ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIES PROMOTING LEARNING OF ACADEMIC LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANDARA SUB-COUNTY, MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA

BEATRICE DAMARIS NJERI GATOGO

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FALCULTY OF EDUCATION

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

NAIROBI-KENYA

2022

DECLARATION

I the undersigned, declare that this piece of work is my original work and has not been presented to any other university for academic credit. Information from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

Signature: ..... Date: 26/09/2022

Beatrice Damaris Njeri Gatogo

MED 1031621

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisors:

Signature: ..... Date: 28th Sept, 2022

Dr. Anne Kanga

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Signature: ..... Date: 28/09/2022

Mrs. Catherine Machyo

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa



DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to God and the people I love especially my son Joseph Ngugi for their inspirations, support and encouragement throughout my study.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess strategies promoting learning of academic low-achieving students in public secondary schools in Kandara Sub-County, Kenya. The research questions were: (i) what is the prevalence of academic low achieving students in public secondary schools in Kandara Sub-County? (ii)Which strategies are currently being used to promote academic achievement among the academic low achievers? (iii)What are challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to low academic achievement in Schools? (iv)Which measures should be put into place by the stakeholders to address the problem of academic low-achievers? The study adopted Educational Productivity Theory by Walberg and a Mixed Methods Research Design, Convergence Model. A Cross sectional survey design was used for quantitative method, and Phenomenology for qualitative method. Target population was 6155: all 56 Principals, all 56 form three class masters, 6042 form three Students and Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Total sample was 199 participants: 176 form three students, 11 class-teachers, 11 principals in 11 schools and one Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Questionnaires, Interview guides, FGD guides and Document analysis guides collected data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, while thematic analysis analyzed qualitative data. Results showed the prevalence rate of academic low-achievers was high with a significant number of students scoring grade D and below, while the strategies being used to promote learning among academic low-achievers include: Institutional related strategies, the teacher and classroom-related strategies, the student-related strategies, and government and school policies. The study concluded that the prevalence rate of academic low-achievers was high and that most strategies being used to promote learning in schools are good and go a long way in improving attendance, even academic excellence if applied well. However, most strategies tend to work better for the higher achievers; with others like some policies leaving academic low-achievers further behind. The study recommends teacher facilitation to trainings, workshops and seminars; learners to be self-motivated, inspired to succeed, focused and responsible for choices they make regarding academics. The Ministry of Education to train teachers regularly on handling academic low-achievers.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
CBC	Competence Based Curriculum
CUEA	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
FGD'S	Focused Group Discussions
FPE	Free Primary Education
FDSE	Free Secondary Education
ICT	Integrated Computer Technology
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
SDG's	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Program for Social Sciences
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Globally, children who are low achievers generally struggle in the classroom to keep up with general academic requirements (Gresham, MacMillan & Bocian, 1996). Education is a tool for social-economic change and the more educated the citizens, the more they might become civilized and disciplined which results in the development of the society (Njuguna, 2011). Student's success in school determines their success as adults determining whether and where they go to college, what professions they enter into and how much they are likely to earn in future (World Bank, 2018). This implies then that over and above monetary benefits, there are non-monetary benefits of academic achievement which include higher rates of self-reliance thus lower rates of government dependency, better health, lower rates of incarceration, respect in society and also leads to people voting more often (World Bank, 2018; Yator, 2003).

An explanation of academic low-achievers as informed by several scholars and studies (Nayak & Jahan, 2010; Dunne, et al., 2011), are learners who score very low mean grades in their studies - in Kenya, it involves those who score grades D, D- or E in their major examinations - mid-term and end of term examinations. This group of students may tend to show most of the following characteristics: Inconsistent effort at school and may only work hard on easy tasks but not when challenged; They are incurious thus dislike thinking too much and may be bored with traditional school curricula and intellectual activities; Has low willpower thus set modest goals or set no goals and when pushed to work harder, they may quit; They tend to be disorganized and unprepared, starting a new activity before finishing the current one; They lack responsibility, meaning that they are opportunists and take advantage of opportunities without

letting prior commitments or ethics get in their way. This implies that they may cheat in exams or fail to do duties; they show combativeness. Combative students get into fights anytime within and out of school implying that they are aggressive and competitive. Some may have anger management issues (Reiss, 2009; Mandel & Marcus, 1995; Baker, Bridger & Evans, 1998; Nayak & Jahan, 2010; Dunne, et al., 2011).

Other characteristics may include: Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (Johnson, Johnson & Johnson, 2014). The aforementioned characteristics may have very serious effects on the well-being of the academic low-achievers themselves, teaching and non-teaching staff, the family, society and even other learners. This calls for strategies aimed at minimizing or even better, eliminating the problems associated with academic low-achievement.

Studies have shown that underachievement generally is common among learners of all educational level's world over. In Spain, a study on underachievement focusing on all levels of intelligence by Veas, Gilar, Miñano and Castejón (2016), found that there was a large proportion of underachieving learners (28.14%) of the total sample used (of 643 learners). The study also cited that in U.S.A they were 10% while in China they stood at 12% in the same year. In Jordan, the same problem of low academic achievement in schools has been documented as noted by Al-Zoubi and Yaunes, (2015).

There are many reasons behind students' academic low-achievement and sometimes blame game has been seen among the educational stakeholders. The institutions, the teachers and the learners need to be adequately supported for better academic achievement. For instance, the society, parents and even educationists instead of building the teachers' sense of worth, they blame them for failing the students (Sarsar, 2007). The academic low-achievers are also blamed for the poor performance regardless of whether they were supported by teachers, parents/caregivers or not. Like in a study by Njoroge & Mwenje, (2020) in Kandara Sub-county on the impact of parental alcoholism in academic performance of mixed public day secondary school students found that 80% the students' respondents (63 boys and girls) attributed their low academic performance to parental alcoholism. Although the study took place in Kandara Sub-County, it covered on general poor academic performance of all learners while the current study covers strategies used to promote learning among academic low-achievers.

It should be noted that the least of the reasons behind low academic achievement are being lazy, 'unteachable', difficult or learning-disabled as they are labeled (Rahal, 2010). Poor or lack of motivation is one of them. Mandel and Marcus (1995) suggest that underachievers are highly motivated but in other directions other than good grades and their turning point to be achievers lies on finding out specifically what make such students tick. It is therefore the challenge of the teachers to figure out how to unlock each individual student's motivation to succeed and then build onto that foundation.

In this light, countries across the world have stepped up efforts to improve student academic performance and reduce achievement gaps. Different strategies have been employed world over to reverse the problem of low achievement in schools. United States of America has been in the forefront in developing teaching standards and strategies to enhance effective

teaching. For instance, Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009), put out that strategies to enhance effective teaching and improve students' performance entail organizing forums where teachers meet in learning teams and share their experiences. In Turkey, classroom strategies to solve the problems associated with classroom management include improving teachers qualifications, regulation of structure of the course in the curriculum, organizing motivational activities, giving punishments, reorganizing classroom seating plan, ignoring some misbehavior, understanding the reasons behind the problems, parental involvement and coordination among different subject communities in schools (Erdogan, Kurson, Sisman, Saltan, Gok & Yiidiz, 2010). Their study recommended in-service courses for teachers on effective classroom management, conflict resolution and stress management. They also suggested that teachers ought to be equipped with self-organization skills as well as time management skills. However, their study covered the whole school while this current study concentrated on academic low-achievers.

Students' motivation may be improved through the use of various instructional methods and techniques. It is believed that perennial dismal academic performance by majority of learners is due to use of ineffective instructional strategies by teachers to transfer knowledge to the learners (Adunola, 2011). Research on the effectiveness of the instructional strategies shows that, the worth of teaching is reflected by the performance of learners (Ayeni, 2011). Therefore, teachers are responsible for being conversant with several teaching strategies that make them transfer knowledge effectively on various concepts being covered (Ayeni, 2011; Atandi, Gosore & Anyona, 2019).

Students-related strategies meant to improve academic efficiency, calls for learners need to understand that they have a major role to play as stakeholders in education. They need to remain focused academically in and out of class, need to be hard working, curious to know more, interact with other students in and out of schools, be ready to learn, aim to make correct choices and take responsibility for their own actions as Nthotho, (2017) argues in her study in South Africa on 'Children as stakeholders of Education: Does their voice matter? Nthotho's study also points out that the teacher completes the syllabus, but it's the responsibility of the learner to grasp the content.

Remediation is another student-related strategy that has been shown to yield positive academic gains especially among the lowest attainers since the alternative of remediation is a threat to grade retention (Saavedra, Naslund-Hadley & Alfonso, 2017; Betts & Costrel, 2001). According to the study by Saavedra, Naslund-Hadley & Alfonso, (2017) teachers lack adequate teaching skills to help the struggling students as they implement the curriculum without setting aside time for the struggling learners and this is common world over including Kenya. The same study also noted that low performing students can learn through inquiry-based pedagogical approaches though there is need for learners to be motivated for instance by giving snacks. In Kenya, remediation is done in schools but in many cases, it covers the whole class which likely leaves academic low-achievers further behind (Aminga, 2013). This is because, where the whole class is involved, the numbers of learners do not reduce, making remediation less effective.

Counselling and life skills to equip learners with coping skills and strategies to improve self-management and self-control has also been advocated by Subasinghe, (2016) in Sri-lanka; as well as involving and supporting parent's /care givers through consultations and mentoring them on parenting issues; supporting and empowering teachers and use of fairer assessment systems

(Baker, Bridger & Evans, 1998; Sarsar, 2007). Alcuizar, (2016) in his study in Phillipines found that one of the effective strategies to reverse academic low achievement is to expose learners to sport activities and good nutrition as these promote active brain function, better concentration levels, good classroom behavior and higher self-esteem than their less-active counterparts.

Stoop (2011) contend that effective teachers acknowledge student differences, build collaborative learning relationships, have clear communication with parents, provide feedback to students and use strategies enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning. Notably, Langer (2007) noted the need for; more time for independent reading, small group instruction, high levels of engagement in higher-level literacy tasks, use of scaffolding to link instruction to real reading and strong links between school and home to enhance increased reading at the classroom level.

The importance of classroom management in realizing students' outcome have been emphasized by researchers. According to Wilkinson and Meiers (2007) of the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER), an effective classroom management occurs where a teacher is endowed with skills on behavior management and that of student learning. Wilkinson and Meiers found out that there is no single solution to managing students' behavior in the classroom, and that different approaches work in different situations. They noted that what works for students at a given time may not apply all the time. However, schools with programmes on behavior management are able to create an atmosphere to undertake different classroom tasks (Wilkinson & Meiers, 2007). In addition, other teachers' classroom strategy for enhancing students' performance in public schools include: encouraging collaborative learning, promoting teacher professional learning, providing resources for teachers to improved student learning and investing in teacher capacity building (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Teachers in all subjects need to employ various strategies such as discussion groups, peer-teaching and projects in order to enhance pupils' competence in knowledge and skills acquisition depending on the learners' level of understanding (Akama, 2015). He further noted that challenges hindering the implementation of instructional strategies should be addressed so that learners' academic achievement could be improved. Although Akama's study suggested use of various strategies, the study focused on the whole class which may actually leave behind the struggling low-achievers unless deliberate care is taken by the concerned teachers.

Some studies have found that teachers have continued to show some kind of awareness of strategies to use on learners to help them get knowledge. Some of the strategies of transferring knowledge have been shown to be somehow ineffective on the learner's capability to keep in mind the vital ideas (Adunola, 2011). However, teachers who are effective at improving some outcomes often are not equally effective at improving others (Blazar, 2016). Although, as noted by Longareth, Godinho, Parr & Wilson (2009), peer tutoring can be utilized by tutors as a strategy to improve learners' motivation, cognition and social outcomes in learning, better sense of responsibility for one's own acquisition of knowledge, thus enhancing their academic achievement.

Policies of a country as well as school policies have been shown to play a great role in influencing academic performance among learners of different ability levels with the low academic achievers standing to benefit most. For instance, in U.K, Every Child Matters: Change for Children in schools, focused on the need to raise the educational achievement of the lowest attaining learners and the need for more differentiation in teaching and learning. The bill also emphasized the importance of listening to children, young people and families (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2004). In the U.S.A. the policy No Child Left Behind of 2001

focused on closing the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. It included the provision of disadvantaged students and supported standards-based education reforms which were to improve individual outcomes in education (No Child Left Behind (NCLB), 2001). Different schools also come up with policies and ethos that guide the handling of underachievers and academic low-achievers at school level for improved academic performance.

In Kenya, there are policies that affect academic achievement like: policies on Free Primary and Secondary (basic Education), prohibition against corporal punishment and mental harassment to the learners, prohibition of holiday tuition, prohibition against employment of a child of compulsory school age, no repetition and expulsion of learners as well as the new Competence Based Curriculum (CBC), that is based on nurturing every learner's potential. The role of the Government is also indicated involving financing, monitoring, provision of facilities, ensuring admission of children including provision of free, sufficient and quality sanitary towels to every girl child in public schools and provide a safe and environmentally sound disposal mechanism (Basic education Act, 2013).

All the above policies ensure that learners attend school and are supported by all the stakeholders to learn. However, none of the policies specifically target low academic achievers and this study has attempted to fill the gap. Furthermore, most of them are likely to leave academic low-achievers further behind as they promote large classes.

In Africa, empirical evidence shows that most secondary schools students' performance is generally poor. In South Africa for example, the pass rate of students in examinations in their final year dropped consecutively for five years, from 73.3% in 2003 to 62.2% in 2008, (Pretorius, 2012). This paints a gloomy picture for the continent and has led to current thinking;

of a shift from the concept of highly qualified teacher to highly effective teacher in every classroom (Barry, 2010; Grosser, 2007; Pretorius, 2012). Similarly, Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego, (2002) in South Africa observed that low-academic achievement by Grade 12 were poor for years. They quoted that the pass rates 1998-2000 were 54%, 52.1% and 58.2% respectively. South Africa therefore, has put into place initiatives to improve school quality which include: reviewing education policy, prioritizing teacher development, involving stakeholders in education planning and implementing the accelerated infrastructure delivery project (Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego, 2002; ROS, 2011).

In Nigeria, a study of general performance of five main subjects, (Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry and English) covering 2008-2012 showed an average failure rate of 43.50% (mean grade of C and below) (Sakiyo, 2015). A more recent similar study was done by Owusu and Amedahe, (2018) to investigate trends in performance of Mathematics and Science for 10 years' duration (2007-2016) using West Africa Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results. The results were characterized by high percentage (around 50%) of candidates with grade F (Failure) of raw marks 0-39 percent. The two studies found more or less similar reasons behind the mass failure trend which included: Little or no recognition for higher degrees among the teachers which demotivated them; inadequate teachers, some teaching out of their area of specialization; poor completion of syllabi with 50-75% completion rate.

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) national results show that many candidates score the lower grades with those who scored combined mean grades of D, D- and E being 57.4% in 2017, 52.1% in 2018 and 45.81% in 2019. The mean percentage for the three

years was 53.6% as shown on Table 1 (Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), 2017; 2018; 2019).

Table 1

National KCSE Analysis for the Years 2017-2019

Year	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Combined % of D, D- and E
2019	627	5796	13366	24478	35340	46139	63102	83358	101687	137713	152339	29318	45.81
2018	315	3417	8268	16403	26156	20131	40707	71047	129863	147918	165139	30840	52.1
2017	142	2714	7344	12628	19355	27860	40474	61040	88447	135550	179381	35536	57.4

Note: Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), 2017; 2018; 2019

Table 1 reflects low performance nationally with combined percentage of academic low-achievers being around half of the learners. The situation was similar for Murang'a County where candidates who scored combined mean grades of D, D- and E were 43.07% in 2019, 52.1% in 2018, and 57.7% in 2017 (Murang'a County KCSE Analysis 2019) as shown by Table 2. Despite the resources invested in Murang'a County to promote academic achievement, and the fact that Murang'a is surrounded by many and traditionally well performing schools in the neighboring Kiambu and Nairobi Counties; the likes of Starehe High school, Mang'u High school, among others, Murang'a County is still among the poor performing County in Nairobi and the Central region, hence the justification for this study.

Table 2

Murang'a County KCSE Analysis 2017- 2019

Year	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Combined % of Grades D, D- and E
2019	33	256	611	1090	1476	1920	2505	3076	3630	5020	5292	830	43.07
2018	6	135	402	773	1152	1559	2014	3618	3292	5415	6524	1201	51.1
2017	3	107	312	572	833	1191	1653	2422	3258	5075	7650	1419	57.7

Note: Kandara Sub-County Education Office, (2019)

Table 2 indicates that the academic low-achievers were many in Murang'a County; around half of the candidates who sat for those examinations.

Kandara Sub-County where this study took place also has been posting poor grades and as this study foregrounds, it records among the lowest mean scores in the National examinations compared to other sub-counties. For instance, in the year 2018, the eight Sub-Counties of Murang'a County as confirmed by Murang'a County KCSE Analysis, posted mean scores as follows: Kahuro Sub-County with a mean of 4.68; Murang'a East, 4.33; Kigumo, 4.29; Mathioya, 4.23; Kangema, 3.98; Kandara, 3.96; Murang'a South, 3.78 and finally Gatanga with a mean of 3.50 (Kandara Sub-County Education Office, 2019). Kandara Sub-County KCSE Analysis for the Years 2017, 2018 and 2019 with those students who scored combined mean grades of D and below were 45.34% in 2019, 52.1% in 2018, and 58.1% in 2017 as shown on Table 3.

Table 3

Kandara Sub- County KCSE Analysis for the Years 2017- 2019

Year	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Combined % of Grades D, D- & E
2019	0	12	62	160	248	347	457	554	678	942	993	156	44.34
2018	0	8	46	114	78	297	353	468	616	940	1149	197	52.1
2017	0	5	25	62	154	231	326	492	601	955	1146	261	58.1

Note: Kandara Sub-County Education Office, (2019)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Poor academic performance of students has been of great concern to stakeholders despite all the programs and strategies employed by the stakeholders to promote high achievement in schools in Kenya. In the light of this, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary (KCSE) national results show that many candidates score the lower grades with those who scored combined mean grades of D, D- and E being 57.4% in 2017, 52.1% in 2018 and 45.81% in 2019.

This poor performance led to general outcry by all stakeholders including school administrators, teachers, parents and policy makers over the falling standards of education calling for an urgent need to come up with strategies that can promote achievement among the learners especially for the academic low achievers, otherwise this downward trend will continue. The outcry is further evidenced by speeches by key leaders in education. For instance, in her speech on Murang'a KCSE 2017 results analysis, Murang'a County Director of Education wished to encourage those who did not do well to put in strategies to improve their performance in internal and external examinations in order to revert the downward trend that have been witnessed in the past few years in Murang'a County School performance. She went ahead to

encourage all stakeholders to re-think, re-organize and re-strategize on how they prepare learners in acquisition of knowledge and skills for the future (Personal communication, Murang'a County Director of Education, 2017).

Murang'a has also hit the headlines as reported by the Star newspaper on 22nd January, 2019 where a secondary school in one part of the County was facing closure over low enrollment and poor performance. It was reported that parents were very unhappy with the poor performance consistently posted by the school as it was the last in the County with 21 out of 26 scoring D minus while the rest scored E's in the 2018 K.C.S.E. The parents transferred most of the students to the neighboring schools while the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) did the same with the teachers (Waithera, 2019). This indicates that there is a serious problem with academic low achievement in the County that needs to be addressed urgently, hence this study.

Kandara Sub-County, where this study was executed has been posting poor grades as mentioned elsewhere in this study, as it posted among the lowest mean scores in the National examinations compared to other sub-counties as shown by Kandara Sub-County KCSE Analysis for the Years 2017, 2018 and 2019 where students who scored combined mean grades of D and below were 45.34% in 2019, 52.1% in 2018, and 58.1% in 2017 as shown on Table 3 giving an average percentage of 51.84% as academic low achievers for the three years. The high percentages of learners with lowest grades call for quick remedies for the same, a gap that this study has addressed. Furthermore, the continued poor performance over the years may imply that the current strategies have not favored the lowest attainers, hence this study to assess whether the currently used strategies are effective for the academic low-achievers.

Moreover, as pointed out by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services (KUCCPS) board, all candidates with mean grade of C+ and above in KCSE are placed in both public and private universities to pursue degree courses under government-sponsored programme. Those who scored a mean grade of C- of 32 points in the year 2018 were eligible for placement for diploma courses while those who scored a mean grade of D of 18 points were eligible for placement in tertiary institutions (KUCCPS, 2019). This indicates that those who scored a mean grade of D of 17 points and below did not get direct placement for competitive courses. This implies that if something is not done to improve academic performance among the lowest achievers, most of them will be wasted, hence this study.

Mwangi, (2015) studied administrative factors determining poor performance in KCSE in public day secondary schools in Thika West District and came out with strategies that were used to promote general performance which included: Benchmarking with well performing schools, early syllabus coverage, administration of standardized assessments and designing induction and orientation sessions for new teachers. In another study on factors influencing students' academic performance in Public Secondary schools in Matungulu Sub-County, Machakos County by Kieti (2007), found that administrative practices, socio-economic background and teacher factors were the major determinants of performance in schools. The study recommended routine checking of professional documents by the administration, timely procurement of relevant materials used in the school for both teachers and learners. The suggested strategies are good but fairly general while the current study specifically recommends for strategies to promote performance among the academic low-achievers.

Most of the above studies concentrated on general poor performance, the causes and strategies put in place to reverse the trend. Very few have been studied to promote improvement among the academic low-achievers specifically and there are no clear guidelines put in place to cater for academic low-achievers and so the schools and parents are left to find their own ways to cater for this group; which constitutes a large percentage. The academic low-achievers who are still in school therefore end up feeling ignored, unloved, academically isolated and uncared for. This translates to low concentration in class, truancy due to defiance and eventually low academic achievement.

The consequence of academic low-achievement could therefore imply insufficient support, low academic self-perceptions or low goal-valuation among other negative processes (Ziegler et al., 2012). This study therefore, is an attempt to assess the strategies being used to promote learning of academic low-achievers in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County and recommend relevant strategies that will work for this group for improved academic performance.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of academic low-achievers in public secondary schools in Kandara Sub-County?
2. Which strategies are currently being used to promote academic achievement among the academic low-achievers in Kandara Sub-County?
3. What are challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to low academic achievement in Kandara Sub-County?
4. Which measures should be put into place by the stakeholders to address the problem of academic low-achievers in Kandara Sub-county?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study findings has provided information to the school administrators, teachers and parents on how to deal with academic low-achievers in order to assist them excel in their academics. It has enlightened the Guidance and Counseling departments both in and out of schools to come up with relevant activities that can guide all stakeholders on how to deal with academic low-achievement, for instance workshops, trainings, seminars and conferences.

The findings can also benefit the Ministry of Education and other policy makers to come up with clear policy guidelines that can accommodate all learners especially the academic low-achievers. The students also benefit as the findings, suggested strategies and policies would make them better performers. The information would help them (students) to value their academic goals, get self-regulated strategies, develop positive attitude towards school, teachers and peers, and adequately enhance their self-concepts. The information from the study would also contribute to existing knowledge on strategies dealing with academic low-achievement among learners in schools.

1.5 Scope and Delimitations

The study has focused on Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Academic Low-achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County. The study has delimited public secondary schools in Kandara Sub-County form three students, form three form three class masters, Principals and Quality and Standards Assurance Officer. Form three students were selected because they were in the best position to answer the study questions as they have been in secondary school for long and are not under pressure of preparing for a national examination. The Principals, the form three class masters and the QASO were selected as they had the required information for the study. Murang'a County was selected for study because despite the resources invested in Murang'a County to promote academic

achievement, and the fact that it is surrounded by many and traditionally well performing schools in the neighboring Kiambu and Nairobi Counties; the likes of Starehe school, Mang'u school, among others, Murang'a County is still among the poor performing County in Nairobi and the Central region, hence the need for this study. Kandara Sub-County was chosen because the area was among the Sub-Counties with the lowest mean grades in the National examinations compared to other Sub-Counties in Murang'a County in the past few years. Furthermore, no similar study has been carried out in the area. The delimitation to the area of study was also due to limited time for the study and financial implications.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The study has used Educational Productivity Theory which was developed by Herbert Walberg in 1981 and has nine factors that require optimization to increase affective, behavioral and cognitive learning. The nine factors are further grouped into three categories namely: (i) Student aptitude, which include ability or prior achievement as measured by the usual standardized tests; Development as indexed by chronological age or stage of maturation; and Motivation or self-concept as indicated by personality tests or the students' willingness to persevere intensively on learning tasks.(ii) Instruction, which entails the amount of time students engage in learning; as well as the quality of the instructional experience including psychological and curricular aspects.(iii) Environmental factors which include: The home environment; the classroom social groups; the peer groups outside the school and lastly, the use of out of school time (amount of leisure-time out of school like television viewing and other mass media networks) (Walberg, 1981; 1984).

According to Walberg, the named factors are the major direct causes of learning and they influence one another and are in turn influenced by feedback on the amount of learning that takes place. For the environmental factors, students learn from them directly and the same factors indirectly benefit learning by raising student ability, motivation and responsiveness to instruction. When leisure time hours are used well, learning is optimized but wrong use of these hours, displaces homework time and other educationally constructive activities outside the school (Walberg, 1981).

The Strengths, Weaknesses and Relevance of the theory

The theory has the strength of recognizing the complexity of human learning and still converge the least number of factors that powerfully and consistently predict student outcomes. It is also one of few educational theories that have been tested using over 3000 research studies that are national in scope (Walberg, Fraser & Wayne, 1986). The theory's weakness is not explaining why some learners still do not do well even when the variables are favourable and some do well even when the variables are not favourable.

