers support training as a way of equipping teachers to manage gifted learners
- ii. Most of them would like teachers to do more to identify gifted learners
- iii. The idea of starting special classes for gifted learners in secondary schools was supported by most (83%) teachers
- iv. Many of the teachers supported of inviting external facilitators (61%) while (67%) strongly agreed to the proposal to link gifted learners with external opportunities for growth.

## **5.8 Conclusions**

It is unfortunate that many secondary schools do not have curricular provisions for gifted learners. This is a sad state of affairs in our country since nurturing gifted learners has numerous benefits to themselves and the whole nation

Although a good number of teachers have some awareness of the issue of gifted learners, it is difficult to understand why some teachers cannot identify gifted learners yet all teachers are trained in the same institutions. A possibility is that these teachers are not confident of their competencies in this area.

Unless secondary schools improve their curricular approaches, the talents of gifted learners will continue being untapped. Yet the significant changes that secondary schools can make can only be mandated by the Ministry.

Consequently, the following recommendations are made:

## **5.9 Recommendations**

The study recommends the following:

- i. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) should immediately come up with a clear policy on the teaching of gifted learners in Kenyan schools
- ii. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should consider designing a curriculum for gifted learners to be implemented in Kenyan schools
- iii. Schools should providing adequate teaching and learning resources for gifted children in

iv. Teacher training institutions should include more courses on gifted learners especially how to identify them and also how to teach them in school.

v. Schools should consider collaborating with each other in order to teach gifted learners. One way of collaboration is to have common resources such as special classes and programs.



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## APPENDIX 1

### Research Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to establish the curricular provisions in secondary schools employed to nurture academic performance of gifted learners. The results will be treated as highly confidential and are for research purposes only. Please respond as honestly as possible.

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Taught:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject** \_\_\_\_\_

(A) **Teacher's Gender:** Male  Female

B) **Teacher's Age (years):** Less than 30  30 - 40  40+

C) **Teaching Experience (years):** Less than 5  6 - 10  10 +

**Instruction: Circle the letter of the statement that reflects your personal view**

1) **I have encountered gifted learners in my class.**

(A) Often (B) Sometimes (C) Rarely

2) **I know that gifted learners need special attention in class**

(A) Very well (B) Quite Well (C) Fairly well (D) Not well (E)

Not at all

3) **How often do you use special approaches in class as you try to cater for gifted learners?**

A) Often (B) Sometimes (C) Rarely

**4) How often do you identify challenges facing gifted learners?**

A) Often (B) Sometimes (C) Rarely

**5) Catering for gifted learners in class is difficult**

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Do not know (D) Disagree (E) Strongly disagree

**6) Accommodating gifted learners is useful for their academic excellence:**

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Do not know (D) Disagree (E) Strongly disagree

**7) I would not like to have a gifted learner in my class**

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Do not know (D) Disagree (E) Strongly disagree

**8) Teaching gifted learners is fascinating because they are highly motivated**

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Do Not Know (D) Disagree (E) Strongly disagree

**9: How would you rate your school's teaching programmes for gifted children?**

A) Very Highly (B) Highly (C) Average (D) Low

**10) How else can secondary schools facilitate gifted learners to fulfill their academic potential?**

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### Section B: Curricular Provisions for Gifted Learners

The following are different approaches for teaching gifted learners. Show how frequently you use each method by ticking the appropriate box.

PROVISION	HOW		OFTEN?		
	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often	Always
Grouping ( <i>Putting gifted learners in a class in same working groups</i> )					
Acceleration ( <i>Gifted learner skips a class and moves ahead</i> )					
Pull-Out Programs ( <i>Gifted learners come for special classes e.g. on weekends</i> )					
Others ( <i>Clubs, Library Access etc</i> )					

### Section C: Teachers Suggestions for Curricular Provisions for Gifted Learners

The following are various suggestions that can improve how schools cater for the academic performance of gifted learners. Show how preference by ticking the appropriate box.

<b>SUGGESTED APPROACHES</b>				
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Train teachers to handle gifted learners				
Identify and motivate gifted learners				
Start special classes for gifted learners				
Invite external facilitators				
Link gifted learners with external opportunities for growth				

**End of Questionnaire**



**APPENDIX 2: Maps**

**MAP OF KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**



Source: <http://www.kiambu.go.ke/about/administrative-political-units>

**LOCATION OF KIAMBU COUNTY IN KENYA**

