

ABSTRACT

Studies worldwide have revealed that student, teacher, principal, school and government policy factors influence performance of students in academics. In the years 2012 and 2013 the Kakamega County posted a mean of 5.23 and 5.36 respectively which was below average despite the presence of student, teacher, principal and government policy factors for enhancing performance. Although Kakamega County performs more or less as Busia and Bungoma Counties at the means of 4.93 and 5.1 in 2012 and 5.20 and 5.4 in 2013 respectively, it had a high candidature of 20,588 compared to Busia and Bungoma whose candidature was 8,171 and 17,603 respectively. This means many candidates in Kakamega County were adversely affected. The purpose of this study was to establish the level of influence of selected factors on students' academic performance in secondary education in Kakamega County. Objectives of the study were to: establish the influence of student factors on students' academic performance in secondary education; establish the influence of teacher factors on students' academic performance in secondary education; establish the influence of principals factors on students' academic performance in secondary education; determine the influence of school factors on students' academic performance in secondary education and establish the influence of government policies on students' academic performance in secondary education in Kakamega County. A conceptual framework showing the relationship between the variables (student, teacher, principal, school and government policies factors) and the dependent variable, student academic performance, was used to focus on the variables of the study. The study employed the ex-post facto and correlational research designs. The study population consisted of 324 principals, 324 deputy principals, 9,000 candidates (2011 cohort) and the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (CQASO). The study sample consisted of 176 principals, 30 deputy principals, 300 candidates selected through multi stage and proportionate sampling techniques and 1 CQASO selected through the saturated sampling technique. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group discussions and document analysis guide. Validity of the instruments was determined by experts in educational administration. The reliability co-efficient of the principals' questionnaire was 0.8 at a set p-value of 0.05. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and regression analysis. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub-themes. The study established that student factors that influenced students' academic performance were KCPE mark, age, exclusion from school and participation in co-curricular activities, which accounted for 75.6% of the variation in students' academic performance. Teacher factors that influenced students' academic performance were: B.Ed degree teacher qualification and KCSE teacher qualification, which accounted for 59.4% of the variation in students' academic performance. Principal factors that influenced students' academic performance were experience in current and other stations and workload. They accounted for only 4% of the variation in students, academic performance. The school factors that influenced students' academic performance were libraries and laboratories. They accounted for 73.8% of the variation in students' academic performance. Government policy factors that influenced students' academic performance were: assessments by CQASOs, capacity building programmes for teachers, subject workshops, bursaries and FSE funds, which accounted for 55.4% of the variation in students' academic performance. This means that these factors improved students' academic performance differently. The study concluded that the selected factors influenced positively students' academic performance. The study recommended that the student factors that influence academic performance of KCPE mark, age and participation in co-curricular activities must be upheld; the principals' factors should be re-examined with a view to enhancing their role as managers of the school curriculum. The findings of this study are significant to stakeholders in education as they provide the way forward in improving student academic performance.