The theory is relevant for this study as it shows educators and other stakeholders how much more they need to know about investing in students to improve educational productivity. This is in the strategies used to promote learning of academic low-achievers at the institutional level, at the class level and individual student level both in and out of school.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a modeled diagram showing how the variables in the study are interrelated and interlinked as shown in Figure 1.

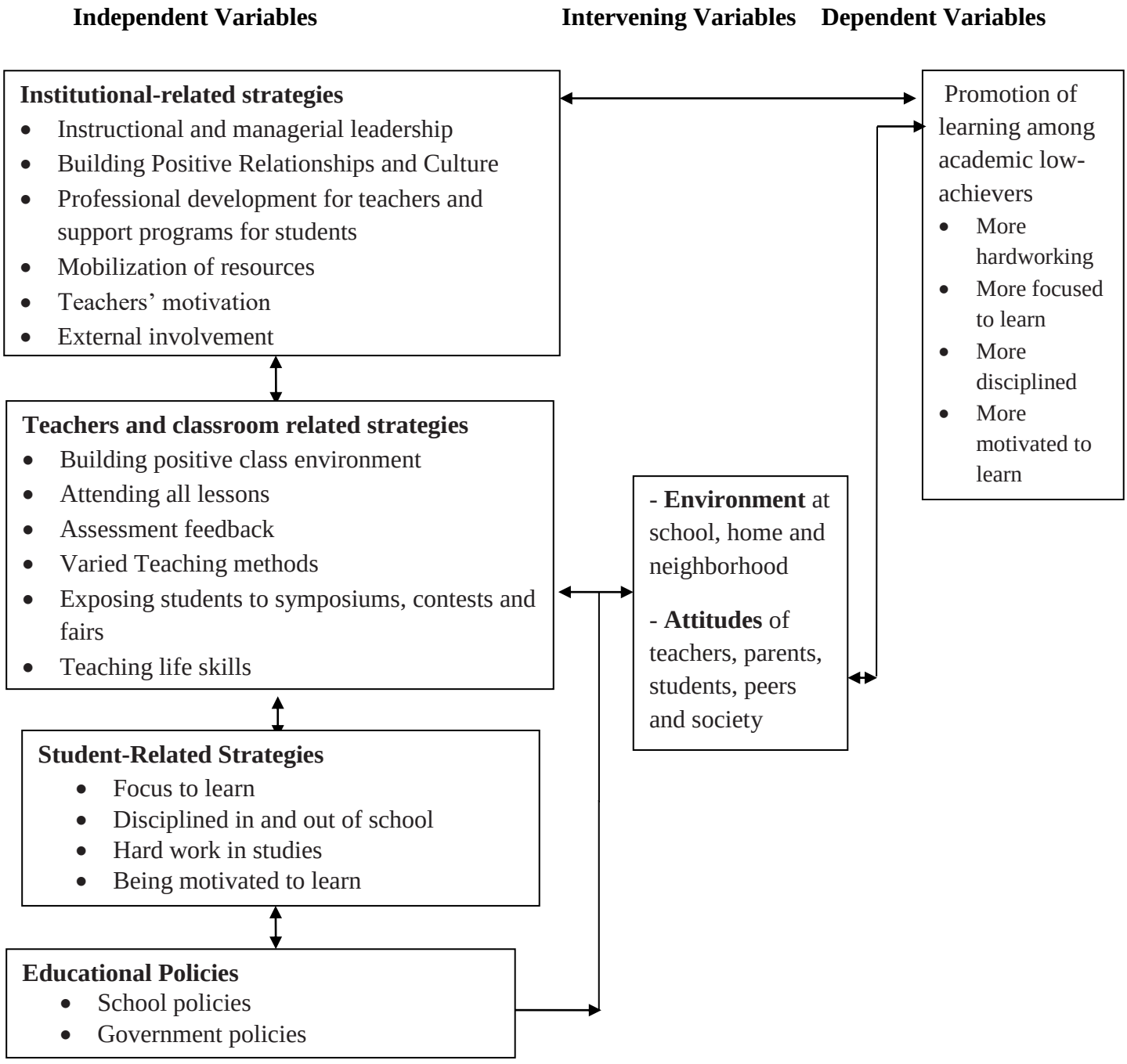


***Figure1*:** Inter-Relationship between Independent Variables, Intervening Variables and Dependent Variables
Source: Researcher, (2019)

Figure 1 show inter-relationship between independent variables, intervening variables and dependent variables. The Independent variables are divided into four: i) Institutional-related strategies which include: Institutional and managerial leadership; Professional development for teachers and support programs for students; Building positive relationships and culture; Mobilization of resources; Teachers' motivation; External involvement. (ii) Teachers and classroom related strategies which include Building positive class environment; Attending all lessons; Assessment feedback; Teaching methods; Exposing students to symposiums, contests and fairs; and Teaching life skills. (iii) Student-related strategies (iv) Policies, which include School policies and Government policies. The Dependent Variable is academic achievement of learners while the Intervening variables include Environment at school, home and neighborhood as well as attitudes of teachers, parents, students and society. When the independent variables (the Institutional-related strategies, Teachers and classroom related strategies and Educational policies) are applied effectively, and the Environment at school, home and neighborhood as well as attitudes of teachers, parents, students and society remain positive, then students' academic low-achievement will be promoted to be a thing of the past in our schools indicated by the academic low-achievers being focus to learn, disciplined in and out of school, being hard working in studies and being motivated to learn.

1.8 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Academic Low-achievers - These are learners who score very low mean grades in their studies– Grades D, D- or E in their mid or end of term examinations in regular public schools. Measured using document analysis of the said major exams.

Challenges- Refers to the difficulties experienced by academic stakeholders especially teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to academic low achievement during implementation of strategies that promote learning of academic low-achievers.

Learning - The process of absorbing, processing and retaining new or modifying already existing knowledge, skills, values or behavior resulting to better academic performance.

Measures- Courses of action designed by education stakeholders during implementation of strategies that promote learning of academic low-achievers to overcome the problem of academic low-achievement among learners in schools.

Policy- Refers to statement of commitment or official guidelines given by the government or the school to undertake specific programmes directed at achieving some goals.

Prevalence- Refers to how widespread academic low-achievement is among learners in schools

Strategies - Plans of action intended to promote learning of academic low achievers in schools.

Students' academic achievement – Refers to the extent to which a student accomplishes short or long-term educational goals. It is measured by the mean grades attained in examinations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature and theories related to the assessment of strategies promoting learning of academic low-achieving students in public secondary schools. The chapter outlines: The review of related theories; The prevalence of low-achieving students in public secondary schools; Strategies being used to promote learning of academic low-achievers; Challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers as they implement the strategies to enhance academic achievement among academic low- achievers in Kandara Sub-County; Measures to be put into place by the stakeholders to address the problem of low-achievement and Summary of the reviewed literature.

2.2. The Review of Related Theories

2.2.1 The Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

This study has used Abraham Maslow's Theory on hierarchy of needs which was developed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. Maslow, (1943) divided human needs into five categories. The most basic category is physiological needs. These include food, water, warmth and rest. When students lack these basic needs, they cannot perform well in school because their concentration will be on their discomfort. For this study, it implies that if the parents/guardians are not able to provide these needs (due to negligence or low financial status), then students' academic performance can be negatively affected. At school, these needs may be met through access to free or subsidized lunch programmes organized through Parents/guardians collaboration as well as having comfortable physical facilities like the classrooms, laboratories and hostels.

The second category is safety needs. These include security and safety. For this study, students who witness conflicts/physical or emotional abuse among schoolmates, family members or neighborhood due to different reasons or if teachers resort to ridiculing, threatening or shouting, do not feel safe at home, school or society as they fear that the involved may hurt each other or even them (children). This is reflected in their low academic performance. In our schools, these needs are met if the school come up with clearly defined routines, procedures and rules in and out of classrooms so that the students always know what is expected of them at all times. The school and classroom environment therefore need to be as positive as possible for learners to feel free to take risks like answering questions and expressing their opinions without fear of ridicule which is one of the common fears among the academic low achievers.

The third category is belongingness and love need. They include friendships, trust, acceptance, receiving and giving affection; being part of a group. For this study, if the students are communicating well with the family members, teachers, and peers, they feel loved and accepted. If the students have strained relationships between teachers, family members and other students, they may feel unloved, unaccepted, isolated and this is reflected in their low academic performance; being influenced by what they get or feel. Teachers therefore must ensure that learners feel that they belong, valued and respected as individuals by taking advantage of every opportunity to reinforce positive learner behavior and efforts.

The fourth category is Esteem Needs and they include esteem of one-self (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and desire for reputation or respect from others. This need makes one gain approval from others. For this study, if the students do not get approval from other students, family, teachers and society in general, they tend to become academic low-

achievers. In schools, this need is met through positive reinforcement of behavior and guidance and counselling. The fifth and highest need on the hierarchy is self-actualization which is the need that makes one feel self-fulfilled and realize one's potential. This stage relates to the ability to apply what the students have learned and to be able to give back and become involved with the betterment of the larger community. For instance, having students who are very good in certain subjects or games help their classmate in their work. All these needs can only be fully and satisfactorily met in a loving family with a positive parental influence, comfortable school, class, neighborhood environment and is reflected in students' academic performance.

The Strengths, Weaknesses and Relevance of the theory

This theory's strengths include being simple to understand, thus many people relate to it as it touches on physical and psychological needs in the lives of human beings. Also, it gives consideration to basic human nature as the more demanding needs are found in the lower levels of the pyramid. This theory is also applicable in many fields including Education, business, and politics among others. However, the theory shows a few weaknesses as not all individuals think in the same way, as some individuals may feel that some needs that are placed on the higher levels are more important than some at lower levels. For instance, some individuals consider social affection and respect to be more important than safety needs. Another weakness is that it is difficult to measure the satisfaction which one gets after satisfying each level of need as it is subjective in nature since it deals with human mind which cannot be predicted by any machine or method.

This theory is relevant for this study because of its practicability in explaining that the physical and psychological needs of individuals, determines their behavior and attitude in life, including academic life. If the low achievers' needs are fully satisfied per level both in and out of school, then their academic performance is likely to improve.

2.2.2 Relative Deprivation Theory

The study has also used Relative Deprivation Theory that was developed by a Sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer (1900–1960) after World War II (Heck & Wech, 2003). Relative deprivation is the lack of resources to sustain the diet, lifestyle, activities and amenities that an individual or group are accustomed to or that are widely encouraged or approved in the society to which they belong. Measuring relative deprivation allows an objective comparison between the situation of the individual or group compared to the rest of society. Relative deprivation may also emphasize the individual experience of discontent when being deprived of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled, however emphasizing the perspective of the individual makes objective measurement problematic (Walker & Smith, 2001; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). The concept of relative deprivation has important consequences for both behavior and attitudes including feelings of stress, political attitudes and participation in collective action. Social scientists, particularly political scientists and sociologists, have cited relative deprivation as a potential cause of social movements and deviance leading in extreme situations to political rioting, terrorism, civil wars and other social defiance such as crime (Merton, 1938).

For this study, some teachers, family and society in general, tend to concentrate on and support higher academic-achievers and more disciplined children leaving the academic low-achievers behind. They (the academic low-achievers) therefore, end up feeling ignored, unloved, academically isolated and uncared for. The result of all these, are the feelings of deprivation

which has important consequences for both behavior and attitudes including feeling of stress (Walker & Smith 2001), negative attitude towards education and may also show deviant tendencies (Merton, 1938). This translates to low concentration in class, truancy due to defiance and eventually academic low achievement. If this group of learners get the necessary support, they are likely to perform better.

This theory's weakness is failing to explain why some people who feel discontented fail to take action (Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). For this study, some students who feel deprived of necessary support in and out of school may even work harder to succeed instead of showing deviant tendencies. This theory is relevant for this study as it gives an explanation behind academic low achievement among students that can sensitize education stakeholders to be alert and work together to reverse the trend as academic low achievement as it may imply insufficient support, low academic self-perceptions or low goal-valuation among other negative processes (Ziegler et al., 2012).

2.3 Prevalence of Low Achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools

Studies have revealed that academic low-achievement among learners is a common occurrence world over. In Spain, a study on underachievement focusing on all levels of intelligence by Veas, Gilar, Miñano and Castejón (2016), found that there was a large proportion of underachieving learners (28.14%) of the total sample used (of 643 learners). The study also cited that in U.S.A they were 10% while in China they stood at 12% in the same year. In Jordan, the same problem of low academic achievement in schools has been documented as noted by Al-Zoubi and Yaunes, (2015).

In Nigeria, a study of general performance of five main subjects, (Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry and English) covering 2008-2012 showed an average failure rate of 43.50% (mean grade of C and below) (Sakiyo, 2015). A more recent similar study was done by Owusu and Amedahe, (2018) to investigate trends in performance of Mathematics and Science for 10 years duration (2007-2016) using West Africa Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results. The results were characterized by high percentage (around 50%) of candidates with grade F (Failure) of raw marks 0-39 percent. The two studies found more or less similar reasons behind the mass failure trend which included: Little or no recognition for higher degrees among the teachers which demotivated them; Inadequate teachers, some teaching out of their area of specialization; poor completion of syllabi with 50-75% completion rate; Inadequate teaching and learning resources; Truancy on the part of both teachers and students and negative attitude towards the subjects among other reasons. These problems have also been rampant in Kenya.

These were similar to challenges identified by a study in South Africa by Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego, (2002) who noted that low-academic achievement by Grade 12 were poor for years. They quoted that the pass rates 1998-2000 were 54%, 52.1% and 58.2% respectively. They gave reasons as due to lack of resources, poor morale, indiscipline, problems concerning the implementation of policies and inadequate parental involvement. In Kenya, the National, County and Sub-County examination results, specifically Kandara Sub-County has been posting high percentages of academic low-achievers for several years now. Could be the underlying reasons are similar and this study aims to find out.

A study by Kabuga, Mohamed and Mnjokava, (2016) on Learners' attitude and performance in science subjects in A-level in secondary schools in Mbarara Uganda, indicated that the percentage level of student performance in science subjects in Uganda Advanced Certificate Education (UACE) from 2011 to 2013 had deteriorated and this may be assumed that the general performance in the other subjects may have equally deteriorated. In Tanzania, a report by Ministry of Education and Vocational Training for Tanzania, showed that there was poor performance in secondary education examinations with most students getting marginal passes of Division IV or failing completely necessitating the Ministry to come up with the Secondary Education Development Programme II (July 2010- June 2015) Final Draft to improve the trend of academic low performance (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010). Such programs are relevant as they aim to come up with strategies to improve academic performance in schools. The only weakness being that very good programmes are developed but are more on paper than in action owing to poor implementation.

Further, a study by Maganga, (2016) in the same country (Tanzania) on Factors that affect academic performance in secondary schools in Ilala District, found that the performance in the National Examinations by four secondary schools in the District in 2013, more than 81.3% had scored poor grades (division four and below). This is an indication that students under-perform due to various reasons which Maganga highlighted to include the use of English as the language of instruction which affected performance in almost all subjects (which happens to be a foreign language in the country) and inadequate teaching and learning resources which led to inadequate formative evaluation in schools. These challenges are also experienced in Kenya and could be causing low academic achievement among learners. All the above studies show that

academic low-achievement is common internationally, but they are all fairly general involving all learners. This current study has concentrated on academic low-achievers.

In Kenya, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) National level results show that many candidates score lower grades with those who scored combined mean grades of D, D- and E in 2019 being 45.81%, 52.1% in 2018 and 57.4% in 2017, as shown by Table 1 (KNEC 2019; 2018; 2017). This reflects low academic performance as around half of the candidates scored a mean grade of D and below. In Kirinyaga County, only a total of seven schools appeared in the top 100 schools in KCSE examination results between 2010 and 2016 (Kangangi, 2017); while in Matungulu Sub-County of Machakos County attained mean grade of 4.30(D+) in KCSE for the period between 2009-2014 (Kieti, 2017).

The situation was similar for Murang'a County **(**Refer to Table 2) where candidates who scored combined mean grades of D and below were 43.07% in 2019, 52.1% in 2018 and 57.7% in 2017 (Kandara Sub-County Education Office, 2019). This indicates that the low academic achievers were around half of the candidates who sat for those exams for the three years. In Kandara Sub- County where this study was carried out, the situation is equally bad: as shown on Table 3, with those students who scored combined mean grades of D and below being 45.34% in 2019, 52.1% in 2018 and 58.1% in 2017. This indicates that academic low-achievement is real thus necessitating for this study, to find out the strategies being used to promote learning among the academic low-achievers and to come up with recommendations for the same.

2.4 Strategies Currently Being Used to Promote Learning of Academic Low-Achievers in Kandara Sub-County.

Strategies are categorized into Institutional-related strategies; Teacher and classroom-related strategies, student-related strategies and Educational Policies.

2.4.1 Institutional-Related Strategies

Institutional-related strategies are grouped into Instructional and managerial leadership; Professional development for teachers and support programmes for students; Building positive relationships and culture; mobilizing resources; Teacher motivation and External involvement.

2.4.1.1 Instructional and Managerial Leadership

Instructional leadership focuses on direct initiatives that would directly influence teaching and learning of students while managerial leadership emphasizes on the responsibilities of maintaining facilities, ensuring student discipline, inspiring and empowering the personnel through appropriate use of resources and the usual running of school administrative affairs, and both are the major determining factors of academic improvement (Jazzar & Hoyle, as cited by Norviewu-Morty, 2012). The principal forms the major determinant of academic performance of learners in a school and he/she is the pivot around which many aspects of the school revolve, being the person in charge of every detail of running the school, both academic or administrative and the success and failure of a school is attributed to him/her (Kieti, 2017; Nechesa, 2012; Mugambi, 2015; Johnson, Johnson & Johnson, 2014).

Motivating learners is an important factor in determining academic performance and is usually the role of the Principal to facilitate this practice in the school. Good and Brophy, (2008) asserts that the reward system (verbal and tangible rewards) of a school may motivate learners positively if delivered carefully in an informational rather than controlling manner. They should be given occasionally and unexpectedly. They have negative effects if given merely for

participation, without regard for quality of performance. Although competition motivates some students to succeed, it may not be the case to others especially academic low-achievers. Competition exposes students to public failure rather than private failure and students in competitive environments may be so focused on "winning" they miss the objective of the lesson and fail to focus on what they are supposed to learn. Students tend to be motivated in school when they find the tasks meaningful, believe that they can do them and feel supported by teachers, parents, friends and others around them (Rahal, 2010; Adelodun, 2013). It is therefore the responsibility of teachers, parents and other stakeholders to ensure the learners within and out of school feel exactly that: motivated, confident and supported. The principal forms the basis for support of all learners, teaching and non-teaching staff in a school and he/she ought to be effective as success in a school largely depends on him/her.

In Ghana, Norviewu-Morty (2012) did a study, Principals strategies for improving the academic achievement of students of disadvantaged rural junior high schools where he used qualitative methods of data collection using interviews, FGDs and observations from two high achieving and two low achieving disadvantaged Junior secondary schools. He found that the Principals' instructional leadership in the well performing school, was demonstrated through correction of lesson notes, direct coaching of teachers, random check of students' work and conducting academic and staff meetings to evaluate students' learning while their collegial working relationship with teachers and students were demonstrated through participatory decision making processes that focused on regular teaching-staff meetings, consultation with implementation committees and heads of departments and regular dialogue with students. In poor performing schools, these roles of the principal were either absent or poorly done hence the

low academic performance. Effective leadership therefore, builds teamwork among all staff members who are encouraged to work towards one goal; success.

Poor training of teachers leads to poor leadership in schools. According to Kafu in Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo (2015), the challenges facing teacher education programmes are to blame for inadequate human, material and financial resources, which remain a hindrance to producing quality and competent teachers. Poorly trained teachers when appointed as teacher education administrators lead to poor leadership in schools. This contrasts with a study by Ntuta and Schurink, (2010) in South Africa: Towards Sustaining Performance in a Gauteng Secondary School, using a qualitative research approach within a case-study design which found out that the main reason for the inability of the school to sustain its performance were not internal (within the school itself) but external (within the education system); due to poor leadership at departmental level. Some of the Kenyan schools may be suffering from poor leadership that may be resulting in low academic achievement in schools.

Eshiwani, (1983) did a study on Factors influencing performance among primary and secondary school pupils in Western Province of Kenya: A policy study, where he used questionnaires and interviews in 170 schools and found out that schools that show good performance have sound and efficient leadership and this implies that the reverse is also true that inefficient leadership results to poor academic performance. Yator, (2003) cites Hellinger et al. who noted that in many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. It is her/his managerial skills that set the benchmark, the direction, the tone and the tempo of the school. He/she sets the climate for teaching and learning, level of professionalism and his/her managerial skills are pivotal for morale of teachers and set the

degree of concern for what students may or may not become. This shows that the effectiveness of the principal in instructional and managerial functions is key to better academic performance.

Mugambi, (2015) did a study on 'The role of principals in promoting students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya and used descriptive survey research design. She collected data using questionnaires with 300 participants who included Principals, teachers and students in 10 schools. The study revealed that the success or failure of a school is usually attributed to the principal and that most principals make decisions about the school's key aspects such as selecting teaching/learning materials, equipping laboratories, libraries and provision of other resources (Odhong 2014), setting school rules and regulations and budgeting with close consultation with their deputies, HODs and teachers. Mugambi's study used questionnaires alone while the current study in addition to questionnaires for teachers and students, used interview guides for Principals and the QASO as well as FDGs for students that tend to yield deeper insights. Furthermore, none of the above studies attempted to find out whether these roles of the principals promote learning of academic low-achievers or not. This study has attempted to answer these questions.

2.4.1.2 Professional Development for Teachers and Support Programmes for Students

It is the principal who is responsible for supporting teachers for professional development (Kieti, 2017; Mugambi, 2015; Katamei & Omwono, 2015). This is through supporting teachers to attend workshops, seminars, SMASSE in-service courses, training in guidance and counseling, benchmarking and Kenya National Examination Council training (Nechesa, 2012; Jepketer, Kombo & Kyalo, 2015). Professional Development helps change the teachers' attitudes positively and equips the teachers with necessary current knowledge and skills

that would make them better teachers. Teachers with minimal or no opportunities to enhance themselves, may not be effective in their duties.

Professional development opportunities that build on one another can positively affect teachers' work. Desimone (2011) claims that "a professional development activity is more likely to be effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills if it forms a coherent part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development. In United States of America, Parish (2013) conducted a study in Texas on the impact of professional development on student achievement as measured by mathematics and science Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBA), the study revealed that the students whose teachers spent more hours in professional learning for continuous improvement had an increased likelihood of scoring above average grades in the Districts' Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBA).

Learning how to teach and working to become an excellent teacher is a long-term process that require one development of practical and complex skills under the guidance and supervision of experts (Omoh, 2013). Omoh, recommended that principals should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to promote capacity building of teachers through intensive and regular in-house seminars and workshops to improve knowledge, pedagogical skills and competence of teachers in various subjects. This study did not find out the influence of professional development of teachers on academic low-achievers which the current study has attempted to find out.

According to Katamei and Omwono, (2015) in their study on Intervention Strategies to Improve Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) in Kenya, they found that support programmes for learners which include Guidance and Counseling programmes and remedial Programmes play a big role in promoting academic achievement especially so for academic low-achievers as they focus on the needs of

the students; models and fosters caring and supportive relationships which increase self-confidence, awareness and management of behavior and positive attitudes towards others. These programmes are facilitated by the principal. Although support programmes for teachers and learners were found to help learners improve performance, they were too general: there is need for more specific support programmes; Teachers' Professional Development programmes, Guidance and Counselling and remedial programmes tailored for academic low achievers can help them improve academically which this study has recommended.

2.4.1.3 Building Positive Relationships and Culture

Schools, led by the principal, should create conditions in which students feel cared for, safe and supported. This can be realized through nurturing a humanistic school environment where teaching as well as non-teaching staff relate well with learners (Kingori & Kiumi, 2018). This includes an inclusive and nurturing environment that encourages a culture of hard work both in academic and non-academic related achievements of academic low achievers as Dunne, et al. (2011) pointed out in their study in U.K. This may be through giving prizes and awards, public recognition, badges, free or subsidized trips among others. If the learners know that improvements and hard work are recognized whichever the grade, they will be motivated to go for it. In Texas, the study by Johnson, Johnson & Johnson (2014), found that a school success is founded on a good, positive school culture (learning environment and conditions) that maximizes students' opportunity to learn and succeed and that effective relationships among people, is the key to increased efficiency, productivity and growth in any institution.

In Ghana's Aarie Junior Secondary School that was studied, had its own culture developed and maintained by all, led by the Principal to ensure good academic performance. It included: Culture of discipline, punctuality, orderliness, commitment, perseverance and pride of

being the best school in the District (Norviewu-Morty, 2012). In the same study of another school, there had no specified culture, communication was ineffective, no clear school policies and academic performance was inevitably poor. This indicates that academic performance go hand in hand with effective and well-defined school culture led by the school principal.

According to Kingori and Kiumi (2018) in their study on School location, school type and students' academic aspiration. The case of public secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya, they used Expost facto research design and issued 375 questionnaires to randomly selected students in 106 public schools, a key observation from their findings, was that academic aspiration was lower in rural schools compared with urban schools. The same was the case in day schools whose students demonstrated a lower level of aspiration compared with their counterparts in boarding schools and schools that had boarders and day scholars. They further observed that there was a need for rural schools and day schools to create conditions which can help to build students' academic aspiration, need to make students to see value in what they are doing in school including efforts to enhance students' sense of belonging in their schools. Also, there is the need to instill growth mindsets in students, by enhancing perceptions of themselves as learners. Positive aspirations and motivation among learners need to be part of the school culture and should be supported by all stakeholders in the school. This study was carried out in Laikipia County while the current study was carried out in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County to find out whether aspirations influence academic low achievement. Also, in addition to questionnaires, it has used Interview guides and FGDs to collect data.

