



RESEARCH ARTICLE

SCHOOL BASED CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINCIPALS IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF NDHIWA SUB COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Principals of secondary schools play a very important role in enhancing students' academic achievement. However, in the process of doing this, studies have shown that, principals are faced with a number of challenges resulting in poor performance of students. Public Secondary Schools in Ndhwiwa Sub County have not been performing well academically as shown by Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination results between the years 2013 and 2018, compared to the neighboring Sub Counties within Homa Bay County. On the other hand, the average Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education mean scores was 4.7 when compared to other Sub-counties, which are higher; Homa-Bay: 6.0; Suba: 5.0 Rachuonyo North: 5.1; Rachuonyo South: 5.2; Mbita: 5.3. Hitherto the school based challenges principals face relating to their areas of operations were unknown in Ndhwiwa Sub County, the knowledge gaps this study sought to fill. The objective of this study was to determine school based challenges faced by principals in enhancing students' academic achievement in Public Secondary Schools in Ndhwiwa Sub County, Kenya. Grounded theory was used to guide the study. A conceptual framework based on concept that school based challenges faced by principals (Independent Variable), must be overcome in order to enhance student academic achievement (Dependent Variable) was used. The study established that school based challenge posed bigger challenge to the principals in enhancing students' academic achievement as indicated by the overall mean rating of 3.64. The study recommended that: principals need to be given a lot of training on management of finances to enable them manage the financial resources available in their schools; the stakeholders like the Boards of Management should think of other sources of funds that the schools can engage in to boost the financial resources; the principals and teachers should give priority to developing the attitude of students positively to enhance performance of students in their schools.

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INTRODUCTION

School principals play a very important role in enhancing students' academic performance both internationally and locally. Bakhda (2010) indicates that head teachers play a very important role in maintaining appropriate and detailed records of the students' academic progress and their social growth. Hompashe (2018) established the association between measures of instructional leadership (for example teachers' understanding of curricular goals and teachers' degree of success in implementing curricular goals) and student scores for mathematics and science using linear probability models. Findings confirm the existence of the principal-agent problem in education, since many school respondents indicated that curriculum delivery monitoring was not conducted as expected. From the multivariate analysis, instructional leadership variables, such as teachers' understanding of curricular goals and teachers' degree of success in implementing the curriculum appear as important correlates of student achievement, though significance differs according to level

of schooling and whether the questions were answered by principals or teachers. Mugambi (2015) in a study to establish the role of principals in promoting student academic performance in secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-county, Meru County, established that there was an association between the school's performance and its principal's instructional management practices. Other findings were that, some minor approaches like use of students to monitor teacher lesson attendance and visiting class to observe a teacher were rarely used. Mugambi (2015) further established that schools faced challenges that include inadequate trained teachers, learning/ teaching materials, irregular fee payment, inadequate science laboratories and lack of time to check on the teachers' and students' work by principals. The principals also face student-based challenges as observed by studies conducted without and within the country. For instance, Waseka and Simatwa (2016), carried out a study on student factors influencing academic performance of students in secondary education in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study established that performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, age, participation in co-curricular activities and exclusion from school

were student factors. This study however, did not establish which one of these are a challenge to the principals, the knowledge gap this study sought to fill in public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub - County.

Research Objective: The objective of the study was to determine school based challenges faced by principals in enhancing students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub County.

Synthesis of literature on school - based challenges faced by principals in enhancing students academic achievement: According to Onyara (2013), school-based challenges are those within school control that can influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools. They include; teaching resources, teacher adequacy, physical facilities and head teachers' supervisory role. A number of studies have been carried out on the challenges principals face with respect to school-based challenges and other related studies both internationally and locally. For instance, Wise (2015) carried out a study on emerging challenges facing principals focusing on US public schools and established that principals face challenges including overwhelming effects of poverty, increasing pressure on students' achievement, the breakdown of communities, lack of financial resources and a host of other issues. Over 10, 000 principals participated as respondents in this study. In this study one of the school based challenge that was addressed was financial resource, which the study did not tell us the extent to which it is a challenge among others. Indeed, school activities cannot be run without finances. However, other school – based challenges were not addressed which the current study sought to address.