2.4.1.4 Mobilization of Resources

Ntuta and Schurink, (2010) did a study 'Towards sustaining performance in a Gauteng secondary school in South Africa: The Education Academic Zones (EAZ) - a program that was started to improve academic performance in schools, and found that resourced schools in Gauteng in many ways, like renovating facilities, giving out text books, financed workshops for all the staff members, keeping them at par with the current methods of instruction improved academic performance. Before this support was given, academic performance was very poor but improved soon after. However, it should be noted that increasing infrastructure and other inputs in schools does not improve learning if the materials do not improve teacher-learner interaction; like providing more books in Sierra Leone in 2008 did not improve learning in the classroom because administrators put most of those books in storage (World Bank, 2018). Therefore, there is need to do follow-ups by the management to ensure that the resources are being utilized effectively, resulting to learning by all the learners especially now that FPE/FSE programmes provide learning materials in Kenya.

In a study on poor academic performance in Sumbawanga Tanzania, Nyandwi, (2014) found that inadequate resources like teachers, teachers' houses, libraries, teaching/learning materials, science laboratories and dormitories or hostels had negative impact on the students' academic performance in the district which agrees with a study by Iwu, Gwija, Benedict and Tengeh, (2013). Nyandwi, (2014) recommended that the government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders should collaboratively construct facilities, equip them and provide teaching and learning materials.

In Kenya, Kieti (2017) did a study in Matungulu Sub-County, Machakos County that used 280 participants, stratified and purposive sampling and questionnaires for principals and teachers. The findings of the study revealed that learning resources were inadequate and hence

affected academic performance to a great extent. He recommended that the school management should ensure that relevant materials were procured for use by both students and teachers. These results agree with those by Reche, Bundi, Riungu and Mbugua, (2012); Njoroge and Nyabuto, (2014) as well as Kingori and Kiumi, (2018). When resources are inadequate or poorly utilized in teaching and learning, poor performances are posted especially among the lowest academic achievers as they are the greatest academic strugglers who tend to give up easily if inadequate support is given. The above studies concentrated on how resources influence the general academic performance in a school while the current study has attempted to find out the adequacy and utility of resources to promote learning among academic low achievers in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County.

2.4.1.5 Teacher Motivation

There is no amount of training or inputs that can substitute for teacher motivation (World Bank, 2018). According to their 2018 report, education systems in many countries neither reward teachers for performing well nor penalize them for performing poorly and that teachers, need to be treated as professionals - and good professionals receive support and respect, but also held to high expectations. The principal is responsible for facilitating motivation of teachers as motivated teachers are more productive. Studies have shown that there is correlation between motivation and productivity like in countries with high absenteeism, such as Kenya and India (World Bank, 2018).

Highly motivated educators experience job satisfaction thus performs better than their unmotivated counterparts. Iwu, Gwija, Benedict and Tengeh, (2013) in their study Teacher job satisfaction and learner performance in selected high schools in Western Cape Province in South Africa, found that motivation is a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors with the major ones (in

order) being better working conditions, job security and perceived growth opportunities which agrees with a study by Mji and Makgato, (2006) in the same country, South Africa. Iwu, et al., (2013) further noted that barriers to job satisfaction among teachers include (in order of importance): inadequate resources, heavy workloads, inadequate infrastructure, lack of recognition and communication barriers among others. They recommended that school management, department of education and other stakeholders to work on the barriers to improve educators' job satisfaction for better performance in schools.

Motivation, as reported by World Bank, (2018) may be through financial and non-financial incentives. The report further found that in India, students performed better in schools that provided teachers with financial motivation for reading and mathematics scores, also in a District in Columbia, United States. In some countries like Mexico and Tanzania, teacher financial incentives were effective when another intervention was used. This could be partly because when teachers are paid poorly, they engage in other activities away from school to make ends meet thus the absenteeism. Thus, with financial and non-financial incentives, teachers may concentrate in school work which translate to improved performance.

Gitonga, (2012) did a study on influence of teachers' motivation on students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Imenti South District, Kenya. She employed descriptive survey design and collected data used questionnaires. The findings revealed that conducive working environment and professional development motivates teachers to be better performers. Also, there was a strong relationship between remuneration related factors and school performance. She recommended improved intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on teachers for improved performance. This study concentrated on whole school performance and took place in Imenti South while the current study has concentrated on academic low

achievers' performance in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a to find out whether teachers' motivation influences performance of academic low-achievers.

2.4.1.6 External Involvement

Involving parents/guardians is generally thought to be effective in improving the learning of low-attaining pupils (Dunne, et al 2011; Desarrollo, 2012; Farooq et al., 2011; Banerjee, 2016) in their studies in U.K., America and India respectively. Successful school change which also imply positive change of academic low-achievers at the individual learner level, require the collaborative support of the entire school community: the students, teachers, parents, peer-groups and counselors, since low-achieving learners can still learn if provided with the appropriate help (Dunne, et al, 2011; Chukwu-Etu 2009; Johnson et al, 2014).When parents/guardians are involved in school matters, learners are motivated to work harder especially as they know everyone is keeping an eye on them. Involving parents/guardians may be through inviting them to school for academic clinics, through homework activities, holding guidance and counseling classes for parents, holding common meals like lunches or dinners and employing them in school to do various jobs (Dunne, et al. 2011). According to Dunne et al, also engaging specialists for academic low-achievers like guidance and counseling experts, mentors, psychologists, language and communication support officers, motivates them to work harder in their academics. Al-Zoubi and Younes, (2015) in Jordan, also supports the same idea of parental involvement since parents are taught not to exert excess pressure on their students to perform since this may create a feeling of fear leading to failure. They are also made aware of how family problems may negatively affect the students' academic performance especially with the academic low achievers who tend to give up easily.

According to Desarrollo (2012), the extent to which parents or other family members are actively engaged in students' education influences a student achievement in Latin America. He further argues that the most accurate predictor of a students' school achievement is the extent to which his/her family encourages learning. This implies that if the family members are not concerned with what learners do in schools, and the learners know this, they will not be compelled to work hard and the result is academic low achievement in school. Those students who know that their parents care and support them work hard and keep out of trouble not to let them down.

In Kenya, some parents especially in rural areas have little or no time to spend with their children (Yap & Enoki, 2010; Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014). Their professions, family instabilities, behavior, social class and other related aspects leave students under the care of their teachers which is detrimental for students' education. When students feel neglected at home, they tend to seek for attention in classrooms (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014) and such students disrupt the more attentive and concentrating students. A study by Kobia, (2011) on Problems associated with performance in day secondary schools in Meru Central revealed that there was laxity on the side of the parents and guardians. They left the duty of parenting to teachers and school administrators. Kobia's study further revealed that 40% of parents were not concerned with what their children do in school, resulting to truancy hence low academic achievement in school. This agrees with Muyalo's (2017) study on Parent related factors influencing learners' academic performance in KCSE in Igembe North Sub-County, Meru. She used descriptive survey design and collected data using interview schedules from 12 Public Secondary Schools; 960students, 24 form three class masters and 12 Principals. She found that the more the parents/guardians are supportive, the more likely their learners have fewer behavioral problems,

are likely to complete high school and perform better than those with no support from parents/guardians.

Reche, et al, (2012) did a study on Factors contributing to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public day primary schools in Mwimbi Division, Maara District, used Descriptive Survey design, and collected data using questionnaires from 6 Headteachers, 51 teachers and 146 students. The study revealed that majority of parents (62%) rarely consulted teachers on education matters of their children, 20% indicated they sometimes consulted and 8% did often consult but 10% never consulted teachers. The study also found that majority of the pupils (69.2%) did not get assistance to do homework at home, but 30.8% did. This is an indication that most parents are not so much concerned about education of their children and if the students know this, they show reduced performance as they reduce their efforts in school. Inadequate or lack of support lead to low academic achievement by the learners. This study was carried out in Maara District where the parents/guardians may have different social-economic activities compared to Kandara Sub-County, hence the current study. Also, the authors used questionnaires alone in data collection while the current study has in addition use FGDs, interview guides and data analysis guides.

Kingori and Kiumi, (2018) in their study on School location, school type and students' academic aspiration: The case of public secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya, used Expost facto research design and randomly selected 375 students in 106 public schools. They suggested that specifically, schools need to connect with parents since through such linkages, schools will have an opportunity to educate parents on strategies to enhance home level cultural and social capital relating to students' progression in school and aspiration to succeed in life and also to remind parents of their duty of enforcing students' discipline as well as encouraging them

(parents/guardians) to offer moral support to learners and teachers. This study was in Laikipia County with different socio-economic activities from Kandara Sub-County, thus the need for the current study.

2.4.2 Teacher and Classroom Related Strategies

In the classroom, the teacher is the key to learners' learning and getting them ready and motivated to learn is the first step to effective learning. Without these, other policies and programs will have minimal effect (World Bank, 2018). This is possible through teachers' techniques of instruction and management that allow students to feel supported, valued, safe, have a sense of belonging and a feeling that the teachers have their interest at heart which reflects Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). With all these, the learners become motivated to work harder in all their undertakings (Johnson, et al, 2014). In such kind of environment, there are few distractions, indiscipline cases and learners learn more.

In Italy, Battistin and Schizzerotto, (2012) did a study on Threat of grade retention, remedial education and student achievement: evidence from upper secondary schools in Italy. They used surveys and collected data using assessment tests and document analysis. They found that teachers' expectations have a significant impact on student achievement. Teachers with high expectations are a positive predictor of students' goals and interests, while teachers with low expectations are a negative predictor of students' goals and interests thus low academic performance. More generally, how teachers manage classroom culture like creating a supportive environment for low achieving students has a strong impact on student motivation and passing rates.

In Nigeria, a study by George, Sikirudeen and Sunday, (2017) found that students' performance is significantly influenced by teachers' classroom management strategies and that in schools where teachers use considerable corporal punishment, give verbal instructions and carry out instructional supervision, learners show less disruptive behavior and academically perform better. The study adopted Survey design on a target population of 2044 Senior Secondary School where they sampled 200 students from Public Secondary Schools in 4 clans in the study area. Questionnaires were used. The study recommended that teachers need to be skilled in classroom management so as to influence the learners to perform better. This study also covered learners of all abilities while the current study attempted to find out the teacher-classroom related strategies being used in class rooms and whether they benefit academic low-achievers to perform better.

In Kenya, Odhong, (2014) did a study on Strategies Adopted to Enhance Performance in Sciences in Public Secondary Schools in Nyando District, Kisumu County. He used survey design and purposive stratified and simple random sampling to get 8 principals, 29 science teachers, 369 students and 1 District Education Officer. He collected data using questionnaires for students and teachers and interview guides for principals and District Education Officer. The study revealed that science teachers focus on strategies such as attending every lesson, teacher/learner discussion to teach non-laboratory lessons, exposing students to every practical lesson, helping students prepare for science contests, symposiums and congresses, encouraging students to focus on studying science on their own most of the time and helping students to develop positive attitude towards sciences. Although the aforementioned strategies targeted sciences, most of them may be applied in other subjects as well and are good for all levels of achievement and more so for academic low-achievers hence this study.

The use of teacher-centered methods of teaching and learning are very common in schools despite them being discouraged for use by teachers in schools. This is because they are ineffective in teaching and learning and leave many learners behind especially academic low achievers. Wamboka, Oketh and Mugambi (2021) carried out a study on the impact of teacher-centered teaching methods on students' academic achievement in English language on national tests in Nairobi Kenya. Their study used descriptive survey design, purposive sampling done to select 23 school directors and 46 English teachers. The study found that teacher centered methods of teaching were dominant in schools despite not being recommended for teaching young learners. They recommended more research to find out why teachers keep using the traditional teacher-centered methods in schools so that if the reasons are due to large classes and inadequate resources, then the concerned to deal with these challenges for better performance by learners. This current study attempted to find out the teacher class room being used and whether they help academic low-achievers.

A study by Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo, (2015) on Teachers' classroom strategy for enhancing students' performance in public secondary schools in Nandi County, where they used descriptive survey design, stratified and simple random sampling of 30 Principals, 85 teachers, 136 students in 30 public schools and 1 County Director of Education. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The study revealed that teacher's teaching methods, handling learners' discipline and giving feedback on assessments promote academic performance in the classroom to a great extent. They concluded that teachers should apply research-based varied instructional strategies, manage student behaviors to avoid students' disruptive behaviors resulting to indiscipline and give classroom assessments regularly to gauge and monitor learning process. They also noted that students are not taking their work seriously; wasting their own time

as well as teachers' and parents' time, so they need to be guided and coached properly to change their behavior in order to succeed.

According to these authors, students also need to be exposed to other learning activities such as co-curricular activities which will help identify and utilize their talents and teachers need to be facilitated to develop themselves professionally that will raise their competence in classroom management and delivery. This study was carried out in Nandi County while the current study was carried out in Kandara Sub- County, Murang'a County. In addition to questionnaires and interview guides, FGDs were used to collect data, for deeper insights of the study topic. Also, this study covered learners of all abilities while this current study only concentrated on academic low-achievers to find out whether the strategies being used promoted learning among the academic low-achievers.

2.4.3 Student-Related Strategies

Students-related strategies meant to improve academic efficiency, calls for learners need to understand that they have a major role to play as stakeholders in education. They need to remain focused academically in and out of class, need to be hard working, curious to know more, interact with other students in and out of schools, be ready to learn, aim to make correct choices and take responsibility for their own actions as Nthotho, (2017) argues in her study in South Africa on 'Children as stakeholders of Education: Does their voice matter?' The study also points out that the teacher completes the syllabus, but it's the responsibility of the learner to grasp the content. Remediation is another student-related strategy that has been shown to yield positive academic gains especially among the lowest attainers since the alternative of remediation is a threat to grade retention (Betts & Costrel, 2001). Success requires hardworking,

sacrifice and patience. Therefore, learners need to work hard, be ambitious and focused to fulfil their goals (Alzaubi & Jounes, 2015).

Students are directly responsible and accountable for their academic performance and underachievement in schools results from failure in self-regulation (Popa, 2014). Popa, in his study in Romania Secondary Schools, he concluded that competence of self-regulated learning has a strong impact on the level of school performance achieved by the students and that it is one of the most important transferable skills that schools should focus in their curriculum because it enhances the motivational level and allows students to be accountable for their own learning and also because it determines indirectly changing patterns of poor behavior and positively influence the level of achieved performance (Popa, 2014).

As stakeholders, the learners need to be given opportunities to practically participate in all aspects of school leadership, management systems and structures which may include development of school mission, and vision, in budget planning, in development of strategic plan as well as organizing function not just mere taking part in school or lessons but getting involved in real decision-making in schools (Mutwiri, 2015). The study found that involving learners in management and decision making improves academic importance as it makes them feel more confident in their learning and that it was minimal in Uringu Division in Meru County. The study recommended that the learners be involved in aspects of school leadership, management systems and structures. This study was carried out in Uringu Division in Meru, while the current study was carried out in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County. Furthermore, this study did not relate learner involvement in school management to academic low-achievement which the current study has attempted to find out.

2.4.4 Educational Policies

A policy is a statement of commitment or official guidelines given by the government or a school to undertake specific programmes directed at achieving some goals. School policies are policies developed at school level aimed at directing the school community on day to day running of the school while government policies are those that are directed to schools in the whole nation to guide them in their operations. Policies influence academic performance both positively and negatively. For instance, in U.K, Every Child Matters: Change for Children in schools, focused on the need to raise the educational achievement of the lowest attaining learners, the need for more differentiation in teaching and learning and also emphasized on importance of listening to children, young people and families (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2004). In the U.S.A. the policy No Child Left Behind of 2001, focused on closing the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility and choice, so that no child is left behind. It included the provision of disadvantaged students and supported standards-based education reforms which were to improve individual outcomes in education (No Child Left Behind (NCLB), 2001).

In UK, a study by Dunne et al. (2011) on Teaching and learning for pupils in low attaining sets, found that to promote learning of academic low-achievers, some schools developed different curriculum pathways as well as school ethos. For instance, vocational-based pathways where some low-achievers attended off-site work for two to three days followed by reduced school curriculum; Skills-based pathway where some schools offer certified Skills courses focusing on communication and numeracy alongside academic curriculum, less emphasis on literacy for low-achievers to be more likely to succeed. Others included supported project work of about six months like a film, artwork, mathematics or science project. Some school ethos involved consulting learners on their views on their learning through Focused

Group Discussions (FGDs), building strong Teaching and learning relationships, having disciplinary and reward systems with positive behavior, policies emphasizing on mutual tolerance and respect, involvement of parents/guardians as well as external agencies like business community, politicians among others. It should be noted that strong policies that are known by all staff and learners work to motivate them to better academic performance.

In Kenya, Basic Education Act of 2013 spells out on what basic education entails. For instance, that the basic education is free and compulsory for every learner from pre-unit to form four, the role of the parent or guardian to ensure children of school going age go to school and are supported to learn, prohibition against corporal punishment and mental harassment to learners, prohibition of holiday tuition, prohibition against employment of a child of compulsory school age and no repetition and expulsion of learners. The role of the Government is also indicated involving financing, monitoring, provision of facilities, ensuring admission of children including provision of free, sufficient and quality sanitary towels to every girl child in public schools and provide a safe and environmentally sound disposal mechanism (Basic education Act, 2013).

All the above-mentioned policies ensure that learners attend school and are supported by all the stakeholders to learn. However, none of the policies specifically target academic low-achievers. Sometimes they (policies) help make matters worse for the academic low-achievers. For instance, in a study on Factors associated with low achievement among students from Nairobi urban informal neighborhoods by Ejakait et. al. (2011) where they used questionnaires and longitudinal framework design, they found that one major cause of low academic performance in the schools was the large class sizes resulting from the 100% transition policy to secondary schools. Although good as it ensures students attain basic education, it has resulted to

overcrowding of schools, putting pressure on all resources especially classrooms, libraries, laboratories, dorms, teaching staff among others.

Wanzala, (2019) also reported that schools are being forced to admit students they cannot accommodate. He goes further to describe a school in Bogoria County which admitted 200 students instead of 80 and there were no classrooms as well as furniture for use. The problem is made worse by the delayed release of Free Secondary Education (FSE) funds by the government. This agrees with the study by Muricho and Chang'ach, (2013) whose study revealed that large class sizes created by the 100% transition policy reduce the effectiveness of teaching and learning as different learners have different abilities including those with very low entry behavior. This implies that many academic low-achievers stand high chances of actually being left behind. This current study was aimed to find out the influence of the 100% transition policy to academic performance of low-achievers in Kandara Sub-County.

Other policies that affect students' performance include: policy on delocalization of teachers, transfer of teachers and policy on deployment of teachers. Although at some point teachers move from one school to another due to factors like promotions and balancing, their movement may affect teaching and learning negatively as they destabilize the teachers, the schools and the learners as the involved parties take time to adjust. This information is supported by studies by Kurgat and Tanui, (2014) in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya; as well as by Gatemi, and Thinguri, (2018) who attributed poor performance to frequent movement of staff through transfers and other factors which affect stability of teachers and learners.

The policy on teacher evaluation and quality assurance by use of Teachers Performance Appraisal Documents (TPAD) is a relatively new tool that if used well will positively promote learning especially among the low academic achievers as it involves setting of targets so teachers

strive to attain them, promotes identification and growth of talents among learners, ensures accountability in contact hours with learners and promotes teacher preparedness through collegial supervision among other benefits. A study by Osendo, Wanjala and Okoth, (2019) on influence of teacher appraisal on job performance in public schools in Mumias Sub-County, Kenya, where they used descriptive research design, stratified sampling of 17 schools, 17 Head teachers, 17 Deputies and 154 teachers. They collected data using questionnaires and observation. They found that performance appraisal plays an integral part in institutions' performance systems ensuring responsibilities, duties and outcomes are in relation with set objectives. According to this study, if they are used effectively, they give an added advantage over schools that ignores them.

This agrees with a study by Kareithi, (2018) in Kirinyaga Sub-County where she found that the implementation of this TPAD system for teachers plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' performance which goes hand in hand with learners' performance. However, some teachers have not taken this system positively as they feel they did not receive thorough training, it is time consuming, with a lot of paperwork as Midimo, (2017) found out in her study in Nyeri County. She recommended thorough training for teachers, reduced paper work and relevant features of teaching profession captured. None of the above three studies related the influence of the use of the new appraisal system to learning of academic low-achievers which the current study has attempted to find out. Furthermore, reviewed studies were in other Counties.

In line with Kenya's Vision 2030, the government has structures in place to intensify application of science, technology and innovation (STI) to raise productivity and efficiency levels. However, more need to be done through devoting more resources to scientific research and development, technical capabilities of workforce and raising the quality of teaching

mathematics, science and technology in schools and intensifying STI awareness to the general public (Sessional Paper No. 10). Closer monitoring and evaluation of the policies is needed to ensure implementation and reviewing if need be.

2.5. Challenges Facing Teachers and Academic Low-achievers in Relation to Low Academic Achievement in Kandara Sub-County.

There are several challenges that are associated with academic low-achievement. In schools, low-achievers are usually dealt with as individuals or may be grouped. Grouping is usually done based on the same abilities or mixed abilities. A study on Teaching and Learning for Pupils in Low Attaining Sets in United Kingdom (U.K.) by Dunne et. al., (2011) revealed that teachers face some challenges of grouping the low-achievers, which include: Whom to target for which group, as some students are low-achievers in some subjects and not others; Grouping encourages distraction making teachers struggle to maintain discipline; Challenge of assessment where teachers are faced with the dilemma of whether to offer common assessment to ensure equity in terms of set allocation and not de-motivate them; Putting too much pressure on academic low-achievers to achieve, resulting to stress, tension or even temptation to cheat in exams. Same ability grouping may result to low self-esteem among the learners as the groups become known, though it raises confidence among the learners (to ask questions). Another challenge of grouping is inadequate time for learners to liaise with teachers and teaching assistants.

Some academic low-achievers are aggressive, bored with the traditional curriculum, suffer from low self-esteem, has intellectual incuriosity (Reiss, 2009), are likely to engage in general misconduct and mostly disturb other students in and out of class making them unhappy and stressed with others aping their (negative) actions. Such learners make the teachers and

parents feel inadequate, frustrated (Reiss, 2009), angry and a lot of learning time is wasted when dealing with their cases like failure to do assigned duties, resolving conflicts among others.

Indiscipline impacts negatively on the level of commitment to schoolwork. In Nigeria, Usman, (2016), carried out a study to investigate the impact on the management of Students' Indiscipline on the Management of Secondary Schools in Kogi-East Senatorial District. He used Survey design and issued questionnaires to 450 participants. He found that truancy, stealing, examination malpractice, sexual immorality and drug abuse have effects on the management in secondary schools. He recommended that the Ministry of Education should expel and handover erring students to security agencies; and government, parents, teachers and students should work towards the eradication of examination malpractice in schools. Other indiscipline forms according to Urhungur in Usman, (2016) include: disregard for school rules and regulations, disrespect for authority, lateness, disobedience, apathy and stubbornness, alcoholism and drug abuse, cruelty, verbal assaults, bullying, dishonesty, fighting, vandalism, improper dressing, negligence and laziness.

The above results agree with those by Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego, (2002) in South Africa who found that most indisciplined students show disrespect to the authority as they ignore instructions leading to most of them spending a lot of time away from their classrooms, come late to school and leave early. They used survey method and collected data though interviews for stakeholders and questionnaires for students. All indiscipline cases lead to strained teacher-student relationship and lower teachers' morale as it becomes difficult for teachers to curb the situation more especially now that corporal punishment was abolished (Republic of Kenya, 2013) and thus low academic achievement. They may also result in long term effects to the perpetrators like: unwanted pregnancies, incarceration, diseases like respiratory, mental and

sexually transmitted diseases, or even death (Usman, 2016; Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego, 2002). These indiscipline issues are common among academic low-achievers may be as a result of reaction by these learners to factors aforementioned elsewhere in this study including feeling of academic neglect, isolation and frustration and the current study has attempted to find out.

In Kenya, Njoroge and Nyabuto, (2014) did a study on Discipline as a Factor in Academic Performance in Ruiru District, Kiambu County. They issued questionnaires and interviews to 132 participants who included Principals, Deans of Studies and Students. They found that indiscipline in schools is caused by school factors like lack of support services like guidance and counseling, poor food quality, lack of enough learning materials, poor teacher-student relationship, ignoring students complains, and unresponsive administration. The societal factors include: peer pressure, low self-esteem, drug abuse and lack of role models. The effect of indiscipline in schools leads to time wastage for both the indisciplined and disciplined students, affects the teacher-student relationship, and disrupts learning environment and the overall effectiveness of the school and the education system (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014; Waithaka, 2017; Mugambi, 2015). However, their study concentrated on general performance of the school while the current has concentrated on academic low-achievers.

Indiscipline also leads to low-achievement among the learners causing it and the resultant ripple effect affects the innocent students learning and the overall academic performance. In case of riots, injuries and even deaths have been reported (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014). They concluded that discipline is a vital ingredient for the success of students' academic performance, both in and after school and that the major challenge to indiscipline problems lies in the hands of the school management, the students and the parents. They recommended implementation of the necessary guidelines and policies that can effectively handle most of indiscipline cases, a

suggestion shared by Waithaka, (2017). This current study has attempted to find out whether academic low-achievers are also indisciplined.

In another study by Waweru, (2012) on Analysis on factors influencing academic performance among secondary schools in Embakasi Division of Nairobi Province revealed that the common indiscipline behaviors included lateness in school, use of 'sheng' language instead of English, not obeying the bells, unexplained absenteeism, drug abuse, involvement in sexual relationships and involvement in anti-social gangs. These indiscipline behaviors led to loss of instructional time (for both the perpetrators and other students), emotional imbalance and poor relationship with teachers and parents which affected academic performance negatively. Most of the above studies did not show the underlying factors to these indiscipline behaviors and this study has attempted to find out whether the students misbehave due to lack of necessary support both in and out of class and suggest strategies to be used in order to reverse the trend.

2.6 Measures to Be Put into Place to Address the Problem of Academic Low-achievement in Kandara Sub-County.

Reversing low-achievement should be the top priority of all stakeholders involved as the effects of low-achievement are long term; they manifest themselves even in the labor market in the future, where many academic low-achievers become unemployed or stuck in low-wage, unstable or informal sector jobs (World Bank, 2018).

2.6.1 Institutional Measures

Appropriate set of learning traits should be emphasized at designated time of school day or week, where students especially the academic low-achievers need to be taught on how to deal with social-emotional problems such as in self-regulation, stress management, empathy, goal-setting as well as interpersonal relationship (Johnson, Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Majzub, &

Rais, 2010). These skills are foundational to academic achievement and they should also be taught to all school staff.

The principal needs to ensure that the low-academic achievers get maximum attention and support. In U.K, according to Dunne et al (2011), strategies in use include: keeping low-attainment groups small to allow more individualized teaching and learning, though the challenge with this is inadequate time and resources; use of teaching assistants, support teachers and learning mentors who work in collaboration with regular teachers to support the low-achievers and experienced and well qualified teachers need to be allocated to the academic low-achievers just as in the rest of the learners. This ensures that the academic low-achievers also get the best teachers to support them. In Kenya, there is a challenge of inadequate teachers, leave alone teaching assistants, Psychologists and support teachers.

Norviewu-Morty, (2012) in Ghana in their study suggested that there should be vigorous monitoring of test results and assignments to ensure students' progress is in track. This could be through assisting learners set goals at the beginning of the year or term and following up to check progress and ensuring that assessment schedules are followed up and after they are done, that teachers revise all the exams. The principal should also ensure intensified instructional and managerial leadership by making sure that teachers keep and use updated professional documents and build teamwork among teaching and non-teaching staff, holding regular staff meetings to discuss strategies for academic improvement especially for academic low-achievers. There should also be strong strategies in place on expectations for success of the students as well as teaching and non-teaching staff, through making it clear to all that the school has high hopes and confidence to perform well in academic and non-academic activities. When everybody feels

supported and valued, their esteem is raised and are motivated to do better (Mwaura, 2010; Kieti, 2017).

The principals should also put strategies in place to monitor school attendance and punctuality by both staff and students to ensure teaching and learning goes on always soon after school opens till the end of the term and year. A study by Reche, et al (2012), in Mwimbi Division, Maara District, revealed that a lot of teaching and learning time is wasted especially at the beginning of the term with majority (55.5%) of the 6 schools studied, starting learning in the second week after the school opens, while 43.5% of the 6 schools starting learning after the first week. When teaching and learning hours are lost, the teachers may not complete the syllabi while some will put pressure on the students on the last minute. In such a case, some learners especially the low-achievers are left behind.

Lack of role models has been shown to result to academic low-achievement since it is associated with low motivation and hopelessness. Therefore, adequate teachers of both genders need to be deployed to schools to act as role models as well as career guides and mentors for both boys and girls as Majzub and Rais, (2010) in Malaysia as well as Katamei and Omwono (2015) in Kenya suggests. Odhong, (2014) suggested that students should be let free to choose among the optional science subjects for better performance. A technologically based curriculum needs to be integrated in day-to-day teaching and learning. According to the study in Malaysia by Majzub and Rais (2010), boys are mostly technologically inclined and therefore technology use raises their motivation to study, is fast so it saves time and attracts the attention of the students. The study also found that more physical activities such as outdoor projects enhance learning in boys. Although the study was on boys, the same may also work well with girls.

Professional development can improve the quality of school management for instance, in Jamaica, the government invested in a school principal training program with key characteristics that led to better management. The program was based on analysis of principals' weaknesses. Principals were trained to provide feedback to teachers on their performance, as well as to use data to evaluate the learning needs of students. The program also provided practical experience (World Bank, 2018). The principal should ensure that teachers get opportunities for professional development by facilitating them attend seminars, workshops, in-service training including KNEC training for examiners, training in co-curricular activities among others. These motivate teachers, and equip them with the latest teaching and learning methodologies which makes them better teachers as well as giving them a chance to advance their careers. Newer and better supervisory techniques developed through research and training when applied, release maximum potentials in teachers (Okumbe, 1998; Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015). Other non-teaching staff also need to be facilitated to get opportunities for professional development. Motivated staff is committed and work effectively and vice versa.

Parents/guardians need to be involved in school programmes including academic clinics, volunteering their services like in motivating the students and specifically, they need to be educated on the meaning of free secondary education as others think that the Government takes care of everything including supplying uniforms, pens, rubbers and allowances among others (Adepoju & Oluchukwu, 2011) which is the same case with some parents/guardians in Kenya. Resources should be mobilized in the school to support effective teaching and learning of all learners and especially among academic low achievers through active partnerships with not just parents/guardians, but also local community. Others include external involvement of politicians, business community, media institutions, governmental and Non-governmental organizations

among others, to support curricular and co-curricular activities in schools (Dunne et al., 2011; Ong'era, 2016; Reche, et al, 2012; Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014; Kingori & Kiumi, 2018; Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015).

2.6.2 Teacher and Classroom Measures

Teacher skills, abilities and personal character influence academic performance of learners in and out of the classroom. They are supposed to organize and direct teaching and learning activities and for them to be able to do that, they need to have a high degree of professionalism, integrity, morality and ethics in their relationship with the learners. They should be warm and approachable by the learners, effective communicators, orderly and knowledgeable in their subjects as Kapur (2018) suggests in his study on Factors influencing the students' academic performance in secondary schools in India. This inspires learners to model them (teachers). When teachers do not show the above characteristics, learners become indisciplined and are not motivated to work hard. Teachers' enthusiasm, emphasis on achievement of students, teachers' clarity in their delivery of lessons to students and constructive criticism of learner's influence students' performance.

Rogers as cited by Chukwu-Etu (2009) in Ghana, maintained that every individual has the potential of doing well if favorable conditions are provided and that teachers can make use of this approach by acting as facilitators whose duty is to create an environment that is conducive for learning and engagement; not putting up too much professional or personal façade when dealing with academic low-achieving students and also teachers need to empathize with the students. This makes them (students) to feel understood thus improve academically.

The students' academic success is partly due to the strategies used by teachers in the classroom and effective teachers are those who manage their classroom well. Mendler, (2000) suggested five key strategies educators can use to inspire unmotivated students which include: Emphasizing effort, creating hope, respecting power, building relationships and expressing enthusiasm. Teachers also need to be committed in their work thus being good role models to students. Some specific methods include: Always rewarding not only for performance but also for hard work through giving positive verbal or written positive comments on the students' exercise books, always reminding learners the importance of education in day to day life, emphasizing on having written goals at subject level and making a follow-up to maintain commitment, making it difficult to fail by increasing the level of difficulty gradually to raise confidence that they can pass and coming up with class rules together to create sense of ownership and a feeling of belonging. This is also supported by Maslow's Theory of needs.

Others include: The use of personal stories or showing personal pictures especially about the teacher when she/he was younger, calling home or leaving messages on call machines with positive comments about the student, using humor when teaching to catch and maintain attention and lastly, seeking students' feedback in a form of evaluation, although the teacher should not take the feedback personally especially if the feedback is negative. The teacher should be ready to do some adjustments from the given feedback (Mendler, 2000; Johnson, et al., 2014).

Students' motivation may be improved through the use of various instructional methods and techniques. It is believed that perennial dismal academic performance by majority of learners is due to use of ineffective instructional strategies by teachers to transfer knowledge to the learners (Adunola, 2011). Research on the effectiveness of the instructional strategies shows that the worth of teaching is reflected by the performance of learners (Ayeni, 2011). Therefore,

teachers are responsible to be conversant with several teaching strategies that can make them transfer knowledge on various concepts to be covered (Ayeni, 2011; Atandi, Gosore & Anyona, 2019).

Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo (2015), carried out a study on Teachers' Classroom Strategy for Enhancing Students' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nandi County in Kenya, used descriptive survey design, used stratified and simple random sampling techniques. They used questionnaires and interview schedules as tools. Principals, Teachers, Students and a County Director of Education participated. The study revealed that the teaching methods used by the teachers in classrooms, managing students' discipline and providing constant feedback through assessment, influences students' performance to a greater extent. Teachers should engage students in a variety of teaching and learning activities to keep them off disruptive behaviors. Teachers ought to focus testing on improving student instruction but not concentrate on failing; students' success should be built on the mistakes they make and the students should be made to understand this (Johnson, et al., 2014). Jepketer, et al., (2015) study used questionnaires and interview schedules as tools while this study has in addition used FGDs for the students to obtain a deeper insight on the study topic. Life skills teaching should be strengthened in schools as they teach students to acquire disciplined work habits, caring attitudes, ability to relate well with others in society, creativity and problem solving which leads to improved academic performance (Katamei & Omwono, 2015). This study has attempted to find out whether life skills are being taught in schools.

2.6.3 Educational Policies

A policy is a statement of commitment or official guidelines given by the government or a school, to undertake specific programmes directed at achieving some goals as mentioned elsewhere in this study. A country should ensure that the curriculum programmes strive to develop 21st century skills as students entering the workforce need better critical thinking and socio-emotional skills which need to be cultivated in school. It is not enough to train learners to use computers, as to navigate a rapidly changing world; they have to interact effectively with others, think creatively, and solve problems. Innovations in developing 21stcentury skills are much needed, but these skills work best in conjunction with strong foundational abilities (World Bank, 2018; KICD, 2016).

There is need for a country to have strong accountability system programs to engage academic low-performing schools and/or academic achievers specifically in improvement efforts. Like in California, one of the High Priority Schools Program (HPSGP) was created by Assembly Bill (Chapter 747, Statues of 2001) to provide funds ($ 400 per pupil with the Districts matching with $ 200 per pupil annually, for three years), to the lowest performing schools in the state. To be eligible for funding, schools must rank in the bottom decile of the state's Academic Performance Index (API). In return, schools have to meet state benchmarks for improved student academic performance. Schools failing to improve, face various sanctions and interventions, including state take over and dissolution. The HPSG schools must participate in state-specified program for teachers and principals, must purchase specified textbooks and also hire external consultants or evaluators to assist in developing school improvement strategic plan. The role of parents and community are also specified. This ensures that schools academic performance improves for all and in such a case the major beneficiaries are the academic low-achievers who would otherwise lag behind.

In UK, Dunne et al., (2011) revealed that some schools offered alternative curriculum programmes either in specific subjects or through a comprehensive vocational programme that included parts of the week outside the school to college or on work-based placements, use of different teaching approaches in low-achievement groups to appeal to different learning styles and to sustain learner motivation, varied testing formats and classroom arrangements as well as feedback were also adopted to enhance learning experiences and outcomes of academic low-achievers. Successful vocational pathways offer good opportunities for academic low-achievers and have been reported by studies in Malawi, USA and Brazil (Word Bank, 2018).

In Nigeria, a study by Ogundele, Sunday and Kola, (2014) in their study on causes of poor performance in Western Africa schools certificate of education (WASCE), found that among teachers, there was lack of recognition, motivation in terms of salary and other incentives and that nobody wanted to become a teacher; no new qualified teacher wanted to teach again and the old ones were moving from teaching professions unlike in Finland where teaching is a coveted profession; teachers are recognized, well paid and respected enough such that the profession attracts capable and intrinsically motivated individuals. This calls for better selection and retention policies for teachers based on some set criteria like a test or apprenticeship for a few years where the best teachers will then be selected (World Bank, 2018). There is need to have effective mechanisms in place for supporting, mentoring and motivating teachers and the teachers on the other hand ought to deliberately apply the skills they acquire from training in the classroom for learning to occur. Learning is maximized when teacher training, both pre-service and in-service needs are individually targeted and repeated with follow-up coaching often around a specific pedagogical technique (Word Bank, 2018; Admassu, 2013). All the above mechanisms can only be implemented if they are first captured at the policy formulation level.

Teaching should be pitched to the learners' individual abilities as studies in some countries like in Australia, Sweden and USA have shown that teachers teach to the most advanced students or the curriculum may be too ambitious for some learners, especially the academic low-achievers. Effective teaching strategies should be targeted to the level of the learner like using community teachers to provide remedial lessons to the lowest performers, reorganizing classes by ability or using technology to adapt lessons to individual learner needs (Word Bank, 2018).

In Malawi, the education system consists of eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school (with Junior Secondary Examination in form 2 and Senior Secondary Examination in form four) and four years of university education (8-4-4). Currently, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) oversees all levels of education. With Free Primary and Secondary Education, Malawi's education is in crisis as Wamba and Mgomezulu, (2014) found out in their study. Although they noted improved access, they observed that prior to the implementation of Free Primary and Secondary Education Programmes there were challenges that were further made worse by the move which included classroom shortage; teacher shortage with pupil teacher ratio of 62:1 in rural areas and 92:1 in urban areas as at the year 2010; poor teacher qualification with teacher training programmes being changed in design, length of time and focus to cater for the supply. Others included lack of equity and access by students with special needs; non-replacement of consumables; insufficient funding, inadequate resources and infrastructure; widespread poverty and health issues which is very similar in Kenya. Another factor which is an important challenge in developing countries like Malawi and Kenya is the dependency trap with 70-80% of education development budget being donor funded as at 2001 (Ng'ambi as cited by Wamba & Mgomezulu, (2014). The authors suggested public-

private partnerships, multi-grade teaching and special attention/support to the girl-child to ensure higher completion and pass rates as solutions to the education crisis in Malawi.

The 8-4-4 curriculum is being used in Kenya in all public Schools with only academic pathway which has many gaps as indicated elsewhere in this study. The gaps include: the curriculum not providing for the necessary pathways apart from the academic pathway thus hindering pursuing of individual interests and talents; the education framework is rigid and does not facilitate entry and re-entry at different levels; some levels in the curriculum are not appropriate for the learners age; the country lack adequate skilled manpower with relevant skills, knowledge and values that will steer the country towards the requirements of The Kenya Constitution and Vision-2030 (KICD, 2016; Republic of Kenya Constitution, 2010; UNESCO, 2017; Republic of Kenya, 2012). However, with the new Competency-Based curriculum (CBC) that was rolled out in 2019 as from class three, four pathways are accommodated: academic, talent development like sports and drama, technical and vocational pathways. This will accommodate for other abilities among the learners apart from academic ability and equip them with the relevant skills, knowledge, values and attitudes in line with Kenya's Constitution and Vision-2030 (KICD, 2016; Republic of Kenya Constitution, 2010). Meanwhile, since the 8-4-4 curriculum is still going on, all stakeholders need to be more supportive of the learners for better academic performance.

The government has in the past handled educational reforms as a political tool rather than a technical process; like in Mackay Commission and 8-4-4 Educational System as supported by Muricho and Chang'ach, (2013) in their study on Education Reforms in Kenya for Innovation. Currently, the new 2-6-3-3-3 system of education was hurriedly rolled out before all the steps were finalized as claimed by Teachers' representatives (Nyamai, 2019). More time was needed

for piloting, training of teachers and preparing instructional materials. The government needs to support educational reforms rather than using education as a tool to achieve its political agenda (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013).

In Pakistan, a study by Noor, Shaque, Meon and Lodhi (2012), found that transfer of teachers suffered political interference especially to more urban good schools and resulted to disturbances to all involved; the teachers, students and schools in general; as some schools which may require replacements may be forced to employ less qualified teachers as government replacements may take time. This is also happening in Kenya as supported by Kurgat and Tanui, (2014) who attributed poor performance to frequent movement of staff through transfers and other factors which affect stability of teachers and learners. They recommended clear policies on transfers to be developed and implemented and teacher empowerment with intrinsic motivation techniques and good career development to deter early retirements and early exit from teaching (Gatemi, & Thinguri, 2018). Extra responsibilities may also lower the teachers' productivity as time to prepare may not be adequate (Nechesa, 2012) unless the teacher is a good planner and committed. In Kenya, the problem is not lack of qualified teachers but the government is unable to absorb them into the job market.

The Government also need to focus more on the quality of Education by investing in well trained teachers, Monitoring and evaluating curriculum implementation, monitoring administration and management of schools, provision of instructional materials and infrastructure development as well as other critical areas like school access, retention and completion not forgetting increasing efficiency in expenditure within educational system (Policy Brief, 2017). The policy on mass promotions of students from one grade to another need to be re-considered-promotions need to be based on prescribed benchmark and any student that fails to

meet the benchmark should not be promoted and this will go a long way to motivate the learners to put more effort in their academics and the end results will be improved quality and standards of education (Adepoju & Oluchukwu, 2011). The policy on extra-tuition also needs to be reviewed as in some schools especially the sub-county day schools all or almost all students are academic low-achievers due to having limited time in school compared to their boarding counterparts and the whole class extra-tuition may be among the best option to academic improvement which may fall over weekends or holidays.

Aminga, (2013) did a study on Determination of provision of remedial lessons in public secondary schools in Manga District, Kenya. He employed descriptive survey design, systematic sampling to obtain 35 teachers and 237 students and used questionnaires. The study revealed that remedials were offered by majority of schools mostly for whole class. He noted that the learners performed better. He concluded that both teachers and learners felt that remedial lessons are good and wished they continue. This study has attempted to find out whether the academic low-achievers are offered remedial lessons or not, their effectiveness as well as whether there are other policies that target performance of academic low-achievers.

2.7 Summary of the Literature Review and the Knowledge Gap

From the reviewed literature, it is clear that most of the studies carried out on achievement in schools concentrate on the general poor performance of all learners, others favor top achievers. This implies that the academic low-achievers whether they are underachieving or not, are a forgotten lot. Furthermore, most studies have been carried out in other regions and very few if any have been done in Kandara Sub-County. This study has therefore assessed the strategies being used to promote learning of academic low-achievers in Public Schools in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County and come up with suggestions for this group of learners.

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) National results at the national level, Murang'a County level as well as in Kandara Sub-County for the last three years, show that around half of the candidates scored mean grades of D and below. This indicates that academic low-achievement is real, thus necessitating for this study to find out whether there are specific strategies that promote learning among these academic low-achievers. Furthermore, the continued low performance in schools, would imply the possibility that most intervention strategies being used do not favor the academic low-achievers hence this study.

Some educational policies provided by the government and the institution itself to guide running of schools play a role in determining academic performance among learners; they ensure that learners attend school and are supported by all the stakeholders to learn. However, some of them especially Free Primary and Secondary (basic Education), prohibition against corporal punishment and mental harassment to learners, prohibition of holiday tuition and policy on repetition and expulsion of learners, work to leave academic low-achievers further behind as they result to large class sizes reducing individualized learner attention.

Also, some policies are good and relevant but they are poorly implemented; like policy on financing FPE and FDSE since they are delayed almost all the time affecting teaching and learning, while in others like curriculum reforms, transfers and deployment of teachers, there is a lot of political interference. This imply that closer monitoring and evaluation of the policies is needed to ensure implementation and reviewing if need be. Furthermore, none of the policies specifically target academic low-achievers. In light of this, this study has attempted to put forward some recommendations on policies that may promote learning among the low-academic achievers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that the researcher used in the study. It is presented, under the following sub-headings: research design, location of the study, target population, sample and sampling procedures description of research instruments, reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted Convergent parallel design under Mixed Methods Approach. It involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches that complemented each other by maximizing the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms while minimizing their weaknesses (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Under quantitative approach, the researcher used cross-sectional survey design. A cross-sectional survey design is a type that entails the collection of data at a single point in time (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). This design enabled the researcher to reach a large population of respondents, providing a wide range of information.

For qualitative approach, Phenomenology was adopted as it focuses on describing the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). For the current study, the phenomenon was academic low achievement that has been experienced by all the involved participants.

3.3 Location of Study

The study was carried out in all Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County. Kandara Sub-County is one of the 8 Sub-Counties of Murang'a County, located about 50 Km from Murang'a town and 22Km from Thika town (See Map on Appendix N). Kandara Sub-County was selected for study because the area is among the Sub-Counties with the highest numbers of academic low-achievers in the past few years compared to the other Sub-Counties within Murang'a County.

3.4 Target Population

Target population refers to all members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research (Borg, Gall & Borg, 1989). For the purpose of this study, the target population encompassed of 6155 participants who included all 56 Principals, all 6042 form three students, all 56 Form three class masters in the 56 Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County and one Quality Assurance and Standard Officer (QASO) for Kandara Sub-County.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

3.5.1 Sample

According to Wellington (2008), a sample is a small part of anything which is intended to stand for or represent the whole. Sampling provides a better option since it addresses the survey population in a short period of time and produces a quick answer; it is more economical as it contains fewer subjects, offers detailed information and has a high accuracy (Orodho, 2009).

Since the study used Mixed Methods Approach, probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used. The determination of the sample size was guided by Gay, (1992) who suggests that at least 10% of the population is a good representation where the population is

large, and 20% where the population is small. A sample of 199 participants was used for this study that included 176 form three students, 11 class masters, 11 principals and 1 Quality Assurance Officer. The sampling techniques used to sample particular target population are explained in the subsequent sections.

3.5.2 Sampling Procedures

Sampling of Schools- A population of 56 secondary schools in Kandara Sub-County is a small sample and according to Gay (1992), the researcher used 20% of the 56 secondary schools which gave 11 secondary schools. The schools were stratified into three categories: Full Boarding Secondary schools, Full Day secondary schools and Mixed Day and Boarding schools. After getting the schools, simple random sampling was used where the names of schools were written on pieces of papers per category, put in a container and the required number picked. Based on the proportional representation of the schools in the Sub-County, 2 schools were selected from Mixed Day and Boarding schools, 7 selected from Full Day secondary schools and 2 selected from Full Boarding secondary schools. Care was taken to ensure one was a boys' school and the other was a girls' school. Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) explains that in stratified random sampling, subjects are selected in such a way that the existing sub-groups in the population are more or less reproduced in the sample. Stratified sampling ensured that all school categories were fairly selected and both genders represented.

Sampling of Students- In each of the 11 selected schools, 16 form three students with average mean grades of D, D- or E in three lastly done major exams were selected purposively. According to Ellis, (2016) suggests that a sample of between 6 to 20 individuals who have a lived experience of the phenomenon is sufficient. The phenomenon for this study is academic

low achievement. Form three students were selected for study since they had been in school for long and had no anxiety and stress of preparing for the KCSE later in the year.

Sampling of Principals- Principals were purposively selected: one per school for the 11 schools since they had relevant information to the study.

Sampling of Form three Class Masters-One form three class Master per school in the 11 schools was purposively selected. They had the information relevant to the study.

Sampling of Sub-County QASO- There is only one QASO in Kandara Sub-County who was purposively selected as he had relevant information required by the researcher.

Table 4

Summary of Sampling Procedures and Sample Sizes

Category of schools/participants	Target population	Sampling procedure	Proposed sample
Full boarding schools	11	Stratified and simple random sampling	2
Full day schools	38	Stratified and simple random sampling	7
Day and boarding schools	7	Stratified and simple random sampling	2
Form three students	6042	Purposive sampling	176(16 per school)
Principals	56	Purposive sampling	11
Form 3 class Masters	56	Purposive sampling	11
QASO	1	Purposive sampling	1

Source: Researcher (2019)

3.6 Description of Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires, in-depth interview guides, document analysis guides and focused group discussion guides. The questionnaires were used to collect information from the form three class masters, while the in-depth interview guides were used to collect data from the principals and the QASO. FGD guides were used to collect data from the form three students.

3.6.1 Questionnaires for Teachers

The questionnaire was used in this study to obtain comparable responses. They contained unstructured open-ended and structured closed questions (Refer to Appendix D). The open-ended questions gave room for own views, while closed questions guided the respondent avoiding irrelevancy and ambiguity. The researcher personally administered all the questionnaires. According to Gay, (1992) a questionnaire is appropriate as it offers an opportunity of establishing rapport with the respondents, explain the purpose of the study and clarify individual items. It also offers an opportunity to express ideas and feelings. Orodho, (2009) affirms that a questionnaire offers an opportunity to collect a large amount of information within a short period of time and the questions are standardized.

The questionnaire contains 5 sections: Section one sought for background information including form three class masters' gender, age category, school type, length of time in teaching profession, length of stay in the current station and professional qualification; Section two sought information on Prevalence of Academic Low-achievers in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County, whether they are many, moderate, few or none; Section Three sought information on strategies currently being used to promote learning of Academic Low-achievers in Schools which included institutional-related strategies, teacher classroom-related strategies, student-related strategies and educational policies.