In a conference paper presented by Dina (2012) on challenges faced by educational leadership on influencing student learning, it was argued that major challenges having a significant impact on students' learning are school conditions, teachers as well as student background and the government policies and school approaches. Whereas the findings of this study were true as established by other scholars, the educational leaders need to understand the extent to which these challenges affect the students' academic achievement in order to have them addressed, the knowledge gap this study sought to bridge. In Nigeria, Abdurashed and Bello (2015) also carried out a study on challenges to secondary school principals' leadership in Northern Region of Nigeria and found out that poor funding of schools is a major problem of principals' leadership ineffectiveness and lack of availability of funds directly to the schools account to run the schools. This study also established that secondary school education board did not have a system of organizing seminars for capacity building to re train and improve leadership effectiveness of principals in the region. In essence, this study actually concurs with those of Wise (2015) and Dina (2012) which established financial resources to be a challenge but added the fact that the capacity building of the principals needed to be taken care of, in order learn how to address such kind of challenges. A study conducted by Owoeye and Yara (2011) looked at the provision of facilities as it relates to academic performance of students in agricultural science in Ekiti state of Niger between 1990 and 1997. The study population was results of the West African School Certificate Examination conducted between 1990 and 1997 in 50 secondary schools in both rural and urban areas of the state. One validated instrument was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using measurement and T-test. The result showed that there were no significant differences in the performance of students between rural and urban secondary schools in terms of library facilities. This meant that the challenges faced by principals in both rural and urban secondary schools were similar. In Kenya, other related studies have been carried out. For example, a study conducted by Onyara (2013) on school-based challenges influencing students' academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Teso South District, established that some of the school-based challenges that influence academic performance included human resources, financial resources, physical resources and learning techniques. In this study, it was established that human resources is

not well handled, financial resources was not well established and physical resources were not well developed which is an indicator that principals face challenges in such areas in enhancing students' academic achievements. I fully concur with the findings that human resources, financial resources, physical resources and learning techniques are all important in enhancing students' academic achievement. However, it is equally true as established by other researchers that principals face challenges with these aspects to which each one of them is a challenge was not addressed, the knowledge gap the current study sought to address in public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub County.

Musau (2015) also conducted a study on school-based challenges influencing students' performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Masiga Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya, where it was established that schools lacked adequate teaching/ learning resources as indicated by 11 out of 15 school principals. The study further established that there were inadequate teachers to accommodate the large number of students. Further, the majority of principals indicated that water and laboratories in their schools were not adequate. Musau's (2015) findings, concurs with those of Ondieki and Orodho (2015), who established that the main school based challenges that negatively influenced performance of pupils in transition from lower to upper classes included inadequate teaching and learning resources, sketchy syllabus coverage due to inappropriate instructional strategies and poor attitude among pupils and teachers. The point of divergence in the two studies is that Ondieki and Orodho (2015) focused in primary school, which was in a stage of implementing a newly introduced curriculum, and therefore the challenge of instructional materials was expected. However, lack of teaching/learning materials was common to both studies. The two studies however, did not reveal which teaching/ learning materials were a challenge. This is the knowledge gap, the current study sought to establish in public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub County. According Mutindi (2018), in his study on school based challenges influencing students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination in Public Secondary Schools in Kathiani Sub County, it was established that teaching resources especially radios, televisions, computers and projectors were inadequate. Teacher inadequacy also occasioned by the fact that there were no immediate replacements made once teachers were transferred.

In addition, the study established among others that library and laboratory facilities were inadequate. Head teachers were also found to rarely vet teachers' lesson notes and rarely appraised teachers. Overall, the study found out that teaching resources, teacher adequacy, physical facilities and head teachers' supervisory role had positive and significant relationship with students' performance at KCSE. In other word, these findings established that inadequate teaching resources, teacher inadequacy, inadequate physical facilities and inadequate head teachers' supervision were challenges that influenced students' academic achievement. A related study was conducted by Nthenya (2012) on Challenges faced by secondary school head teachers in leadership and management in human resources in Nzau District, Makueni County, Kenya, which established that there was a major challenge of in servicing teachers and developing them because of resistance to change and lack of commitment towards learning and training. This study majorly focused on human resource as a school based challenge, yet there are other school-based challenges. Ndotu (2015) in a study on challenges faced by principals of newly established schools and their copying strategies in Mwingi Central Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya, established that principals face financial challenges, inadequate facilities and shortage of teaching staff. This study closely relates to the one carried out by Obaga (2013), on challenges experienced by public day secondary school head teachers in implementing of free day secondary education in Nyamira County. The study findings revealed that, most secondary school head teachers did not have adequate training on financial management and therefore they needed more training on how to manage both human and financial resources. The study further revealed that physical facilities were not adequate to satisfy the increasing number of students joining the secondary