Section Four highlighted challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to academic low-achievement in schools which included how often the academic low-achievers were interacting with the class master to consult academic issues, whether the level of challenges associated with academic low achievement are high, moderate, low or very low. The class masters were also to indicate the rate at which given challenges occur in the school in relation to academic low-achievement including indiscipline issues, problem of assessment where the teacher has difficulty setting too hard items that may discourage the academic low achievers or too easy to encourage them, whether some academic low achievers underachieve in some subjects and not others, the rate at which academic low-achievers suffer from low self-esteem issues and whether they feel frustrated and/or deprived of resources/ attention. The class masters were also to add any other challenge hindering the effective implementation of the mentioned strategies; Section Five sought information on Measures That Need to Be Put into Place by the Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Academic Low Achievement in Schools including principals, teachers, students, local and national government, the TSC and Ministry of Education to ensure better implementation of the mentioned strategies.

3.6.2 In-depth Interview Guide for Principals

Interviews are advantageous because they offer high response quality, takes advantage of the researcher's presence, it combines questioning, cross-examination and probing approaches. It contained both open ended and closed questions in five sections: Section one sought biographic data including gender, age category, length of being principal, length in the current station, school type and professional qualification; section two captured prevalence of low academic-achievement, section three captured strategies used to promote learning of low-achievers which included institutional-related strategies, teacher classroom-related strategies, student-related

strategies and educational policies ; section four highlighted on challenges facing teachers and low academic achievers in relation to low academic achievement in schools and section five sought information on the measures to be put into place by the stakeholders to address the problem of academic low achievement in schools including principals, teachers, students, local and national government, the TSC and Ministry of Education to ensure better implementation of the mentioned strategies .

3.6.3 In-depth Interview Guide for Sub-County QASO

The interview guide contains both open ended and closed questions in five sections: Section one sought demographic information about the QASO including gender, age category and years in the current station.; section two captured prevalence of low academic-achievers; section three captured strategies used to promote learning of academic low-achievers which included institutional-related strategies, teacher classroom-related strategies, student-related strategies and educational policies; section four captured the challenges facing teachers and low academic achievers in relation to low academic achievement in schools and section five sought information on the measures to be put into place to address the problem of academic low achievement in schools including principals, teachers, students, local and national government, the TSC and Ministry of Education to ensure better implementation of the mentioned strategies .

3.6.4 Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) for Students

A Focused Group Discussion (FGD) is an organized discussion structured in a flexible way comprising of homogenous members of the target participants (see Appendix G). It provides an opportunity for the participants to discuss the topic of study freely and in detail as a group. For this study, the FGD guide comprised of five sections: Section one captured the introduction where the researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of the discussion. This was

done to let the participants be aware and ready to provide the required information; Section two sought information on prevalence of low academic achievement whether they were many, moderate or few. Section three captured on strategies used to promote learning of low academic achievers in the school which included institutional-related strategies, teacher classroom-related strategies, student-related strategies and educational policies section four sought information on challenges facing teachers and low academic achievers in relation to low academic achievement in schools and lastly, section five sought information on measures to be put in place by the stakeholders to address the problem of academic low achievement in schools including principals, teachers, students, local and national government, the TSC and Ministry of Education to ensure better implementation of the mentioned strategies.

3.6.5 Document Analysis Guide

This is the reviewing of existing documents that reveal relevant information for the study (refer to Appendix H). For this study, the researcher used form three performance documents from the class master, to get the list of all the academic low achievers) which indicated the students' mean grades for the latest 3 major exams and their averages for the purpose of extracting the students' sample (See appendix Ia sheet 1; Also, documents showing performance analysis per grade for the latest 3 major exams for purpose of calculating the percentage of academic low-achievers in each school (See Appendix Ib sheet 2). The researcher also sought documents on programmes targeting academic low-achievers like remedial and mentorship programme documents (See Appendix Ic Sheet 3) to determine whether they exist or not. This information was needed for the study.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Instruments

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the topic under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). Wellington, (2008) also defines validity as the degree to which a method, test or research tool actually measures what it purports to measure. Reliability of research instruments is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results, data or information after repeated trials (Orodho, 2009).

3.7.1 Validity of Quantitative Instruments

For this study, validity of quantitative instrument was achieved through regular consultations with experts who included peers and supervisors They also examined the instruments individually, commented and provided feedback throughout the research study Validity was also achieved through triangulation of theories, sources and methods of data collection as the study was grounded on three different theories; data were collected using questionnaires, interview guides, document analysis guides and FGDs from different sources; form three class masters, principals, students and the Sub-County QASO. Validity ensures that the data got is a true reflection of the variable to ensure that the inferences based on such data is accurate and meaningful (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). .

3.7.2 Reliability of Quantitative Instruments

For this study, the reliability of quantitative instruments were achieved by pilot testing of the instrument in two secondary schools which were not among the ones that were studied. Piloting is where one administers some questionnaires to the respondents before the main study in order to check any errors or ambiguity in them. The researcher administered the questionnaires personally, then used split half for pilot testing and then subjected the scores obtained from Likert Scale items to Cronbach Alpha coefficient to determine the degree of correlation or the extent to which the content of the items is consistent.

Table 5

Reliability Coefficient of Quantitative Instruments

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.79
		N of Items	18[a]
	Part 2	Value	.81
		N of Items	18[b]
	Total N of Items		36

The results shown in Table 5 the reliability coefficient for part 1 of the questionnaire was 0.79 while for the part 2 it was .81. Therefore, the quantitative questionnaires were reliable because the reliability coefficients were greater than .70 as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda, (2019).

3.8 Credibility and Dependability of Qualitative Instruments

Credibility involves how well categories and themes cover data; that no irrelevant data is included and no relevant data is excluded (Markve, 2013). Dependability involves how well the findings are steady if the study is repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.8.1 Credibility and Dependability of Qualitative Instruments

Credibility was ensured through regular consultations with education experts who include peers, supervisors and other lecturers in the department where they examined the instruments individually, commented and provided feedback throughout the research study. Credibility was also ensured through triangulation of data collection methods and sources where interview guides, document analysis guides, FGDs in addition to the questionnaires were used together as well as using the participants with the right information required for the study - the Principals, Form three class masters, Students and Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Reliability of instruments ensured that the data got was accurate and relevant for the study.

Dependability was achieved by pilot testing and asking similar and relevant questions for the study using the different research instruments- in the interview guides and FGDs. Dependability of data ensures consistency of findings if the study is repeated.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought a permit from the Department of Postgraduate Studies (PGDE) at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in order to conduct field research (see Appendix J) as well as a permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) to carryout field research (see Appendix M).

The researcher then obtained the relevant permit from the Ministry of Education Office s to carry out the study (see Appendix K). Then the researcher visited the Kandara Sub-County Director of Education office for permission to visit the 11 schools (see Appendix L), then she visited the concerned schools for introduction (See Appendix A) and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher then planned when to administer the questionnaires as well as to carry out the interviews and Focus Group discussions. The actual data collection took place in four phases: In the first phase, the researcher conducted an interview with the Sub-County QASO; In phase two, the researcher went to the concerned schools for document analysis using the documents provided by the Form three class masters for the purpose of obtaining the student sample, percentage of academic low-achievers and determining the programmes specifically directed at promoting learning of academic low-achievers; In phase three, the researcher collected data from the Form three class masters using the Questionnaire for form three class masters as well as carrying out Focus Group Discussions with the sampled form three students; In phase four the researcher conducted interviews with the sampled Principals. Just before the

administration of the instruments, the researcher sought consent from the adults (Refer to Appendix B) as well as assent from the students (refer to appendix C).

The researcher interviewed 1 principal per school (refer to Appendix E) who was purposively selected. It took 25-30 minutes during time appropriate for the respondent.

The researcher interviewed one Sub-County QASO, (refer to Appendix F) who was purposively selected. It took 25-30 minutes during time appropriate for the respondent.

The FGDs for students comprised of 16 students per school purposively selected, and they lasted between 35 minutes to 40 minutes.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedures

After data collection exercise, the questionnaires were indexed and keyed into the computer software Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) for easy access and reference. The raw and output data was preserved and backups created to avoid irreversible data loss. The data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The use of these methods allowed the researcher to obtain more comprehensive data and compensate for limitations of using a single approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2013).

The quantitative data was presented using frequency tables, percentages, graphs and pie-charts. Frequency distribution tables and figures were used to present the analyzed data because they enable the reader to see the trend of the distribution more easily by simply looking at the numbers on the tables. Thematic analysis of qualitative data from in-depth interviews and FGDs was done which involved organizing the data, initial coding of data, reduction of data that overlapped and collapsing the codes to themes and reported narratively in the final report. (Creswell, 2013). The codes used for principals were based on gender like Principal male 1 = PM1, PM2, PM3, PM4, PM5 and PM6. The female principals were coded as follows: Principal

female 1 = PF1, PF2, PF3, PM4 and PM5. Focus Group Discussions were coded as follows: Focus Group Discussion 1 = FGD1, FGD2, FGD3, FGD4, FGD5, FGD6, FGD7, FGD8, FGD9, FGD10, FGD11, FGD12, FGD13, FGD14, FGD15 and FGD16.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Before the actual research study, the researcher sought permits from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) through the Department of Postgraduate Studies (PGDE) at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in order to conduct field research. The researcher then obtained the relevant permits from the Ministry of Education Office at the County level and Kandara Sub-County Director of Education office for permission to visit the 11 schools and got permission to interview the QASO.

In the field, the researcher visited the concerned schools for introduction and permission to use the principals, the form three class masters and the form three students as well as permission to access form three documents for their analysis. The researcher then planned when to administer the questionnaires as well as to carry out the in-depth interviews and Focus Group discussions at a time convenient to the participants and the institutions.

The adult respondents voluntarily signed consent forms while the students signed assent forms after the researcher made them aware that participation was voluntary and also were assured that the information they give would be confidential and anonymous. The researcher ensured this by instructing the respondents not to write their names on the questionnaires. Honesty was safeguarded in all stages of the study. During the writing of the final report, the researcher reported truthfully with honesty bearing in mind that the research study was meant to improve academic achievement of learners. Information from other scholars was duly acknowledged throughout the study to avoid plagiarism.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains presentation of the study findings, interpretation, and discussion of the results. The presentation of the findings starts with the return rate of the research instruments followed by demographic information. This information is critical in understanding the influence of each variable on the assessment of strategies. After the demographic information, the other findings are presented as per the research objectives.

4.2 General and Background Information of the Respondents

The researcher analyzed general and background information of the respondents as follows; research instrument return rate, gender, age category, work experience, years he/she has been in the current station, professional qualification, and school category.

4.2.1 Return Rate of the Research Instruments

The researcher investigated the return rate of the research instruments to determine whether it was adequate for data analysis and in making an informed decision that can go a long way in addressing the challenge of academic low achievers in secondary school level of study. The outcomes are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Return Rate of the Research Instruments

(N=34)

Category	Number of Instruments used	Number of Returned Instruments	Returned Rate (%)
Form Three Students	11	11	100
Principals	11	11	100
Form three Class Masters	11	11	100
QASO	1	1	100
Total	**34**	**34**	**100**

Note: Adopted from Field Data (2022)

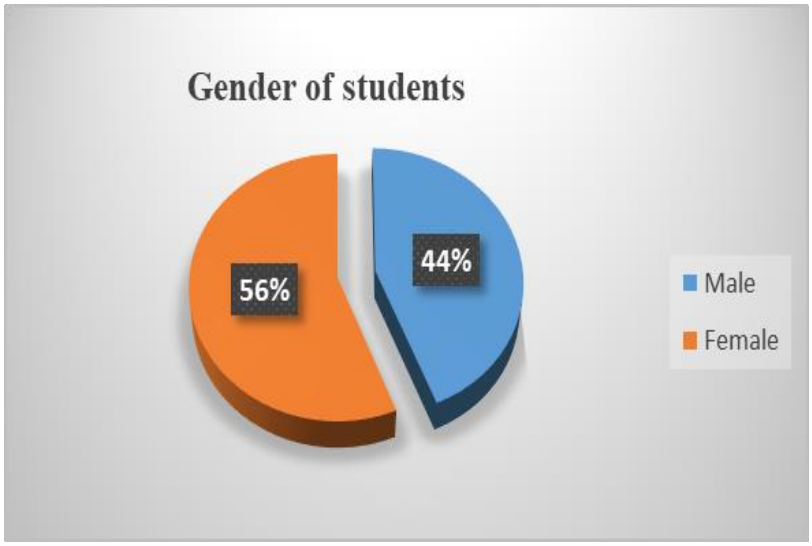
The results in Table 6 shows that there was a 100% return rate on all the instruments used for all the four categories of the respondents, indicating that the participants were cooperative. This was attributed to the fact that the researcher administered the questionnaires to the form three class masters in person, explained to them what the research intended to achieve and either waited for the respondent to complete filling in the questionnaire or agreed when to collect it in person. For the qualitative research instruments (the in-depth interview guides for principals and QASO as well as FGD guides for form three students) the researcher filled in the given information personally. This implies that all the needed information from the participants was included in the final report.

4.2.2 Gender of the Students

The frequencies of the gender of the students were obtained and the results were as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Gender of the Students



The findings indicate that majority of the students who participated in this research were females at 56%. The boys represented 44% out of the 176 students interviewed. This was attributed to the fact that two Mixed Day and Boarding schools were in the process of being made Girls' schools thus females were more.

4.2.3 Gender of the Form three class masters, Principals and QASO

The frequencies of the gender of the form three class masters, principals, and QASO were also analyzed. The findings were as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Gender of the Form three class masters, Principals and QASO

(N=23)

Category	Gender	Frequency	Percent
Form three class masters	Male	4	36.4
	Female	7	63.6
Principals	Male	6	55
	Female	5	45
QASO	Male	1	100
	Female	-	-

Note: Adopted from Field Data (2022)

The female form three class masters were the majority of the respondents in this category with a frequency of seven (63.6%) while four respondents (36.4%) were male implying that a third gender rule in the Kenyan constitution was being followed (Republic of Kenya constitution, 2010). Six male principals (55%) participated in the study while five females (45%) showing a more or less balance between the two gender and only one male QASO participated in the research.

4.2.4 Age Bracket of the Form three class masters, Principals and QASO

The frequencies of the age bracket of the form three class masters, principals, and QASO were also analyzed and the findings were as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Age category of the Form three class masters, Principals and QASO

(N=23)

Category	Age bracket	Frequency	Percent
Form three class masters	26-35	5	45.5
	36-45	3	27.3
	56 and above	3	27.3
Principals	26-35	0	0
	36-45	0	0
	46-55	6	54.5
	56 and above	5	45.5
QASO	26-35	0	0
	36-45	0	0
	46-55	1	100
	56 and above	0	0

Note: Adopted from Field Data (2022)

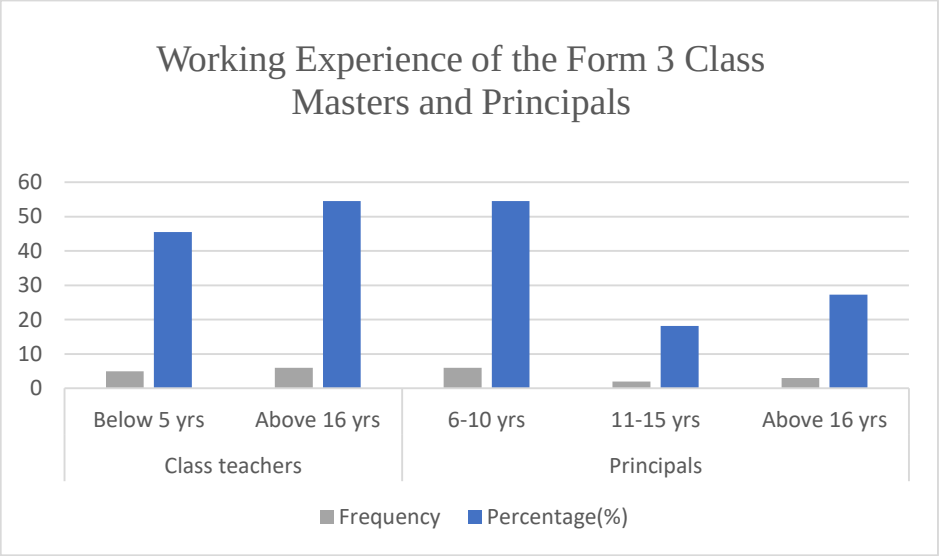
The results in Table 8 indicate that majority of the respondents in the form three class masters category were between the ages of 26 and 35 years representing 45.5%. An equal number of respondents was recorded between the ages of 36-45 and 56 and above at 27% each. In the principals' category, majority (54.5%) were between the ages of 46-55 at 54.5% followed by those aged 56 and above at 45.5%. The QASO was aged between 46-55 years.

4.2.5 Working Experience of the Form three class masters and Principals

The working experience for the principal and form three class masters was also explored. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Working Experience of the Form Three Class Masters and Principals



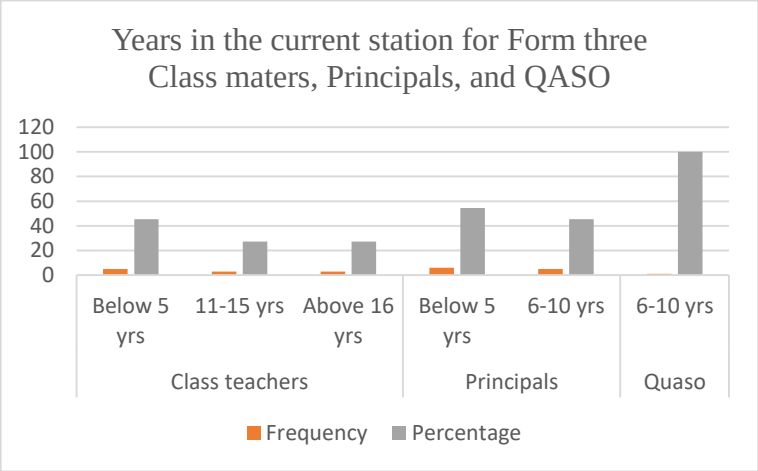
The results in figure 3 show that in the form three class masters' category, six (54.5%) had above sixteen years of working experience against five (45.5%) who had below five years of working experience. The majority of the principals (54.5%) who responded to this question had between 6 - 10 years of working experience followed by those with 16 years and above of working experience at 27.3%. The least were those between 11-15 years of working experience representing 18.2%. This indicates that the form three class masters, Principals and the QASO were highly experienced and in a better position to tackle the issue of academic low achievement.

4.2.6 Years in the Current Station for Form three class masters, Principals, and QASO

The researcher further investigated the years in the respondents had worked in the current station for form three class masters, principals, and QASO. The results of the findings are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Years in the Current Station for Form three class masters, Principals, and QASO



The results in figure 4 indicate that majority of the form three class masters had stayed in the current station below five years at 45.5% followed by those who had stayed between 11-15 years and those who had stayed for more than 16 years in their current stations at 27.3% each. This implies that majority of the class masters had over 11 years in their current stations and therefore had enough experience interacting with the academic low-achievers thus were able to give the required information. For the principals' category, 54.5% had stayed in the current station for less than five years followed by those who had stayed between 6-10 years at 45.5%. The QASO had stayed in the current station for between 6-10 years implying that he had sufficient experience to give information on the study topic.

4.2.7 Professional Qualification of the Form three class masters and Principals

The researcher investigated the professional qualification of the form three class masters and principals. The results were as indicated in Table 9.

Table 9

Professional Qualification of the Form three class masters and Principals (N=22)

Category of Respondents	Professional qualification	Frequency	Percent
Form three class masters	Diploma in Education	0	0
	Degree in Education	11	100
	Masters	0	0
	PhD	0	0
Principals	Diploma in Education	0	0
	Degree in Education	0	0
	Masters	11	100
	PhD	0	0

Note: Adopted from Field Data (2022)

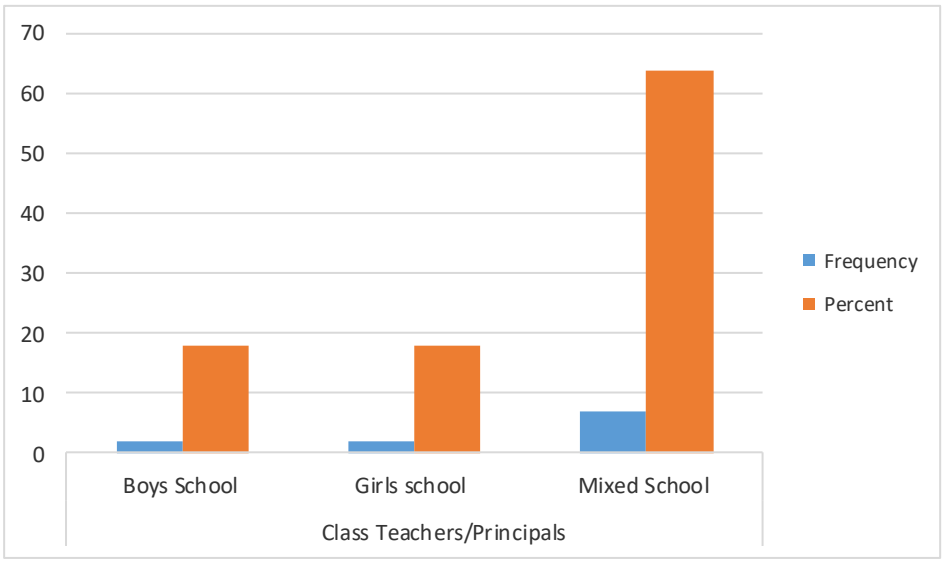
All the principals who participated in this study had Masters Degrees and all the form three class masters had degrees in education. The results indicate that the principals as well as the form three class maters were all qualified to address the issue of academic low-achievement.

4.2.8 School Category of the Form three class masters and Principals

The research sought to find out the type of school categories involved in the study. This was done to ascertain whether they were from boys' schools, girls' schools, or mixed schools. The results are indicated in Figure 5

Figure 5

School Category of the Form three class masters and Principals



From Figure 5, the outcomes reveal that most of the form three class masters were from mixed schools represented by 64% followed by those from boys' school and girls' school each at 18% of the form three class masters. The principals registered similar results where the majority of the respondents were from the mixed schools at 64% followed by those from boys' schools and girls' schools at 18%. This is a clear indication that most of the principals and form three class masters were from full day schools as they formed majority of schools in the Sub-county.

4.2.9 Type of School of the Form three class masters and Principals

Further categorization on the school type was also done to establish whether the form three class masters and principals who responded to the research instrument were from full boarding, full-day, or day and boarding schools. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Type of School of the Form three class masters and Principals

(N=22)

Category of Respondents	Type of School	Frequency	Percent
Form three class masters	Full boarding	2	18
	Full day schools	7	64
	Day and boarding	2	18
	Total	**11**	**100**
Principals	Full boarding	2	18
	Full day schools	7	64
	Day and boarding	2	18
	Total	**11**	**100**

Note: Adopted from Field Data (2022)

The results in Table 10 show that majority of the form three class masters and principals were from the full-day schools each represented by 64% as these schools are the majority in the Sub-county. The form three class masters from full boarding and day and boarding schools were represented 18% in each category.

4.3 Prevalence of Academic Low-Achievers in Public Secondary Schools

The researcher investigated the prevalence of academic low achievers in public schools to answer the first question of this study. Table 11 shows the results from the analysis done.

Table 11

Prevalence of Academic Low-Achievers in Public Secondary Schools

(N=11)

Prevalence	Frequency	Percent
Many	6	54.5
Moderate	5	45.5
Few	0	0
None	0	0
Total	**11**	**100.0**

Note: Adopted from Field Data from the form three class masters (2022)

The results in Table 11 show 54.5% for many and 45% for moderate prevalence rates for academic low achievers while few and none categories of academic low-achievers prevalence rate had 0% respectively. This implies that the prevalence rate of academic low-achievers was high. The results were also confirmed by all the principals, the students and the QASO that many students scored low grades. One principal was quoted saying that 'It is so sad that majority of form three students in this school score D, D- or E' (PM5, interview, 11th January 2022). Another Principal said, 'I am quite new in this school and am shocked that so many form threes score these grades (D, D- and E)…' (PF2, interview, 21st January, 2022).

4.3.1 Percentage of Students with Grade D to E in the Studied Schools

The researcher investigated the percentage of students with grades D to E in the schools studied and the findings are presented in Table 12a and Table 12b.

Table 12a

Percentage of Students with Grade D to E per Category of Studied Schools

School code	Mean percentage of students who got mean grades of D, D- or E in their 3 currently done major examinations	Category of school
A	88.40	Pure Day
B	52.7	Pure Day
C	20.1	Mixed Day and Boarding
D	3.26	Full Girls' Boarding
E	18.8	Full Boys' Boarding
F	28.9	Mixed Day and Boarding
G	50.8	Pure Day
H	33.8	Pure Day
I	38.9	Pure Day
J	70.0	Pure Day
K	53.4	Pure Day

Note: Adopted from form three document analysis (2022)

Table 12b

Range between Minimum and Maximum Percentage of Students with Grade D to E in the Studied Schools

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Percentage of Students with grade D, D- or E in the sampled schools	3.26%	88.40%	51.74%

Note: Adopted from form three document analysis (2022)

The Table 12a and Table 12b show results from document analysis of form three students. Results from Table 12a show percentage of students with grade D to E per category of studied schools. They show that Full boarding schools have low percentage of students with grade D to E, followed by mixed day and boarding schools while pure day schools have the highest percentage of students with grade D to E. These are further confirmed by results in Table 12b showing the range between minimum and maximum percentage of students with grade D to E in the studied schools.