schools. Whereas it's worth appreciating the fact that financial challenges, inadequate facilities and shortage of teaching staff are common in beginning schools and in day schools which do not have any extra levies charged on parents, it should be noted that these are also equally the challenges faced by the so called established schools, both day and boarding. The only thing these studies did not reveal to us is which of these is the biggest challenge and which is the least challenge, the knowledge gap this study sought to fill. In their study on challenges faced by head teachers in public secondary schools in Nyeri South Sub County, Nyeri County, Gichu, Kibaara and Njagi (2017), established that indiscipline, teachers' attitude, poor infrastructure, failure to do assignment by students and uncooperative parents were major challenges. The study further found out that the challenge of indiscipline was due to high enrolment of pupils, drug abuse and exposure to televisions and radios. Finances enable all the programs in the institution to run smoothly. Finances within the school facilitate boarding facilities, services (water, electricity and telephone) enhance general repairs and maintenance, facilitates construction of physical facilities and payment of salaries of some teaching and non-teaching staff (Otula, 2007). (Ngotie, 2009) observes that secondary schools are faced with difficulties of trying to source for alternative funding other than traditional school fees paid by parents mainly public resources and grants from donors and bilateral loans, fund the public education sector. Private investors, religious, charitable, and other Non-Governmental Organizations also play a major role in financing education programs in various parts of the country (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2007). Olendo (2008) studied the relationship between mean performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination and educational resource inputs in public secondary schools in Nyando Sub County and established that textbooks and Kenya Certificate of Primary Education marks contributed significantly to mean performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. Other challenges were student absenteeism; poor fee payment and negative attitude by students in some subjects. In the absence of textbooks, which can only be obtained in the presence of finances, it becomes a challenge to the principals. Conclusively, the above studies have identified financial resources, human resources, and physical facilities as challenges the principals face in enhancing students' academic achievement. However, it was not clear from the studies, which school – based challenges principals faced in their endeavors to enhance students' academic achievement in Ndhiwa Sub County, Kenya, the knowledge gap this study sought to fill in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County, Kenya.

Conceptual framework: The study was conceptualized on the basis of variables that were used in the study (Figure 1). In this case, the study assumes that students' academic achievement was affected by a combination of various variables namely school based challenges, student based challenges, government policy based challenges and economic based challenges.

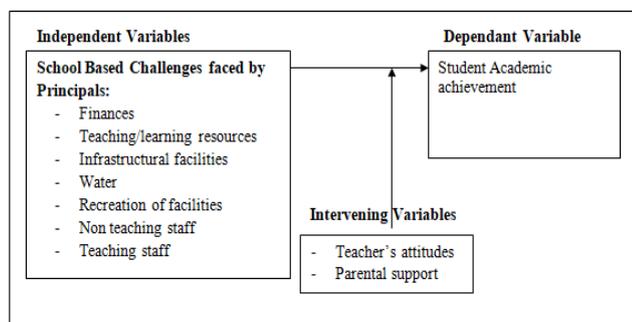


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework showing school based challenges Principals' Face in Enhancing Students' Academic Achievement

The conceptual framework postulates that independent variable (School based challenges) affect the dependent variable (students' academic achievement). The school based challenges for this study are finances, library, water, teaching staff, non teaching staff,

infrastructural facilities, recreational facilities and laboratory chemicals and equipment. However, there are other factors like teachers' attitude and parental support which may intervene resulting in better or poor performance of the students. Studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between school based factors and students' academic performance (Abdulrasheed & Bello (2015), Waseka & Simatwa, 2016), Badugela, 2012), Ndereba, 2011). Similarly, studies have shown that school based challenges surround the school principals and this impact negatively on the results (Ndyali, 2013 & Ndotu, 2015). In this study, the extent to which these challenges influence students' academic achievement was measured.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised 45 principals, 203 teachers, 2,469 Form three students and 1 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Saturated sampling was used to select 26 principals, and 1 Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Simple random sampling was used to select 133 teachers and 332 students. Data was collected using questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussion. Face and content validity of the instruments was established by experts in educational administration. The reliability of these instruments was established through test-re-test method in 3 schools. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means and percentages. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub themes.

RESULTS

Demographic Data of Respondents: The respondents involved in the study were: Principals, Teachers, Students and the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. The principals were asked to indicate the category of school, gender, age range and the 2014 Kenya Mean Score for their schools in addition to their gender and range. Teachers were also asked to indicate their gender and age range. The findings were as shown in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4. From Table 1, it was observed that there were only five (5) County schools and a higher number of schools (21) being Sub County Schools with no National or Extra County schools. From Table 2, it was revealed that majority of the principals 21 were in the age bracket of 41-50 (80.8%). This meant that the majority of the principals had gained reasonable experience and hence were appropriate to respond to aspects of challenges they face in enhancing students' academic achievements. Moreover, 5(19.2%) principals were aged between 51 and 60, meaning even more experienced. It was also noted that majority of teachers were aged between 31 and 40(73.7%). This was attributed to the fact that from the year 2009 there had been a number of new schools established through Constituency Development Fund that required newly employed teachers. At the same time, they have gained experience and can easily observe the challenges that principals face in enhancing students' academic achievement. Twenty 25(33.3%) teachers were found to be aged above 40 meaning that they were satisfactorily experienced and were in a position to respond to challenges faced by principals in enhancing students' academic achievement. Only 10(13.3%) teachers were aged between 25 and 30. From Table 3, it can be noted that 21(80.8%) principals were males while 5(19.2%) principals were females. At the same time, 90(67.7%) teachers were males and 43(32.3%) were females. This indicated that there is still gender disparity in distribution of teachers in Ndhiwa Sub County. From Table 4., it was observed that 6(23.2%) schools had very low performance in 2018 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations with a mean score between 1.00 and 3.44; fourteen (53.8%) schools had performance of mean score ranging from 3.45 to 5.44; five (19.2%) schools had average performance between 5.45 and 7.44 and only 1(3.8%) school had high performance between 7.45 and 8.44. This performance indicated that most schools in Ndhiwa Sub County performed below average of a score of 6.00 out of 12.00.

Table 1. Category of Schools

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
National	0	0
Extra County	0	0
County	5	19.2
Sub County	21	80.8
Total	26	100

Table 2. Distribution of Principals and Teachers by their Age

Age	Principals		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
25 – 30	0	0	10	7.5
31– 40	0	0	98	73.7
41 -50	21	80.8	15	11.3
51 – 60	5	19.2	10	7.5
Total	26	100	133	100

Table 3. Distribution of Principals and Teachers by Gender

Gender	Principals		Teachers	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	21	80.8	90	67.7
Female	5	19.2	43	32.3
Total	26	100	133	100

Table 4. 2018 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination Performance by Schools in Ndhwa Sub County

Mean Score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.00 - 3.44	6	23.2
3.45 - 5.44	14	53.8
5.45 - 7.44	5	19.2
7.45 - 8.44	1	3.8
Total	26	100

Research Objective: The research objective of the study was to determine the school based challenges faced by principals in enhancing students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub- County. To achieve this objective, principals and teachers in public secondary schools were asked to respond to aspects of school based challenges that the principals faced in their endeavor to enhance students' academic achievement. The results were as shown in Table 5. From Table 5, it can be observed that challenges related to finance rated highest by both the principals and teachers at 4.69 and 4.59 respectively, meaning the biggest challenge with overall mean rating of 4.61.