The minimum percentage of the students with grade D, D- or E in the sampled 11 schools was 3.26 while the maximum was 88.40. The mean score stood at 51.74 indicating that the majority of the students scored grade D to E. The researcher noted that the school with the highest percentage of academic low-achievers was a full day secondary school while the one with the lowest percentage of academic low-achievers was a full boarding Girls' secondary school. This implies that full day schools students likely suffer more challenges including lack of extra time to study as well as having lower aspirations to succeed in academics thus hindering effective implementation of strategies to promote their learning than in full boarding schools and this agrees with a study by Kingori and Kiumi (2018) in their study on School location, school type and students' academic aspiration. The case of public secondary schools in Laikipia County. It is therefore evident that the prevalence rate of academic low-achievers was high. The QASO also confirmed that many students scored low grades based on the reports received at their office.

4.4. Strategies Used to Promote Learning of Academic Low-Achievers in Kandara Sub-County

The second objective of this study was to investigate the strategies being used to promote learning of academic low-achievers. The researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data to establish the strategies used to promote learning of low academic achievers.

The researcher collected quantitative data from the form three form three class masters using questionnaires. Data on the strategies being used to promote learning of academic low-achievers were collected using Likert scale and analysis done to generate frequencies. Institutional-related strategies, teacher and classroom-related strategies, and student-related strategies were all analyzed and the results were as presented.

a) Institutional Related Strategies

When the form three form three class masters were asked whether they receive any training on how to handle the academic low-achievers apart from the main career training, 3(27.3%) indicated that they were receiving training while 8(72.7%) indicated that they were not receiving any training apart from the main career training. This implies that the ministry of education has not put in place measures to help the teachers on how to handle the academic low achieving students. When they were asked on how intensified the monitoring of the use of teachers' professional documents in their schools by the principal is, 6(54.5%) indicated that the monitoring was very intensive while 5(45.5%) indicated that the monitoring was fairly intensive. These findings indicate that the principals are doing their jobs as expected in monitoring their teachers on the use of professional documents.

On how well developed teamwork is among the staff and learners, as well as among learners in promoting learning by academic low achievers, 6(54.5%) indicated that it was very well developed while 5(45.5%) indicated that it was fairly developed. This implies that there is

still room for improvement concerning teamwork among staff and learners as well as among learners in promoting learning by academic low achievers. When asked how often life skills are taught in form three-class, 8(72.7%) of the respondents indicated that it was taught sometimes while 3(27.3%) indicated that it was always being taught. This implies that Life skills are rarely taught despite being time tabled. This was confirmed by an excerpt by one of the Principal as follows:

> In the course of monitoring teaching and learning, I realized that life skills lesson is rarely taught by the concerned teachers as they either teach other subjects that they teach in those classes, give out to other teachers who go teach any other subject or ask the learners to utilize the lesson for personal studies (PF2, 21st January, 2022).

When asked whether any programmes specifically targeted learning of academic low-achievers such as remedial or mentorship in schools, 6(54.5%) of the form three class masters indicated the existence of such programmes while 5(45.5%) indicated the non-existence of such programmes. This implies that more sensitization should be done on the existence of such programmes that specifically target academic low-achievers to ensure that all the academic low achieving students as well as teachers are fully informed and involved. Those who indicated the existence of programmes targeting academic low-achievers were further required to identify the different types of programmes adopted. They mentioned the use of individualized attention, remedial, mentorship and revision of all topics from form one to four as some of the programmes being used. If more programmes that target academic low-achievers are effectively implemented and others introduced, then academic low-achievement would decrease drastically.

Having family groups was also another Institutional-related strategy being used where students are assigned different teachers to be discussing strategies to improve academics in schools as confirmed by an excerpt by one of the principals as follows:

> Our school has well working academic families where each teacher is given a group of students to be mentoring. In the families, students are encouraged to study together and have discussion groups where they make use of revision materials and past papers. This way, the academic low-achievers are boosted to work harder."(PM4, January 19th 2022).

Peer teaching was another strategy identified. According to the respondents, the more competent students are allowed to teach the others. It is also easy for the learners to work with peer teachers since they can interact freely with each other and learn from each other hence boosting academic performance for low-achieving students. Purchase of adequate revision materials for academic low-achievers was also being used in an effort to boost their morale and raise their self-esteem. They are able to revise on their own with peers hence improving on their academic performance. Timetabling of remedial lessons was another strategy highlighted. This ensures that the weak areas for academic low achieving students are taken care of and areas of interest given more attention hence boosting their performance. The institutions also organize workshops and seminars for the teachers where they are equipped with new skills on how to handle all learners; not academic low-achievers specifically. Such sessions help teachers in identifying and finding solutions to the learning challenges among the students. Organizing clinics for students who score D and below was also highlighted. During such clinics, the teachers and parents/guardians attempt to identify reasons behind their underperformance and propose ways that help these students to deal with underachievement. The use of a reward

system for all the most improved students including those that score grade E, help in motivating all students was also used although in some schools the most improved student reward is pegged on the University entry grade (C+) which disadvantages most of academic low achievers, demotivating them from working hard in academics.

The researcher further investigated the level of agreement from the respondents on the various statements on institutional-related strategies on a Likert scale. The levels of the agreement included (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) not sure, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. The outcomes are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Response on Institutional-Related Strategies Promoting Learning of Academic Low-Achievers

(N=11)

Statement	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Not sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Mean**	***SD***
Lack of teacher in-service training is the major cause of academic low achievement	-	45.5%	27.3%	27.3%	-	3.18	0.87
Teacher professional development go hand in hand with improved achievement of academic low-achievers	18.2%	81.8%	-	-	-	4.18	0.40
Unconducive school environment affects the achievement of academic low achievers	18.2%	81.8%	-	-	-	4.18	0.40
Poor teacher motivation contributes to academic low achievement in this school	40%	60%	-	-	-	4.45	0.52

Note: Adopted from Field Data by Form three Class Masters (2022)

The results in Table 13 show lack of teacher in-service training as the major cause of academic low achievement as 45.5% of class masters agreed followed by those not sure and those who disagreed at 27.3% each. The mean score for the responses was 3.18 while the standard deviation was 0.87.This implies that there is need for regular in-service training through workshops and seminars to train teachers on new strategies to apply during curriculum implementation.

The second statement stated that teacher professional development goes hand in hand with the improved achievement of academic low achievers. Majority 9(81.8%) of the respondents agreed with this statement while 2(18.2%) strongly agreed. The mean score was 4.18 while the standard deviation stood at 0.40. These findings implied that the majority of the respondents felt that when professional development is undertaken, academic low-achievement will be reduced in schools as indicated by the mean score of 4.18.

On whether an unconducive school environment affects the achievement of academic low achievers, 9(81.8%) of the respondents agreed to this statement while 2(18.2%) strongly agreed. The mean score stood at 4.18 indicating that the environment at school and in the classrooms need to be conducive for learning as they result lower cases of disruptions, greater order and direction, improved discipline and all these encourage focus among learners thus higher academic achievement. These roles that are facilitated by the school principal thus poor leadership lead to poor academic performance by learners while sound leadership translates to high academic performance.

The statement that poor teacher motivation contributes to academic low achievement in the school was also tested on a Likert scale to determine whether it was a factor influencing the academic performance of academic low achievers. The majority of the respondents (60%) agreed

to this statement while 40% strongly agreed. The mean score stood at 4.45 while the standard deviation was 0.52. These findings imply that motivating teachers is a strong motivator for them to dedicate more time with the academic low-achievers as majority of these learners need extra time with the teachers and motivated teachers are more productive.

b) Teacher and Classroom Related Strategies

When the form three class masters were asked how they relate teacher classroom teaching strategies to the achievement of academic low-achievers, 9(81.8%) indicated the existence of moderate relationship while 2(18.2%) indicated high relationship. None of the respondents indicated low relation, no relation, or uncertain relation. This indicated that there is a relationship between the teacher teaching strategies and academic performance and varied teaching strategies need to be applied by teachers to improve learning.

On how often they use new teaching strategies geared towards improving the learning of academic low-achievers, the majority of the respondents 6(54.5%) indicated that it was used every week while 5(45.5%) indicated that it was used on every lesson. No respondent indicated the use of the strategies monthly, quarterly, annually, or not at all. This implies that the teachers use new strategies often. This may imply that even if the teachers apply new strategies now and then, they may not be effective for academic low-achievers. This calls for patience to understand individual academic low-achievers to determine what works best for them.

When the form three class masters were asked whether they set performance pass marks for academic low-achievers, 8(72.7%) responded positively while 3(27.3%) did not set performance pass marks for academic low-achievers. Since majority set pass marks and the performance is still low, it may imply that the process of setting up the pass marks and follow-ups need to be revised to ensure gradual improvement among this group of learners. The researcher further

sought the opinion of the teachers on the level of content mastering among academic low-achievers, 8(72.7%) indicated moderate content mastery while 3(27.3%) indicated very low mastery content implying that they need more time to grasp the content which then calls for extra time for teacher-student interaction.

The researcher further investigated the level of agreement from the form three class masters on the various statements on teacher and classroom-related strategies using a Likert scale. The levels of the agreement included (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) not sure, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. The results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Teacher and Classroom-Related Strategies to Improve Academic Achievement of Low Achievers

(N=11)

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Classroom teaching strategies	45.5%	54.5%	-	-	-	4.45	0.52
Teachers' training	-	54.5%	45.5%	-	-	3.54	0.52
Motivation	27.3%	72.7%	-	-	-	4.27	0.46
Teacher's preparedness	-	100%	-	-	-	4.00	0.02

Note: Adopted from Field Data from Form three Class Masters (2022). *Key:* Standard Deviation (SD)

The results in Table 14 indicate that 6(54.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that teachers' classroom teaching strategies influenced the achievement of academic low achievers, while 5(45.5%) strongly agreed. The mean score obtained from the analysis of the

responses was 4.45 and the standard deviation from the mean was 0.52.This imply that teachers' classroom teaching strategies is a strong influencer of the achievement of academic low-achievers and therefore teachers need to be familiar with a variety of strategies that work best with their learners and utilize them effectively for better academic achievement. The use of varied teaching methods ensures that many students are reached at their level of understanding and that the teachers accommodate all the learning needs of the students. Varied teaching methods also help the students understand a topic or a sub-topic in different ways which help them to boost their academic performance.

In some schools, timetables for the remedial classes had been developed to ensure the balancing of all subjects. It also helps in giving more attention to the poorly done subjects amongst the students translating to improved academic achievement. When asked whether the teachers' training was key to improving the achievement of academic low achievers, 6(54.5%) of the respondents agreed with this statement while 5(45.5%) were not sure whether the teachers' training was key to improving the achievement of academic low achievers. The mean score stood at 3.54 and the standard deviation was 0.52 indicating that majority of the respondents felt that teachers' training through workshops and seminars had an influence on academic achievement of learners. This imply that the teachers need to be facilitated to attend them for improved performance and implement what they learn in those trainings.

On whether motivating academic low-achievers in and out of class was key to promoting their performance, 8(72.7%) of the respondents agreed with this statement while 5(27.3%) strongly agreed. The mean score stood at 4.27 while the standard deviation was 0.46. This shows that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement indicated by the mean score leaning towards five (5). This imply that motivated academic low-achievers are likely to be

more focused to learn, be hardworking, disciplined which translates to improved performance. When asked whether teacher preparedness (with professional documents) promotes achievement among academic low-achievers, 100% of the respondents agreed with this statement with a mean score of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.02 implying that teacher preparedness is the key to promoting learning among the academic low-achievers. The QASO also agreed to the fact that a good teacher takes his/her time to prepare well before teaching so that the delivery is clear, organized and effective (QSO, Interview, 7th January, 2022).

It was also noted that heads of departments hold meetings at least once a term to discuss low performance and follow up on class attendance registers was being done. However, it was noted that academic low-achievers are rarely allowed to attend external symposiums and debates as sentiments from the students confirmed from the following excerpt:

> In form one there was a Science Symposium in a neighboring school and I was very interested to attend but I never got a chance though am good at Biology, only because my overall grade is not good. I got so frustrated that I almost hated Biology. Thanks to my Guidance and Counselling teacher, as she helped me get through it. (FGD7, 12th, January, 2022).

This imply that if these learners are given opportunities to attend external symposiums and debates, they would be more motivated to learn and perform better.

c) Student Related Strategies

The researcher also investigated the student-related strategies being employed by the academic low achieving students to boost their academic performance. Table 15 presents the rates at which some student-related strategies are used.

Table 15

Rate of Using Some Student-Related Strategies Promoting Learning of Academic Low-Achievers

(N=11)

Statement	Very Often		Often		Rarely		Not at all	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Creating time for discussion with the teacher.	0	0	3	27.3	8	72.7	0	0
Following of a personal academic timetable	9	81.8	0	0	0	0	2	18.2
Engaging in extra academic work and taking to teachers for marking	0	0	3	27.3	8	72.7	0	0

Note: Adopted from Field Data from Form three Class Masters (2022)

The results in Table 15 show that (8)72.7% rarely created time to discuss their academic matters with the teachers, while (3)27.3% often created time to discuss with their teachers. None of the students met with their teachers very often to discuss academic matters with their teachers and some of the students do not meet with their teachers at all. These findings imply that there is little effort amongst the academic low-achievers to meet with their teachers to discuss their academic matters.

On whether the academic low-achievers had and followed their academic timetables, 9(81.8%) had and followed their timetables while 2(18.2%) were not sure. This information contradicted the information given by majority of the learners in the FGDs who admitted to own personal timetables but rarely follow them as confirmed by the following excerpt from one of the learners:

> I have a very nice timetable that we were forced to make by our class teacher, though I have never used it because I never get time to do it as I am in a day school, I come from far so I usually leave home early and go back late, I have to do home chores and have time to rest (FGD7, 12th, January, 2022).

This imply that learners have well drawn timetables but rarely follow them. There is need to make learners understand the importance of these personal timetables, in order to own and follow them for their own good.

When asked how often do academic low-achievers do extra work and take to their teachers for marking, 8(72.7%) rarely did, while 3(27.3%) often did it. This implies that majority of academic low-achievers do not do extra work and take to the teachers for marking. A sentiment that was confirmed by most of the Principals with one being quoted saying, 'These learners (academic low achievers) are mostly lazy and hate working (hard), so it is very rare for them to do any extra work above what they are required to do'. A number of learners in FGDs also admitted not to do any extra work as indicated by the excerpt by one of the learners:

> Teachers in this school give us a lot of work that completing it is a challenge, we even never get time to relax and do our own things. I wonder if anyone can do any extra work and take to teachers for marking. Even during the weekend, there is hardly any free time (FGD7, 12th January, 2022).

The researcher further investigated the level of agreement from the respondents on the extent to which they agreed with student-related strategies statements using a Likert scale with levels of the agreement being (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) not sure, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. Their responses are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Likert Scale on Student-Related Strategies

(N=11)

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Not hardworking	27.3%	72.7%	-	-	-	4.27	0.46
Indiscipline.	-	81.8%	-	18.2%	-	3.63	0.81
Not focused in their studies	-	72.7%	-	27.3%	-	3.45	0.93
Unmotivated to learn.	-	27.7%	-	72.7%	-	2.54	0.93

Note: Adopted from Field Data from Form three Class Masters (2022). *Key:* Standard Deviation (SD)

The results from Table 16 show that 72.7% of the form three class masters agreed with this statement that academic low-achievers were not hardworking in their schoolwork while 27.3% strongly agreed with the same statement. The mean score was 4.27 while the standard deviation was 0.46. This implied that the majority of academic low-achievers are not hardworking in their studies thus the low grades which confirms that the rate at which they do extra work is low (also see Table 15). On whether the academic low-achievers are likely to be indisciplined, 81.8% agreed with this statement while 18.2% disagreed. The mean score stood at 3.63. This imply that academic achievement go hand in hand with discipline. In most cases, when learners are indisciplined, they lose learning time as they are disrupted physically and emotionally when dealing with the indicipline, resulting to low academic achievement.

When asked whether academic low-achievers were not focused in their studies, 72.7% agreed with this statement while 27.3% disagreed. The mean score was 3.45 indicating that majority felt that these learners are not focused in their studies. This imply that improved performance require focus by the learners which is minimal among this group of learners. On

whether the academic low-achievers were unmotivated to learn, 72.7% disagreed with this statement while 27.3% agreed that they were unmotivated to learn. The mean score obtained was 2.54 indicating that the majority of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The standard deviation was 0.93. This imply then that academic lo achievers are not necessarily unmotivated, only that their motivation may not be in academics. It is therefore the role of the teachers to work together with these learners and direct their motivation to learning. A finding consistent with the study by Good and Brophy, (2008) who found out that academic low-achievers are highly motivated to learn but in other areas apart from school work. It is therefore the obligation of teachers to tap this motivation towards academic learning.

Other student-related strategies that were highlighted include the use of weekly Random Assessment Tests, group discussions and mixed ability groups amongst the students. This ensured that the low achieving students were kept on their toes and got an opportunity to ask questions and get explanations on the language they understand well from their peers. This category of students was noted to receive encouragement often but had negative attitude towards academics. Respondents including the learners themselves also noted that although the academic low-achievers are reminded, encouraged and even pushed to be focused, hardworking, self-motivated and inspired, majority fail to do so due to various factors, some from home, resulting to academic low-achievement. Therefore the learners need to understand that they have a role to play as stakeholders in education, they need to seek help when necessary, listen and implement on given guidance for better academic achievement.

d) Educational Policies

A policy is a statement of commitment or official guidelines given by the government or a school, to undertake specific programmes directed at achieving some goals as mentioned elsewhere in this study.

On Free Primary/Secondary Education (FPE/FSE), 100% of the respondents stated that it ensures that learners are always present in school to acquire skills. This implies that many academic low-achievers stand high chances of actually being left behind. Although good as it ensures students attain basic education, it has resulted to overcrowding of schools, putting pressure on all resources especially classrooms, libraries, laboratories, dorms, teaching staff among others. This agrees with the study by Muricho and Chang'ach, (2013) which revealed that large class sizes created by the 100% transition policy reduce the effectiveness of teaching and learning as different learners have different abilities including those with very low entry behavior. All respondents also noted that the problem is made worse by the delayed release of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) funds by the government as many operations are affected as confirmed by an excerpt from one Principal:

> The dispatchment of FDSE funds to schools in most cases delay, and this affects school operations directly. Like last term, it was so serious that we almost released the learners to go home for some days as no supplier was willing to supply anything (PM2, 21st January, 2022 interview)

This implies that delays in release of FDSE funds have serious implications in the day to day running of the schools.

On the effects caused by the transfer of teachers, 100% of the respondents indicated lack of continuity of syllabus coverage, 73% stated it affected consistency of follow up since new teachers take time to know them and 91% stated that it could contribute to poor performance. This imply that although transfers are normal and sometimes even necessary, they may have long term implications on academic performance of learners especially the low achievers as they may take time to recover the change of teachers. It also has implications to stability of institutions as well as teachers themselves. The transfer of teachers have more or less effects as deployment of teachers. On deployment of teachers, 100% of the respondents noted that the time taken to adjust by new teachers affect performance and 64% indicated it affects the consistency of follow up since the new teachers as well as the students take time to adjust which affects performance negatively. On the introduction of the TPAD, 100% stated its effects include; teachers are able to organize their lessons better, 55% stated that the performance indicators assist teachers in identifying the time takers, 64% said it helps teachers to be well prepared to assist academic low-achievers and 91% said it helps in better teacher content delivery and one Principal confirmed this by having only positive things to say about TPAD from an excerpt:

> TPAD came to help teachers to become organized in preparation, delivery and even record keeping. It encourages all of us (teachers) to collaborate well with other teachers, academic agencies and communities. When it was introduced it had many challenges but over time the experts keep on improving it, making it friendlier to fill and use (PM1, 19th January 2022)

Though, some respondents noted that TPAD involves a lot of paper work and requires a lot of time and commitment on the side of the teachers as one principal observed in an excerpt:

> Some of my teachers keep complaining of the work involved in filling the TPAD; that it is involving and full of challenges associated with digital resources like network challenges and cost of bundles. But I keep on encouraging them to embrace the new norm of the digital era. Nowadays, most of my teachers have gotten used to it (PF4, 20th January, 2022).

On the school policy on discipline, 100% of the respondents indicated that learners have more time for studies, when students are disciplined, 100% said it becomes easy for the teacher to handle even the academic low-achievers, 91% said it motivates learners to be disciplined, and 100% of the respondents said it creates a conducive environment for learning. On the school rules and regulations, 100% of the respondents indicated that they are good as they keep the learners well guided, 100% said it helps in maintaining discipline, and 55% indicated it directly improves academic performance. All the principals stated that local administration was being brought on board to assist in drug and substance abuse issues and rioting amongst the students.

All respondents also noted that they were not aware of any policies that specifically target academic low-achievers. This implies that there is need for the policy makers to come up with policies that will cater for this category of learners. There is also need for a country to have strong accountability system programs to engage academic low-performing schools and/or academic achievers specifically in improvement efforts like in California, a program known as High Priority Schools Program (HPSGP) was created by Assembly Bill (Chapter 747, Statues of 2001) to provide specified funds to the lowest performing schools in the state following a given set of guidelines. The role of parents and community are also specified. This ensures that schools academic performance improves for all and in such a case the major beneficiaries are the academic low-achievers who would otherwise lag behind.

4.5 Challenges Facing Teachers and Academic Low-Achievers in Relation to Academic Low-Achievement in Kandara Sub-County

The researcher also investigated the challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers regarding low academic achievement, by seeking for both qualitative responses from the principals, Students and the QASO as well as quantitative responses from the form three form three class masters.

Responses from the form three class masters were collected to establish how common the challenges were amongst students where a rating scale of 1-5 was used which were: Least common (1), Common (2), Neutral (3), Very common (4), Most common (5) on challenges facing teachers and academic low achievers. The summary on the analysis were given in Table 17.

Table 17

Responses on Challenges Facing Teachers and Academic Low-Achievers

(N=11)

Challenges	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Indiscipline issues	-	54.5%	-	27.3%	18.2%	2.64	0.81
Difficulty on assessment	54.5%	27.3%		-	18.2%	1.82	1.17
Underachievement in some subjects and not others	-	45.5%	-	27.3%	27.3%	3.09	1.30
Low self-esteem issues	-	-	-	54.5%	45.5%	3.45	1.30
Feeling of frustration and/or deprivation of resources/ attention	27.3%	-	-	45.5%	27.3%	3.45	1.63

Note: Adopted from Field Data from Form three Class Masters (2022). *Key:* Standard Deviation (SD)

Results in Table 17, show that in indiscipline issues, majority of the respondents indicated that indiscipline was a common phenomenon at 54.5% followed by those who said that it is a very common challenge at 27.3%. The minority indicated that the challenge is the most common amongst the students at 18.2%. The mean score was 2.64 and the standard deviation was 0.81 implying that the challenge was a very common challenge among academic low-achieving students and hurt academic achievement as discipline go hand in hand with performance. This outcome is consistent with the results obtained by Usman (2016) in his study conducted in Nigeria as well as studies by Waithaka, (2017) and by Mugambi, (2015) where they found that indiscipline issues led to time wastage for both the indisciplined and disciplined students, affected the teacher-student relationship, and disrupted the learning environment and the overall effectiveness of the school and the education system (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014; Waithaka, 2017; Mugambi, 2015).

On the problem of assessment where the teacher has difficulty setting too hard items that may discourage the academic low-achievers or too easy to encourage them, 54.5% indicated that the challenge is least common, 27.3% indicated that the problem is common, and 18.2% indicated that the challenge is the most common. The mean score was 1.82 indicating that the problem was not common. On the issue of some academic low-achievers underachieving in some subjects and not others, majority (45.5%) of the respondents indicated that it is a common problem followed by those who said the problem is very common and most common, each at 27.3%. The mean score stood at 3.09 and the standard deviation at 1.30 implying that this was a common problem amongst the students, an issue that need to be sorted mainly through guidance by the concerned subject teachers. Students confirmed this by accepting that there are subjects they do very well but fail in others as one was quoted saying ‘I perform very well in History and

Christian Education(CRE) but when it comes to Mathematics and Chemistry, I always get grade D and below, very frustrating (FGD1, 19th January, 2022).

When the low self-esteem-related challenges were tested, 54.5% of the respondents indicated that it was a very common problem amongst the academic low-achieving students who had low self-esteem while 45.5% of the respondents indicated that it was the most common problem. The mean score was 3.45 indicating that this was a common problem. The standard deviation stood at 1.30. When the respondents were asked whether academic low achievers feel frustrated and/or deprived of resources/ attention, the majority of the respondents (45.5%) indicated that this was a very common problem, while 27.3% of the respondents indicated that this was a least common problem and another 27.3% indicated that this was the most common problem. The mean score stood at 3.45. These findings imply that majority of academic low-achievers suffer from self-esteem issues that are reflected in their low-performance.

The teachers faced some challenges including, inadequate support from the policymakers only blame game, some teachers were demoralized, with low capacity to deal with academic low-achievers, and inadequate resources to motivate learners. The students faced some challenges including poverty and ignorance, demoralization, development of low self-esteem, frustrations, low confidence, and low morale. Some of these findings are congruent with the results of studies done earlier. Reiss (2009) reported in his study that some academic low-achievers were aggressive and suffered from low self-esteem making them likely to engage in general misconduct and mostly disturbing other students in and out of class making them unhappy and stressed with others aping their (negative) actions. Reiss reported that such actions made the teachers and parents feel frustrated which agrees with the current study.

The respondents also noted that when academic low-achievers are many in a school, the subject means go low too regardless of the support given by the stakeholders, the teachers are blamed of failing the learners or not doing enough leading to frustrations among the teachers as one principal quoted a teacher who said:

> I work very hard to support them (academic low-achievers) but when the results come out and they perform poorly, am blamed for it. Like last year, I missed on promotions because I teach in a small school and my subjects' means were low. I was asked openly to go work harder and try next time' (PM1, January 19th 2022).