Table 5. School Based Challenges faced by Principals in enhancing Students 'Academic Achievement as reported by Principals (n=26) and Teachers (n=133)

Aspects of School based challenges	Respondents	Ratings					Total Score	MR	OMR
		1	2	3	4	5			
Finances	P	0	0	0	8	18	122	4.69	4.61
	T	0	0	1	52	80	610	4.59	
Infrastructural Facilities	P	0	7	13	5	1	78	3.00	3.34
	T	1	13	61	47	11	554	3.41	
Library	P	0	0	0	7	19	123	4.73	4.48
	T	0	0	6	66	62	589	4.43	
Water	P	0	5	15	5	1	80	3.08	3.52
	T	1	8	55	48	21	479	3.60	
Recreational Facilities	P	3	13	9	1	0	60	2.31	2.64
	T	8	48	52	25	0	360	2.71	
Laboratory Chemicals and Equipment	P	0	0	8	12	6	102	3.92	4.31
	T	0	1	37	54	40	583	4.38	
Teaching Staff	P	0	2	9	9	6	97	3.73	3.91
	T	0	2	37	61	33	524	3.94	
Non – Teaching Staff	P	6	15	5	0	0	51	1.96	2.30
	T	18	61	42	12	0	314	2.36	
Overall Mean									3.64

Key: P- Principal T- Teacher OMR- Overall Mean Rating MR-Mean Rating Interpretation of Mean Ratings 1.00 -1.44 = Least Challenge; 1.45 -2.44 = Less Challenge; 2.45 -3.44 = Big Challenge; 3.45 -4.44 = Bigger Challenge; 4.45 -5.0 = Biggest Challenge

Infrastructural facilities and recreational facilities were rated as big challenges at 3.34 and 2.64 by principals and teachers respectively.

DISCUSSION

Rating of finance and library meant that both financial resources and library were the biggest challenge the principals faced among the school factors. Indeed, these findings concur with those of Onyara (2013) and Ndotu (2015) who established in their studies that principals faced financial challenges in their administration. On financial aspect, Otula (2007) indicated that finances within the school facilitates boarding facilities, services (water, electricity and telephone), enhance general repairs and maintenance, facilitates construction of infrastructural facilities and payment of salaries of some teachers and non-teaching staff. During an interview with the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated, "most of the schools in Ndhwa Sub County faced financial challenges due to the fact that there was low income amongst the surrounding community which was the major source of students, and therefore, poor fee payment." At the same time, when asked about the school based challenges that the principals faced, one of the students in a focus group discussion stated, "Some academic activities cannot be done as planned and when we ask the principal about it, he tells us that there are no finances to support such programs." It therefore implies that finances play a major role in the school and as a result enhancing students' academic achievement. Any inadequacy of finances therefore would mean a challenge to the principals as it is rated as biggest challenge. This is because the principals cannot get money to run academic activities such as symposia, laboratory experiments, educational tours and bench marking, the principals cannot hire Board of Management teachers to take care of the understaffing, Other essential services and equipment such as computers. Water, electricity cannot be catered for yet that is the critical role of the principals. The principals keep on struggling on how to provide for these activities in order to enhance student academic achievement. The principals face financial challenges in their attempt to enhance students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub County.

Library was equally rated as the biggest challenge in this study, which concurred with the findings of Mutindi (2018). Library plays a very important role in enhancing students' academic achievement. It was clear that most of the public secondary schools in Ndhwa Sub County had no libraries but instead had book stores as explained by the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer during an interview. Ida (2016) equally carried out a study and the study revealed that some of the secondary schools in Mitwara Mikindani Municipality Tanzania had no libraries. Moreover, the students from secondary schools with libraries and enough materials were observed to perform better in Certificate of Secondary Education Examination than secondary schools with no libraries and enough materials due to the fact that, availability of well-equipped libraries, encourage learning habits and strengthened students study skills which results to good performance of students at Certificate of Secondary Education Examination. Whereas it was clear that availability of the library was necessary in boosting students' academic achievement, the principals actually experienced a challenge since most of the schools in Ndhwa Sub County lacked the libraries. Indeed, this is detrimental to the performance of students as they lack special place for doing research. Neji, Ukwetang and Nja (2014) in their study found out that laboratory facilities in secondary schools are not adequately enough for teaching Chemistry. This means that the principals faced challenge in line with laboratory facilities. Further, the study established that adequacy of facilities does not significantly contribute to the variance in students' academic achievement in chemistry. This is contrary to the findings of this study whose expectation was that the availability of laboratory facilities would enhance performance in Sciences and hence students' academic achievement. Similar challenge was also established in another study by Musau (2015), who established in his study that teachers, water and laboratories were not adequate in their schools. This concurs with this finding as teaching staff and water was also