Yet another reported that one teacher said that he now concentrates on the brighter ones as they save on time and perform better and that 'he gave up on using too much time' on academic low achievers (PM4, 20th January, 2022). Other respondents noted that they do not have adequate capacity to deal with academic low achievers because they are rarely taught on how to handle them apart from when they trained back in college as one wrote that no one trains the teachers on how to handle them specifically, one has to be creative' and that when they go to workshops, the trainers are picked from well performing schools where most learners are self-motivated to learn, so they (teachers) are not helped.

Other learners' challenges included poverty and ignorance, low self-esteem, low confidence and low morale amongst the learners. Some of them especially from day schools come from very challenging home environments and it becomes worse if parents/guardians do not value education, they (learners) become chronic absentees due to poverty, home chores, peer pressure and other home challenges leading to academic low achievement. A student was quoted saying:

> In form one my mother (who happened to be single) lost her job and I started missing school due to poverty, and ever since I do not perform well…I help her over the weekend to do casual labor for upkeep and fees, sometimes I miss school due to fee problem and when I return to school, I have a very hard time recovering what was covered when I am away…and we are many of us here in this school' (FGD1, January 19th 2022).

Frustrations are also common. Another was quoted saying, 'I work so hard but never perform well…it makes my family feel so bad and they usually pay fees for my siblings first. It is so frustrating' (FGD1, January 19th 2022).

4.6 Measures Put into Place to Address the Problem of Academic Low Achievement in Kandara Sub-County

The fourth objective of this study was to identify measures being taken to reverse academic low-achievement amongst the students. Both qualitative data and quantitative data were collected.

The researcher used a Likert scale with five levels which included: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) not sure, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. The form three class masters' responses are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Measures to Be Put into Place by Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Academic Low-Achievement

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Retraining of teachers	45.5%	54.5%	-	-	-	4.45	0.52
Motivation of teachers	72.7%	27.3%	-	-	-	4.73	0.46
Provision of conducive school environment	72.7%	27.3%	-	-	-	4.73	0.46
Improved lesson attendance by teachers	72.7%	27.3%	-	-	-	4.73	0.46
Motivation of learners	72.7%	27.3%	-	-	-	4.73	0.46
Individualized attention	72.7%	27.3%	-	-	-	4.73	0.47

Note: Adopted from Field Data from Form three Class Masters (2022). *Key:* Standard Deviation (SD)

Results in Table 18 show that 54.5% of the form three class masters agreed to the statement on whether the provision of teaching skills through training would promote achievement among academic low-achievers, while 45.5% strongly agreed with the same statement. The mean score was 4.45 with a standard deviation of 0.52 implying that adequate training of teachers to cater for the academic low-achievers is necessary, which is the role of the Ministry of Education all the way to the Sub-County Level. The Ministry of Education together with the institutions also need to organize and facilitate teachers to workshops and seminars regularly to equip them on how to handle emerging issues.

On whether motivating teachers financially and/or non-financially goes hand in hand with improvement in the achievement of academic low-achievers, 72.7% of the teachers strongly agreed while 27.3% agreed to these statements. The mean scores stood at 4.73 while the standard deviation was 0.46, indicating that the teachers' motivation may encourage them to take extra time on academic low-achievers supporting better performance. As a Principal was quoted as 'I tried requesting teachers to be coming to school earlier than normal to attend to the academic low-achievers, volunteers were very few until we introduced motivation (PM1, January 19th, 2022). Motivating teachers financially and/or non-financially goes hand in hand with improvement in the achievement of academic low-achievers.

Whether providing a conducive school environment would improve the achievement of academic low achievers in your school, 72.7% of the teachers strongly agreed while 27.3% agreed to these statements. The mean score stood at 4.73 while the standard deviation was 0.46, indicating that the teachers strongly agreed with these statements. This imply that conducive school and class room environment motivate better performance as the set strategies become easier to implement effectively. On whether attending all lessons by the teachers would impact on better performance in academic low-achievers, 72.7% of the teachers strongly agreed while 27.3% agreed to these statements. The mean scores stood at 4.73 while the standard deviation was 0.46, indicating that attending all lessons is necessary so that the teachers never rush the learners when they realize that time is catching up with them.

When asked whether motivating learners verbally and non-verbally in and out of class promotes learning among academic low achievers, 72.7% of the teachers strongly agreed while 27.3% agreed to these statements. The mean scores stood at 4.73 while the standard deviation was 0.46, indicating that motivating the students promotes higher academic achievement among

the low-achievers which is consistent with a study by Good and Brophy, (2014). Motivating learners with rewards regardless of their entry behavior can be a good motivator of higher academic achievement among the academic low-achievers. In some schools, it was noted that rewards only go to top performers while in others, the reward for best improved is determined by the university entry grade (C+) which may end up cutting out all academic low-achievers.

On whether understanding academic low-achievers individually is the key to their academic achievement, 72.7% of the teachers strongly agreed while 27.3% agreed to these statements. The mean scores stood at 4.73 while the standard deviation was 0.46, implying that the teachers need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of academic low achievers and support them perform better. They (teachers) need to display a high degree of professionalism, integrity, morality and ethics in their relationship with the learners in and out of class. They also need to be fair, warm and approachable, show enthusiasm, be patient especially with the academic low-achievers, understand the learners' strengths and abilities individually, orderly and emphasize on hard work and high achievement. This makes them good role models and inspire the learners to work hard in and out of school which is consistent with the study by Kapur, (2018).

When teachers do not show the above characteristics, it makes learners feel demoralized, uncared for, unloved, academically isolated and bitter resulting to academic low-achievement. One student had this to say, 'very few teachers give us (low-achievers) an opportunity to answer questions; they believe we cannot get it right. (FGD1, January 19th 2022).' Another one commented, 'Ever since I raised my hand and got ignored, I never raise my hand any more'. (FGD 14, January 19th 2022) yet another said 'they keep comparing us openly with the brighter ones and it feels very bad' (FGD3, January 19th 2022). Another one noted 'as the

revision books are few, they only give the better performers. Another time I was denied a revision book openly, yet I feel we need these books more than the brighter ones' (FGD6, January 20th 2022). The respondents also agreed that academic low-achievers are rarely given opportunities to attend external debates, symposiums and contests unless internal ones if they are there. This need to change as they also need to be exposed and motivated to perform better. Not to mention that some of them may have special talents especially in debates.

The issue of individualized attention as respondents noted, may be challenging in some schools with high enrollment resulting from FSE/FPE policy. There is need therefore for adequate staffing in schools which is the role of TSC to promote better individualized attention for learners. Transfers and deployment of teachers are necessary and normal but if done poorly, they may end up negatively affecting the stability of learners, teachers and schools in general resulting to poor performance especially among academic low-achievers. This is because replacements take time forcing the learners to stay without teachers while some of the schools are forced to employ temporary ones (BOM teachers). The learners as well as the new teachers also take time to adjust as learner commented in the following excerpt:

> In form one, my chemistry was not very bad but the teacher was transferred, we stayed for a long time before another teacher came to teach us and up to now I have never adjusted to the new teacher, it is my worst subject. (FGD8, January 18th 2022).

Yet another learner added that they stayed for several weeks without a mathematics teacher and that was the beginning of poor performance in the subject (FGD8, 18th January, 2022). This agrees with the study by Kurgat and Tanui, (2014). Furthermore, the respondents suggested the need for support of transferred and deployed teachers to settle down and adjust

quickly. There is need for clear policy guidelines governing transfers and deployments, as some teachers may remain bitter, refuse to adjust or prefer to exit the profession as confirmed by a Principal who gave an example of a colleague who choose to exit the teaching profession after being transferred to a far, remote station. She also said she would do the same (PMF3, Interview, 13th January 2022).

Balancing of staff need to be done as it was noted that some schools are overstaffed in some subjects while others are understaffed. Sometimes such cases result from teacher deployment and transfers. The QASO also confirmed that 'it is possible to have such cases where a school maybe overstaffed in some subjects but understaffed in others' (QSO, 7th January, 2022). An excerpt from a principle also confirmed similar sentiments:

> In my school, Language department is overstaffed while Mathematics Department is understaffed. This happened after my deputy who happened to be from mathematics department was promoted a year ago, the deputy who replaced her is a language teacher. We employed a BOM mathematics teacher to teach as we wait for another TSC teacher to be deployed here (PF2, January 21st, 2021).

This imply that transfer of teachers need to be done on a willing basis or when absolutely necessary to ensure the learners are not disadvantaged.

Having extra tuition for academic low-achievers was noted to be taking place in schools as noted by the respondents, they are good as they create more time for learners to be with their teachers which is consistent with the study by Aminga, (2013) as well as study by Dunne et al. (2011) while investigating the teaching and learning of pupils in the low-achievement category. They identified keeping low-attainment group's small to allow more individualized teaching and learning. They however noted that the challenge with this is inadequate time and resources. They

also reported the use of teaching assistants, support teachers, and mentors who work in collaboration with regular teachers to support the low-achievers and experienced and well-qualified teachers need to be allocated to the academic low-achievers just as in the rest of the learners. This might not be applicable in the Kenyan setup where there is a challenge of inadequate teachers, teaching assistants and psychologists in schools. The issue of holiday tuition came up and most respondents felt that they need to be re-introduced to create more time especially for the academic low-achievers more so for the day schools that have very limited time compared to their counterparts in boarding schools. One Principal concurred with the challenge of time by the following excerpt:

> In my school, which is a day school, there is inadequate time to attend to the needs of this category of learners as they need more time to interact with teachers and that repetition and expulsion do not help academic low-achievers (PM5, interview, 11th January, 2022).

Another principal from a day school also observed that the extra tuition and holiday tuition will do a lot of good to the academic low-achievers as day schools have a disadvantage of time (PM1, January 19th 2022). A learner was quoted saying, 'I wish holiday tuition was there as it will create more time to be with teachers' (FGD13, January 19th 2022). Another observed that 'in extra tuition we are usually fewer and our individual needs are taken care of. It makes us feel we matter when the others (better performers) are not around to tease us and look down on us' (FGD4, January 20th 2022). However, a few learners were against holiday/extra lessons as it exposes them as academic low-achievers as one was quoted saying, 'it exposes us to the others including at home that we are academic low-achievers' (FGD6, January 20th 2022) while another had this to say, 'our remedial lessons involve the whole class, so there is no difference' (FGD7, January 12, 2022).

Involvement of parents/guardians is common in schools as the study revealed, although they need to be more frequent than it is being done as noted by all respondents. However, as reported by a number of respondents, involvement of external agencies is rare in schools and need to be strengthened to mobilize resources in the schools to support effective teaching and learning of all learners and especially among academic low-achievers. This is through active partnerships with not just parents/guardians, but also local community and others like the politicians, business community, Alumni, media institutions, governmental and Non-governmental organizations among others, to support curricular and co-curricular activities in schools (PF3, January 13th; PM1, January 19th, 2022; PM4, January 20th) which is consistent with the studies by Ong'era, (2016) and Kingori and Kiumi, (2018).

The mobilization of resources is necessary especially due to the policy of 100% transition to cater for higher populations in schools. One Principal revealed that the Alumni were actively engaged in the school to support learners especially during Prize giving days and giving motivational talks to encourage the learner's especially academic low-achievers (PM1, 19th January, 2022). Another Principal sadly confessed to trying mobilizing the school Alumni to be involved in school matters but it never yielded any fruits (PF1 January 13th, 2022).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The overall focus of this study was to assess the strategies promoting the learning of academic low achieving students in public secondary schools in Kandara sub-county, Murang'a County, Kenya. The results on the prevalence rate of the academic low-achievers was high. The QASO confirmed with the findings that many students scored low grades based on the reports received at their office. The percentage of students with grades D to E in the schools studied was high with the mean score obtained leaning towards the maximum.

Strategies being used to promote learning of academic low-achievers were grouped into institutional-related strategies, teacher and classroom-related strategies, student-related strategies and the policies. On institutional related strategies, the majority of the respondents highlighted the following: having family groups; peer teaching; purchasing adequate revision materials; timetabling remedial lessons; employment of extra staff especially peer teachers; organizing workshops and seminars for teachers on how to assist academic low-achievers to improve on performance; organizing clinics for students who score D and below, and ensuring that the reward system for the best-improved students covers all categories of students including those with grade E (regardless of the entry behavior of the learners).

Teacher and classroom-related strategies being adopted include: using varied teaching methods, timetabling remedial classes, following up on assignments, lesson observation done frequently, and follow up on class attendance registers. It came out clearly that academic low-achievers are rarely given an opportunity to attend external symposiums and debates (only internal ones if any) and life skills are hardly taught in schools despite appearing on the timetables.

The form three class masters indicated that they were receiving inadequate training on how to handle the academic low-achievers apart from the main career training and that monitoring on the use of teachers' professional documents in their schools by the principal was intensive. On teamwork development among staff and learners, the respondents had varied opinions some indicating that it is well developed while others indicated that it is fairly developed. The respondents noted that the programmes that specifically targeted learning of academic low-achievers were few including remedial and mentorship schools; they noted that these mostly involved all learners. Other programmes being adopted to improve the performance of academic low-achieving students include individualized attention and revision of all topics from form one to form four.

The study showed the existence of a relationship between teacher classroom teaching strategies to the achievement of academic low-achievers. The majority of the form three class masters indicated they use new teaching strategies geared towards improving the learning of academic low-achievers. The majority of the respondents indicated that they were setting performance pass marks for academic low-achievers. It was also discovered that academic low-achievers rarely created time to discuss academic matters with teachers and rarely do extra work

and take to their teachers for marking. The student-related strategies included group discussions and using mixed ability groups.

The policies being implemented in schools provided varied opinions. On Free Primary/Secondary Education (FPE/FSE), the respondents stated that the policy ensures learners are always present in school to acquire skills, ensures learning resources are available for learners and that it moderately influences their performance, though it leads to overpopulation in schools which may leave academic low-achievers further behind. On the policy on transfer of teachers, the respondents indicated lack of continuity of syllabus cover, inconsistency of follow up since the new teachers take time to know the learners and others stated that it could contribute to poor performance. On the deployment of teachers, the respondents noted that the time taken to adjust by the new teachers affects the consistency of follow up since new teachers take time to know the learners too and that students take time to adjust which affects performance negatively.

On the introduction of the TPAD, the findings showed that it helps teachers organize their lessons better, performance indicators assist in identifying the time takers, helps teachers to be prepared to handle learners including academic low-achievers, and better teacher content delivery though the respondents complained that it involves a lot of paper work and time consuming. On the school policy on discipline, the respondents indicated that learners have more time for studies, when students are disciplined it becomes easy for the teachers to handle them even the academic low-achievers. It also helps to motivate learners to be disciplined and creates a conducive environment for learning. The study found that teacher professional development goes hand in hand with the improved achievement of academic low-achievers; that an unconducive school environment affects the achievement of academic low-achievers and that poor teacher motivation contributes to academic low achievement.

The study also found that teacher-classroom teaching strategies influenced the achievement of academic low-achievers; that motivating academic low achievers in and out of class was key to promoting their performance; that teacher preparedness (with professional documents) promotes achievement among academic low achievers; and that teachers' training was key to improving the achievement of academic low achievers. The study also revealed that the academic low-achievers were not adequately hardworking in their schoolwork; that the academic low-achievers are likely to be indisciplined and that the academic low-achievers are not focused in their studies, sentiments that were supported by majority of principals, the students themselves and the QASO. However, the study disagreed that the academic low-achievers were unmotivated to learn.

The respondents highlighted the following challenges facing teachers and low-achievers concerning low academic achievement in schools: that teachers receive inadequate support from the policymakers, only blame game; some teachers were frustrated and demoralized as some miss on promotions; with low capacity to deal with academic low-achievers and inadequate resources to motivate learners. The students faced some challenges including poverty and ignorance, demoralization, development of low self-esteem, frustrations, low confidence and low morale. All these challenges made implementation of the strategies more difficult.

The respondents highlighted the following measures that need to be put in place by the stakeholders to address the problem of academic low achievement in schools: motivating the students with rewards regardless of their entry behavior; re-introduction of holiday tuition; allowing academic low-achievers to attend both internal and external contests and symposiums to boost their morale and expose them; availing adequate revision materials. Further, the

Teachers Service Commission should also employ enough teachers, transfer of teachers be done on the willing basis, mandatory syllabus coverage and implementation of CBC to suit the needs of all students, training of teachers to cater for the academic low-achievers, organizing of workshops and seminars for teachers to equip them on emerging issues in schools, and introduction of policies and programmes that specifically target academic low-achievers like mentorship and remedial/extra tuition in all schools.

5.3 Conclusions

The study came up with various conclusions based on the results: On the prevalence of low academic achievers, it was concluded that the prevalence rate of academic low-achievers was high as around half of the secondary school students in Kandara Sub-County scored a mean grade of D (Plain) and below.

Regarding the strategies that are currently being used to promote academic achievement among the low academic-achievers, the study concluded the strategies being used to promote learning in schools influences the academic achievement of learners and most of them are good and go a long way in improving attendance, even academic excellence if applied well. However, most strategies tend to work better for the higher achievers; with others like some policies leaving the academic low-achievers further behind. Moreover, there are only few strategies and programs that target academic low-achievers specifically; most of them target the whole school.

On the challenges faced by teachers and academic low-achievers concerning low academic achievement in schools, the study concluded that most schools had no well-functioning alumni programs to encourage academic low-achievers and external involvement of other agencies was minimal like the politicians, business community, media institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations among others, to support curricular and co-curricular

activities in schools; indiscipline issues including drug and substance abuse and rioting were common and there was inadequate time to address the needs of academic low-achievers since holiday tuition was banned and not forgetting repetition and expulsion were banned too. Some teachers were demoralized, with low capacity to deal with academic low-achievers and inadequate resources to motivate learners. The study also concluded that there was understaffing of teachers in schools with most being forced to hire BOM teachers until replacement or deployment is done by the TSC, which may take time. The students also faced various challenges including poverty and ignorance, demoralization, development of low self-esteem, frustrations, low confidence and low morale that were associated with academic low-achievement and these challenges made implementation of the strategies harder.

On measures that need to be put in place by the stakeholders to address the problem of academic low achievement in schools, the study concluded that the challenges need to be worked on by the involved stakeholders to reverse the dangerous trend of academic low-achievement by: Motivating the students with rewards regardless of their entry behavior or university entry grade need to be done to motivate academic low-achievers to perform better; re-introduction of holiday tuition; allowing academic low-achievers to attend both internal and external contests and symposiums to boost their morale and expose them; mobilizing resources to ensure availing of adequate revision materials. Further, the Teachers Service Commission should also employ enough teachers, transfer of teachers be done on the willing basis, mandatory syllabus coverage and implementation of CBC to suit the needs of all students, training of teachers to cater for the academic low-achievers, organizing of workshops and seminars for teachers to equip them on emerging issues in schools, and introduction of policies and programmes that specifically target academic low-achievers like mentorship and remedial/extra tuition in all schools.

5.4 Recommendations

Since the study established that there is high prevalence of academic low-achievers, guidance and counseling teachers should be facilitated through training, workshops and seminars to ensure that this category of students is handled well and sensitized on effective strategies that can be used to enhance their academic achievement. They also need to have lower workload to be able to handle those who need their services.

Teachers need to make deliberate effort to effectively implement strategies that are currently being used to promote academic achievement among the low academic-achievers. They need to be careful on what they say and how they say it, or do when dealing with academic low-achievers to avoid negative effects on their self-esteem. This will help the learners feel wanted, cared for and academically included resulting to better academic achievement. If this group of learners (academic low-achievers) get the necessary support, they are likely to perform better.

On challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to low academic achievement in Schools, TSC should employ adequate teachers to mitigate the effects of Free Primary and Secondary Education in schools. The high enrolment rate realized, requires adequate staffing in all schools to ensure that the student-teacher ratio is well within the acceptable standards in order to improve academic achievement of the students and the transfer of teachers be done on the willing basis. The TSC should also ensure timely replacement of teachers who transfer, get promoted or leave teaching profession, to ensure continuity in teaching and learning. Institutions, in collaboration with all stakeholders in the education sector should come up with a reward system that covers both the academic low-achievers and high-achievers to boost the morale for all categories of learners regardless of their entry behavior. Policies should be put into place to ensure that teachers are equipped with skills that will help them handle all learners, as well as specifically deal with academic low-achievers to improve their

academic achievement. Some education policies need to be re-visited for the purpose of strengthening, re-introduction, making changes or even elimination.

The local administration should work more closely and strategically with the County and National governments and other stakeholders to address the issue of drug and substance abuse and related challenges that negatively affect academic achievement of the students. This will ensure that the learners do not become victims of drug and substance abuse due to demoralization resulting to academic low achievement.

Resources should be mobilized in schools to support effective teaching and learning of all learners and especially among academic low-achievers through active partnerships with not just parents/guardians, but also local community, Alumni, politicians, business community, media institutions, governmental and Non-governmental organizations among others, to support curricular and co-curricular activities in schools.

All students including academic low-achievers need to understand that they have a role to play as stakeholders in education. They need to be self-motivated and inspired to succeed in life both in and out of school, ambitious, curious to discover more, focused in their academics and be ready to take responsibility for the choices they make regarding academics. All these will be possible if they changed their negative attitude towards academics and school life in general. Learners also need to seek, be ready to listen and implement the guidance given by various stakeholders in education like the teachers, mentors, parents/guardians among others in order to improve in academic achievement.

The Ministry of Education should train teachers on a regular basis on how to handle academic low-achievers. They should come up with motivation programs for teachers so that they can dedicate more time and effort to mould academic low-achieving students to improve in

academic achievement and equip them with necessary skills required to succeed in life. The Ministry of Education should also ensure adequate allocation of learning materials including revision materials.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

i) This study focused on the prevalence of low academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kandara Sub-County. There is need for further studies to cover wider areas **of** Murang'a County and other Counties to investigate the prevalence rate for boys and girls and come up with gender specific measures that need to be addressed to improve academic achievement.

ii) The findings of this study revealed understaffing as a major challenge faced in public schools that contribute to the high prevalence of low academic achievement. Further studies should be done across the 47 counties of Kenya for more conclusive findings in this area.

iii) This study only focused on the strategies used to promote learning of academic low-achievers. Further studies should be conducted in Murang'a County and other Counties to assess the effectiveness of the strategies improving academic achievement of academic low-achievers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

P.O. Box 62157-00200,

Nairobi – Kenya.

Dear Sir/madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

My name is Beatrice Damaris Njeri Gatogo. I am conducting this study in partial fulfillment of the requirement for my Masters of Education Degree in Educational Research and Evaluation. My study topic is**:** *Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Low-Achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County.* The findings and recommendations of this study will be used to improve the performance of low-achieving students in secondary schools.

I humbly ask for your permission to enable me to collect data on the topic in your area/institution. The data gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Beatrice Damaris Njeri Gatogo.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form for Adults

Researcher: Beatrice Damaris Njeri Gatogo

I am a Masters student in the Department of Research and Evaluation in Education at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, intending to carry out a study on *'Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Low-Achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County'.*

The purpose of the study is to collect information on the above topic with an aim of improving academic achievement among the academic low-achievers. Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study.

I would like to emphasize that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;
- No risks are anticipated as a result of taking part in the study;
- You are free to withdraw at any time.

All the information you give will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from your information may be made part of the final report, but under no circumstances will your name or any other identifying characteristics be included in the report.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below.

…… (Sign)…….... (Date)

Appendix C: Assent Form for Students

Researcher: Beatrice Damaris Njeri Gatogo

Your school has been selected to participate in the study *'Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Low-Achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County'.* You have been sampled to participate in a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) which will take 30 to 40 minutes. The purpose of the study is to collect information on the above topic with an aim of improving academic achievement among the low-achievers in schools.

I would like to emphasize that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;
- No risks are anticipated as a result of taking part in the study;
- You are free to withdraw at any time.

All the information you give will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from your information may be made part of the final report, but under no circumstances will your name or any other identifying characteristics be included in the report.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below.

…… (Sign)…….... (Date)

Appendix D: Questionnaire for Form Three Class Masters

Introduction

This questionnaire is intended to provide information on a study topic '**Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Low-Achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County'. For this study, Low academic achievers are those who score grades D, D- or E.** Kindly complete the questionnaire by putting a tick (√) against your opinion and fill in the blank's spaces (_____) with brief details. The information you give will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality. Do not write your name on it. Thank you for your co-operation.

Section 1: Background Information

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Age category: Below 25 years ( ) 26 – 35 ( ) 36 – 45 ( ) 46 – 55 ( ) Above 56 ( )

3. a) Which type of school is your school?

Boys School ( ) Girls School ( )

Mixed School ( )

b) Full boarding school ( ) Both day and boarding school ( )

Full day school ( )

4. How long have you been a high school teacher?

Below 5 years ( ) 6 to 10 years ( )

11 to 15 years ( ) Above 16 years ( )

5. How many years have you been in the current station?

Below 5 years ( ) 6 to 10 years ( )

11 to 15 years ( ) Above 16 years ( )

6. What is your professional qualification?

Diploma in Education ( ) Degree in Education (B. Ed) ( )

Masters (M.Ed.) ( ) PhD (Ed.) ( )

Section 2

Prevalence of Academic Low Achievers in Public Secondary Schools.

7. What is the prevalence (widespread) of academic low-achievers (Those with grades D, D- or E) in form three in your school?