rated as bigger challenge to the principals. Mutindi (2018) also established that laboratory facilities were inadequate. When students were asked about availability of laboratories in the school during focus group discussion, one of them said, "laboratory is a term we meet in theory but we have not seen it practically. Any time we have a demonstration; it is done in a classroom as organized by teachers. Worst of all is when we have exams in which many classrooms are converted into laboratories." Public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County actually presented a picture that most schools had no equipped laboratories posing challenge to the principals in their endeavor to enhance students' academic achievement. Ebenezer, *et al* (2015), in a study established that even though the quality of teachers was high in terms of their academic and professional qualification, it did not reflect much in the performance of the students. This means that teachers were not necessarily a challenge in terms of their quality. However, when asked about the staffing in Ndhiwa Sub County, the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer explained; "Public secondary schools in Ndhiwa are greatly understaffed. Most of the Principals in the Sub County use teachers employed on Board of Management terms, against the financial challenges. As a result, they end up employing those who were still in the universities who can take little money and this results in inconsistency in content delivery, as they keep coming and going back to their universities or colleges." The comments of the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer indicates that there would be high workloads amongst the teachers in the Sub County. This would actually pose a challenge to the principals since Adika and Sika (2019) revealed in their study that influence on teachers' workload on academic performance was significant ($r = .523$, $N = 154$, $p < 0.01$) and that for every unit increase on teacher workload, there was a decrease in pupils' academic achievement as signified by the coefficient $-.558$. Therefore, principals in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County faced bigger challenge with teaching staff.

Owoeye (2010) observed that provision of facilities especially for recreational and co-curriculum relates to academic performance of students in Niger particularly in Agricultural Sciences. Ogundele (2012) equally established in their study that high positive significant relationship exists between recreational facilities availability, utilization, improvisation and students' academic performance of secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Coupled with the fact that Ndhiwa Sub County was having newly established schools at this time, it was clear that many of them would experience challenge with recreational facilities making it a big challenge to the principals in their endeavor to enhance students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County. This means that, even though the principals faced challenges with infrastructural facilities and recreational facilities, they were not highly rated challenges. The rating of non-teaching staff at 2.30 meant that they posed less challenge to the principals in enhancing students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County. This means that non-teaching staff as a school based challenge was so low that it could not hinder the principal from enhancing students' academic achievement. Whereas the non-teaching- staff plays a vital role in the school, principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa did not focus challenge that they posed to the principals in their attempt to enhance students' academic achievement. The study therefore established that both finances and library posed biggest challenge to the principals in enhancing students' academic achievement, meaning that the financial and library challenges would to a greater extent interfere with the principals' performance. This was followed by laboratory, teaching staff and water as bigger challenges meaning they hinder the principals' performance to a bigger challenge. Infrastructural facilities and recreational facilities posed big challenge to the principals and therefore would only hinder the principals' to a small extent, and finally non-teaching staff posed less challenge to the principals, meaning, very little effect that would actually not hinder the principals in enhancing students' academic achievement. Overall, school based factors posed bigger challenge the principals faced in enhancing students' academic achievement as the mean rating was determined to be 3.64 in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County. This means that the effort by the principals to enhance

students' academic achievement was hindered to a great extent in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub County.

CONCLUSION

School finances was the biggest challenge to principals in their effort to promote student academic achievement. This was followed by library facilities, laboratory chemicals and equipment, teaching staff, infrastructure facility, recreational facilities and non teaching staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That principals need to be given a lot of training on management of finances to enable them manage financial resources available in their schools in enhancing students' academic achievement.
- The stakeholders like the Board of Management should think of other sources of funds that the schools can engage in to boost the financial resources.
- Other school based changes should also be addressed in order to enhance student achievement.

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