Many ( ) moderate ( ) few ( ) none ( )

Section 3

8. Strategies presently being used to promote learning of low academic achievers in your school.

A: Institutional-related Strategies

i) Do you receive any training on how to handle the academic low achievers apart from the main career training?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

ii) How intensified is the monitoring of the use of teachers' professional documents in your school by the principal?

Very intensified [ ] fairly intensified [ ] lowly intensified [ ] Not done [ ]

iii) How well developed is teamwork among staff and learners as well as among learners in promoting learning by academic low achievers?

Very well developed [ ] fairly developed [ ] Not sure [ ] poorly developed [ ]

iv) How often are life skills taught in form three class?

Always [ ] Sometimes [ ] rarely [ ] not sure [ ] not at all [ ]

v) Are there any programmes that specifically target learning of academic low achievers e.g. Remedials, Mentorship in your school?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

vi) If Yes name them and comment on their effectiveness in promoting learning among academic low achievers.

B: Teacher and classroom Related strategies

i) How do you relate teacher classroom teaching strategies to the achievement of academic low achievers?

Highly relate [ ] Moderately relate [ ] Uncertain [ ] Lowly relate [ ] Do not relate [ ]

ii) How often do you use new teaching strategies geared towards improving learning of academic low achievers?

Every lesson [ ] Weekly [ ] Monthly [ ] Quarterly [ ] Annually [ ] Not at all [ ]

iii) Do you as a teacher set performance pass marks for academic low achievers?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

iv) In your opinion, what is the level of content mastering among academic low achievers in form three?

High [ ] Moderate [ ] Low [ ] Not sure [ ] Very low [

C: Student-Related Strategies

i) How often do academic low-achievers create time to discuss their academic matters with you as a teacher?

Very often [ ] often [ ] rarely [ ] not at all [ ]

ii) Do academic low-achievers have and follow personal academic timetables?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Not sure [ ]

iii) How often do academic low-achievers do extra academic work and take to teachers for marking?

Very often [ ] often [ ] rarely [ ] not at all [ ]

iv) Kindly give other student-related strategies being used in your school to promote learning among academic low-achievers.

……

……

D: Educational Policies

i) Comment on how the following Educational Policies influence learning among academic low achievers in your school.

Policy	Comment on how it influences learning among academic low achievers
a) Free Primary / Secondary Education (FPE/FDSE)	-
b) Transfer of teachers	
c)Deployment of teachers	
d)TPAD	
e) School policy on Discipline	
f) School rules and regulations regarding routine and behavior	

ii) Are the learners involved in school management, systems and structures including BOM meetings, Strategic plan meetings, development of School Vision and Mission?

……
……

iii) Are you aware of Educational policy (s) that specifically target learning of academic low achievers in schools? Yes [ ] No [ ]

iv) If Yes, name them and comment on their effectiveness. -

……

……

9. Likert Scale on Strategies being used and Measures Being Taken to promote Learning of Low Academic Achievers in Your School. Please rate the extent of your level of agreement on the statements below under the sub-headings given. Rate them as: **Strongly Agree; Agree; Not Sure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree**

A: Institutional-Related Strategies

Statement	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Not sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
a) Lack of teacher in-service training is the major cause of academic low achievement					
b) Teacher professional development go hand in hand with improved achievement of academic low achievers					
c)Unconducive school environment affects the achievement of academic low achievers					
d)Poor teacher motivation contributes to					

academic low achievement in this school					
B. Teacher and Classroom-Related Strategies					
Statement	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Not sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
e) Teachers' classroom teaching strategies influences the achievement of academic low achievers					
f) Teachers' training is key to improving achievement of academic low achievers					
g) Motivating academic low achievers in and out of class is key to promote their performance					
h) Teacher preparedness (with professional documents) promotes achievement among academic low achievers					
C. Student-Related Strategies					
i) The academic Low-achievers are not hardworking in their schoolwork.					
j) The academic Low-achievers are likely to be indisciplined.					
k) The academic low-achievers are not focused in their studies					
l) The academic low-achievers are unmotivated to learn.					

D. Measures Being Taken to Reverse Academic Low- Achievement					
Statement	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
m) Provision of teaching skills through training would promote achievement among academic low-achievers					
n) Motivating teachers financially and/or non-financially goes hand in hand with improvement in achievement of academic low achievers					
o) Providing conducive school environment would improve achievement of academic low achievers in your school					
p) Attending all lessons by the teachers would impact on better performance in academic low achievers					
q) Motivating learners verbally and non-verbally in and out of class promote learning among academic low achievers					
r) Understanding academic low achievers individually is the key to their academic achievement					

SECTION 4: Challenges Facing Teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to Low Academic Achievement in Your School.

10. How often do you hold interaction sessions with academic low achievers apart from normal class hours?

Very often [ ] Rarely [ ] Not sure [ ] Not at all [ ]

11. How many complaints or complements do you receive from academic low achievers pertaining your teaching subjects on average per week?

Below 2 [ ] 2-6 [ ] 7-10 [ ] above 10 [ ]

12. How would you rate the level of challenges associated with low academic achievement in your school?

High [ ] Moderate [ ] Not Sure [ ] Low [ ] very low [ ]

13. The following shows some of the challenges associated with academic low achievement. Please rate them in a scale of 1 to 5 on the level of occurrence in your school where 1 is the least common while 5 is the most common.

Challenge	1	2	3	4	5
a) Indiscipline issues					
b) Problem of assessment where the teacher has difficulty setting too hard items that may discourage the academic low achievers or too easy to encourage them.					
c)Some academic low achievers underachieve in some subjects and not others					
d)Low self-esteem issues					
a) Academic low achievers feel frustrated and/or deprived of resources/ attention					
f) Any other (specify) …… …… ……..					

SECTION 5: Measures that Need to Be Put into Place by the Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Academic Low Achievement in Schools

14. How effective do you think providing teacher with in-service training would impact on achievement of academic low achievers in your school?

Very effective [ ] Moderately effective [ ] Not sure [ ] Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

15. How do you relate motivation of teachers to achievement of academic low achievers in your school?

Highly relate [ ] Moderately relate [ ] Lowly relate [ ] Not sure [ ] Do not relate [ ]

16. Please add other measures that have not been captured that may promote learning among academic low achievers.

……

……

……

……

Thank you for your co-operation.

Appendix E: In-depth Interview Guide for Principals

Section 1: Background Information

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age category: Below 25 years ( ) 26 – 35 ( ) 36 – 45 ( ) 46 – 55 ( ) Above 56 ( )
3. How long have you been Principal?

   Below 5 years ( ) 6 to 10 years ( )

   11 to 15 years ( ) Above 16 years ( )

4. How many years have you been in the current station?

   Below 5 years ( ) 6 to 10 years ( )

   11 to 15 years ( )Above 16 years ( )

5. a) Which is the type of your school?

   Boys School ( )

   Girls School ( )

   Mixed School ( )

   b) Full Boarding School ( )

   Both Day and Boarding School ( )

   Full Day School ( )

6. What is your professional qualification

   Diploma in Education ( ) Degree in Education (B. Ed) ( )

   Masters (M. Ed) ( ) PhD (Ed.) ( )

   Other …….

Section 2: Prevalence of Academic Low Achievers in Public Secondary Schools and Causes of Low Academic Achievement.

7. What can you say about the number of academic low-achievers (those with grades D, D- or E) in form three in your school?

   Many ( ) moderate ( ) few ( ) none ( )

Section 3: Strategies used to promote learning of low academic achievers in your school.

8. How do the following strategies promote learning of low academic achievers in your school?

A: Institutional-related Strategies

i) How would you comment on the availability and access to teaching and learning materials o learning of academic of low achieving students in your school?

ii) How do you ensure adequate material and staff allocation for teaching and learning of academic low achievers in your school?

iii) Do you allow and facilitate your teaching and non-teaching staff to attend trainings aimed at acquiring more skills and strategies geared towards improving learning of academic low achieving students? Please elaborate. *(Which are the examples? Whom do they target? Do they target general performance of all students or academic low achievers?)*

iv) Do you have any programmes targeted towards learning of academic low-achievers specifically? Please explain. [like remedial, mentorship]

v) Do you have any school reward system that target academic low achievers? Please explain.

vi) Any addition on how institutional related strategies in place promote learning among academic low achievers in your school?

B: Teacher and Classroom-Related Strategies

i) How do you ensure strategies employed by teachers in the classrooms during lesson delivery do not leave behind academic low-achievers in your school?

ii) Do the school expose academic low achievers to symposiums, contests and fairs? Please explain

iii) How often do you or your teachers hold discussions on performance of academic low achievers in your school?

iv) How often are life skills taught in form three class?

C: Student-Related Strategies

Which are the student-related strategies that promote learning among academic low-achievers in your school? *(Are the students focused? Hardworking? Motivated to learn? Disciplined?)*

D: Educational Policies

i) Do you involve external agencies in your school (like Alumni; Business community; Political administration like chiefs and police)? How do they influence performance of academic low achievers in your school?

ii) How do school policies influence learning of academic low achievement?

iii) Are the learners involved in school management, systems and structures including BOM meetings, Strategic plan meetings, development of School Vision and Mission?

iv) Comment on how Government policies like FPE & FDSE, TPAD, Deployment of teachers, policy on holiday tuition, policy against repetition and expulsion of learners and Transfers of teachers influence academic low achievement in schools.

v) Are there any Educational policies in place that target learning of academic low achievers specifically? Please explain

Section 4: Challenges Facing Teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to Low Academic Achievement in Kandara Sub-County.

9. Which are the challenges facing teachers and academic low-achievers in relation to low academic achievement in your school.

Section 5: Measures that Need to Be Put into Place by the Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Academic Low Achievement in Schools

10. Which measures should be put in place to promote learning among academic low achievers in schools including policies?

11. Please add any information that have not been captured and may contribute to the study topic of academic low achievement in schools.

Thank you very much for your co-operation. God bless you.

Appendix F: In-Depth Interview Guide for Quality Assurance Officer (QASO)

Section 1: Background Information

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age category: Below 25 years ( ) 26 – 35 ( ) 36 – 45 ( ) 46 – 55 ( ) Above 56 ( )
3. How many years have you been in the current station?

   Below 5 years ( ) 6 to 10 years ( )

   11to 15 years ( ) Above 16 years ( )

Section 2: The prevalence of low-achievers in your school (Those with grades D, D- or E) and causes of low academic achievement.

4. What can you say about the number of academic low-achievers (Those with grades D, D- or E) among the form three's in Kandara Sub-County?

   Many ( ) moderate ( ) few ( ) none ( )

Section 3: (Strategies used to promote learning of low academic achievers in your school.

5. How do the following strategies promote learning of low academic achievers in schools within Kandara Sub-County?

A: Institutional-related Strategies

i) Comment on the availability and access to teaching and learning materials to learning of academic of low achieving students in schools within Kandara Sub-County?

ii) How do you ensure adequate material and staff allocation for teaching and learning of academic low achievers in schools within Kandara Sub-County?

iii) Are there programmes in place that allow and facilitate teaching and non-teaching staff to attend trainings aimed at acquiring more skills and strategies geared towards improving academic achievement of students? *(Which are the examples? Whom do they target? Do they target general performance of all students or academic low achievers?)*

iv) Do you have any programmes directed towards learning of academic low-achievers specifically in schools within Kandara Sub-County? Please explain. [e.g. remedial, mentorship]

v) Do you have any reward systems that target academic low achievers in the Sub-County? Please explain.

vi) Any addition on how institutional related strategies in place promote learning among academic low achievers in your schools within Kandara Sub-County?

B: Teacher and Classroom-Related Strategies

i) How do you ensure strategies employed by teachers in the classrooms during lesson delivery do not leave behind academic low-achievers in your school?

ii) Do you ensure exposure of academic low achievers to symposiums, contests and fairs? Please explain

iii) How often do you hold discussions on performance of academic low achievers in schools within Kandara Sub-County?

iv) How do you ensure that life skills are taught in form three classes in the sub-County?

C: Student-Related Strategies

Which are the student-related strategies that promote learning among academic low-achievers in schools within Kandara Sub-County? *(Are the students focused? Hardworking? Motivated to learn? Disciplined?)*

D: Educational Policies

i) Do you think involvement of external agencies in schools (like Alumni; Business community; Media houses; Political administration like chiefs and police) influence academic achievement in schools? *(How do they influence performance of academic low achievers specifically in schools?)*

ii) How do school policies influence learning of academic low achievers in schools within Kandara Sub-County?

iii) Are the learners involved in school management, systems and structures including BOM meetings, Strategic plan meetings, development of School Vision and Mission?

iv) Comment on how Government policies like FPE & FDSE, TPAD, Deployment of teachers, policy on holiday tuition, policy against repetition and expulsion of learners and Transfers of teachers, influence academic low achievement in schools. Are they relevant? Give your feelings about them. Please add others if any.

v) Are there any policies in place that target achievement of academic low achievers specifically? If yes, name them. How effective are they? Please explain

Section 4: Challenges Facing Teachers and Academic Low-Achievers in Relation to Academic Low Achievement in Kandara Sub-County.

6. Which are the challenges that the teachers and academic low-achievers face in relation to low academic achievement?

Section 5: Measures that Need to Be Put into Place by the Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Academic Low Achievement in Schools

7. i) Which measures apart from policies should be put in place to promote learning among low-achievers in schools?

ii) Which policies should be put in place to promote learning among low-achievers in schools?

8. Please add any information that have not been captured and may contribute to the study topic of academic low achievement in schools.

Thank you very much for your co-operation. God bless you.

Appendix G: Focused Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Students

Date..... Venue.....

Group: Form Three students Gender: Boys.....… Girls.....

Total number of participants in the FGD.....

Section 1: Introduction

1.Introduction and welcoming the members

Section 2: Strategies being used to promote learning of low academic achievers in your school.

2.a) How do the following strategies promote learning of low academic achievers in your school?

A: Institutional-related Strategies

i) Comment on the adequacy and access to teaching and learning materials on learning of academic low achieving students in your school? *(How adequate are the teaching and learning materials? How accessible are they? Are revision materials supplied by the government or the parents buy them?)*

ii) Are there any extra staff allocated to supporting low academic achievers in your school? If yes elaborate.

iv) Do you have any programmes directed towards learning of academic low-achievers specifically? Please explain. [Like remedial, mentorship]

v) Do you think the relationships among students and with teaching and non-teaching staff influence academic low achievement in your school? Elaborate.

vi) Is there any school reward system that target academic low achievers? Please explain.

vii) Any addition on how institutional related strategies in place that promote learning among academic low achievers in your school?

B: Teacher and Classroom-Related Strategies

i) Comment on the teaching methods used by teachers during classroom delivery. (*Which are the teaching methods used by the teachers during teaching? Do they vary within the lesson? Are they effective?)*

ii) Comment on the conduciveness of school and class environment to learning of academic low-achievers in your school.

iii) How often do you do individual consultations with your subject teachers in or out of class? *(Do you feel free to consult teachers? Are the teachers available and willing to attend to the learners?)*

iv) How effective do teachers prepare academic low achievers for exams?

v) Comment on the adequacy of assignments and exams given to academic low achievers. *(Are they effective in promoting learning among academic low-achievers? How often is the feedback on assignments and exams given?)*

vi) Comment on teachers' lesson attendance.

(Do teachers miss lessons? How frequent do they of miss lessons? Do the teachers recover the missed lessons or not?)

vii) Are you exposed to symposiums, contests and fairs? *(Do you get opportunities of participating in them? Do you get adequate support during preparation? Is the support effective?)*

viii) Are you encouraged to have personal timetables? Do you follow them effectively?

C: Student-Related Strategies

Which are the student-related strategies that promote learning among academic low-achievers in school? *(Are you focused? Hardworking in academics, Motivated to learn? Disciplined? How do these influence learning?)*

D: Educational Policies

i) Comment on how school policies influence learning of academic low achievers in your school. *(How do the school rules on discipline, hard work and daily routine influence learning of academic low achievers?)*

ii) Comment on how the following Government policies influence academic low achievement in schools:

- FPE and FDSE policy,
- Transfer of teachers
- Policy on holiday tuition
- Policy against repetition of students

(What are your views about the policies? How do you think they influence learning among academic low achievers?)

Section 4: Challenges Facing Teachers and Academic Low-Achievers in Relation to Academic Low Achievement in Kandara Sub-County.

3.Which are the challenges you as well as teachers face in relation to academic low-achievement?

Section 5: Measures that Need to Be Put into Place by the Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Academic Low Achievement in Schools

1. Which measures should be put into place by the Stakeholders to promote learning among low-achievers in schools?

Thank you very much for your co-operation. God bless you.

Appendix H .: Document Analysis Guide for Form Three Class

School Code: ……

The following documents will be analyzed:

1. Progress records showing the names of the learners who scored mean grades of D, D- or E in their three lastly done major exams for the purpose of extracting the sample (See Sheet 1).

2. The average percentage of academic low achievers – those with grades D, D- or E in their three lastly done major examinations (See Sheet 2).

3. Records of programmes that are directed towards learning of academic low achievers like: -

-Remedials/extra tuition,

- Mentorship,

- Any other (See Sheet 3)

Appendix I a.: Sheet 1: Form Three Students' Sample

School code: ……

Student S/N	Mean grade End of Term 1 Exam, 2021	Mean grade Mid-Term Exam, Term 1 2021	Mean grade End-Term Exam, Term 3 2020	Average mean grade
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				

Appendix I b.: Sheet 2: Performance Numbers Per Grade for Form Three Class and Combined % of Grades D, D- and E.

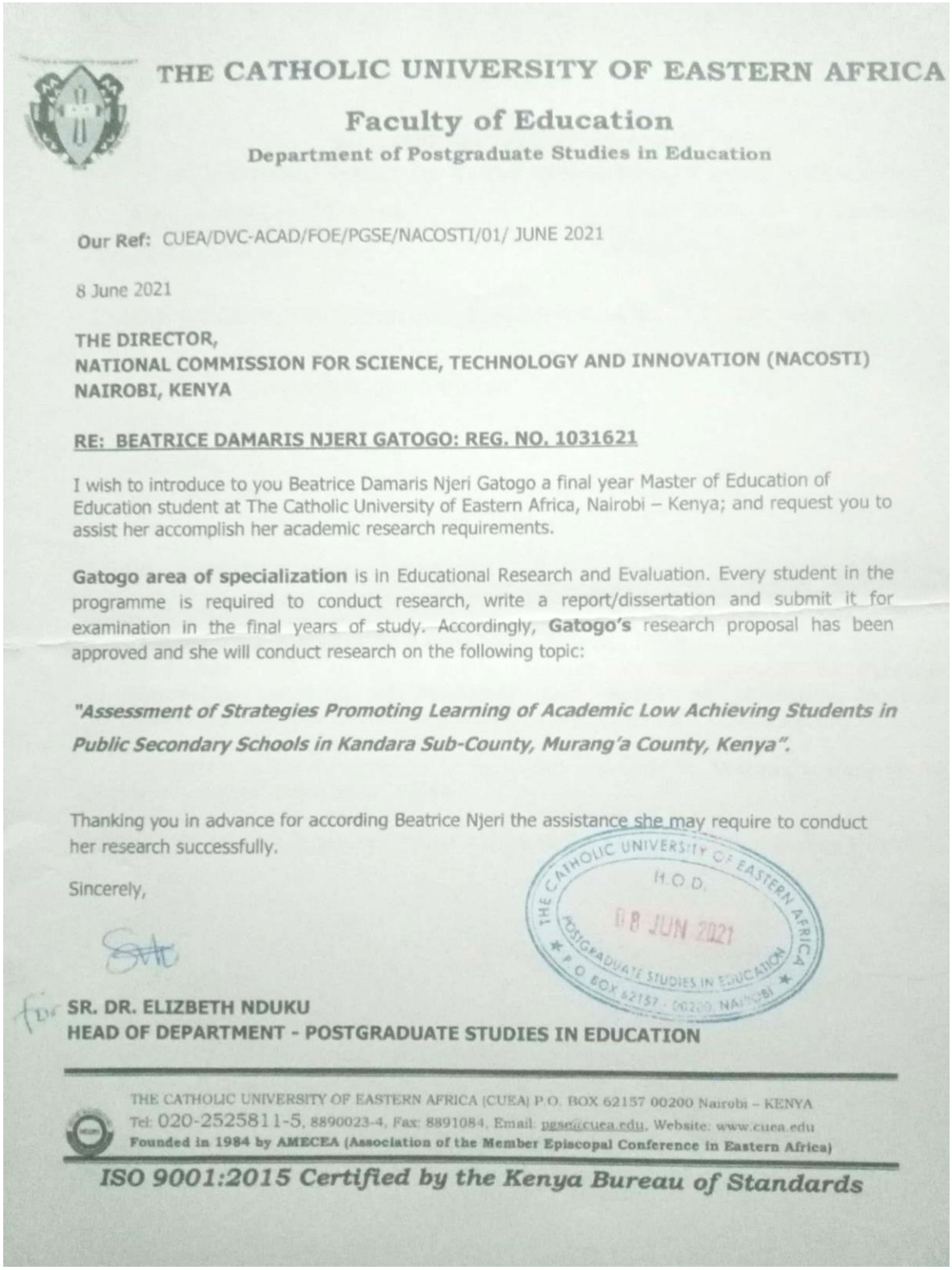
School Code: ……

Grades	Entry	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Combined % of D, D-and E
End of Term 1 Exam, 2021														
Mid-Term Exam, Term 1 2021														
End-Term Exam, Term 3 2020														
Average														

Appendix I c.: Sheet 3: Programmes Directed Specifically Towards Learning of Academic Low Achievers

No.	Programme	Presence	
		Yes	**No**
1	Remedial/Extra tuition		
2	Mentorship		
	Any Other	**-**	**-**
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Appendix J: Research Letter from CUEA



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

Faculty of Education

Department of Postgraduate Studies in Education

Our Ref: CUEA/DVC-ACAD/FOE/PGSE/NACOSTI/01/ JUNE 2021

8 June 2021

THE DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (NACOSTI)
NAIROBI, KENYA

RE: BEATRICE DAMARIS NJERI GATOGO: REG. NO. 1031621

I wish to introduce to you Beatrice Damaris Njeri Gatogo a final year Master of Education of Education student at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi – Kenya; and request you to assist her accomplish her academic research requirements.

Gatogo area of specialization is in Educational Research and Evaluation. Every student in the programme is required to conduct research, write a report/dissertation and submit it for examination in the final years of study. Accordingly, **Gatogo's** research proposal has been approved and she will conduct research on the following topic:

"Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Academic Low Achieving Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya".

Thanking you in advance for according Beatrice Njeri the assistance she may require to conduct her research successfully.

Sincerely,

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA H.O.D. 08 JUN 2021 POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN EDUCATION P.O. BOX 62157 - 00200 NAIROBI

for **SR. DR. ELIZBETH NDUKU**
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT - POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN EDUCATION

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA (CUEA) P.O. BOX 62157 00200 Nairobi – KENYA
Tel: 020-2525811-5, 8890023-4, Fax: 8891084, Email: pgse@cuea.edu, Website: www.cuea.edu
Founded in 1984 by AMECEA (Association of the Member Episcopal Conference in Eastern Africa)

ISO 9001:2015 Certified by the Kenya Bureau of Standards

Appendix K: Research Letter from the County Education Office

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

Email: cdemuranga@gmail.com
Telephone: 060 2030227
When replying please quote

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
P.O BOX 118 – 10200
MURANG'A

REF: MGA/CTY/EDU/RESEARCH/GEN/64/VOL.III/31 **29th June, 2021**

BEATRICE DAMARIS NJERI GATOGO

P.O. BOX 63,

KAGUNDUINI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

The County Education office is in receipt of your request letter and authority from NACOSTI Ref No.131836 and license number NACOSTI/P/21/11405 dated 22nd June, 2021 to carry out a research on **"Assessment of Strategies Promoting Learning of Academic Low Achieving students in Public Secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-County, Murang'a County Kenya."**

Permission is hereby granted to carry out research in **Murang'a County** for a period ending **22nd June, 2022.**

You are kindly advised to deposit a copy of the final research report to this office.

Anne Kiilu
County Director of Education
MURANG'A

Appendix L: Authorization Letter from the Kandara Sub-County Education Office

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING& BASIC EDUCATION)

E-MAIL: deokandara@gmail.com

When replying please quote
KDR/EDU/18/VOL1/ 30

HARAMBEE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE SUB-COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE
KANDARA SUB-COUNTY
MURANG'A COUNTY
P.O BOX 92-01034
KANDARA

10TH August 2021

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

BEATRICE DAMARIS NJERI GATOGO

The Sub-County Education Office is in receipt of your request letter and authority from NACOSTI Ref No. 131836 and license number NACOSTI/P/21/11405 dated 22nd June, 2021 to carry out research on" Assessment **of strategies promoting learning of academic low achieving students in public secondary Schools in Kandara Sub-county, Murang'a County Kenya".**

Permission is hereby granted to carry out research in **Kandara Sub-County** for a period ending **22nd June, 2022.**

You are kindly advised to deposit a copy of the final research report to this office.

SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KANDARA
P.O. Box 92 - 01034 KANDARA
Date..... Sign.....

ROBERT G. MWETI

SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

KANDARA SUB-COUNTY

Appendix M: Research Permit from NACOSTI

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 131836

Date of Issue: 22/June/2021

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. beatrice Damaris Gatogo of Catholic University of Eastern Africa, has been licensed to conduct research in Muranga on the topic: ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIES PROMOTING LEARNING OF ACADEMIC LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANDARA SUB-COUNTY, MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 22/June/2022.

License No: NACOSTI/P/21/11405

131836

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

Appendix N: Map of Murang'a County, showing Kandara Sub-County



Source: http://www.maphill.com/, (2019)