The School Principal and Teachers’ Roles in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance at a Selected School in the Karas Region (Namibia)

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ABSTRACT

Objective. The purpose of the study was to investigate the principal and teachers’ roles in improving learner’s academic performance at a selected school in the Karas region (Namibia).

Materials & Methods. The researcher applied a qualitative approach to obtain the qualitative information and deep understanding of the role of the principal...
and teachers in improving learner’s academic performance at a selected school. The teachers and the director of the Karas region took part in the study. The sample consisted of one principal and fourteen teachers, which gave a total sample size of 15 participants. For the study, the researcher used one of the best schools in the region. A purposive sampling was used to choose the participants.

Results. The findings of the research revealed that the principal’s and teachers’ roles in improving learners’ academic performance are supervision and monitoring, discipline and decision making, assessment as well as involvement of the learners in extramural activities. Upon executing those roles, they faced some challenges such as lack of teaching and learning resources, misconducting by teachers and learners, failure to meet the set targets, late coming and overcrowded classrooms. These challenges were overcome through motivation, improvising resources, continuous professional development and team building activities.

Conclusions. In this scenario, principals are required to work with other stakeholders. Collaborative teaching and discussion should be improved as it will help teachers to improve on teaching and learning. The school principal and teachers should continue to inspire their learners by talking. Teachers are encouraged to continue to play their role in classroom management, guide learners in their learning activities and let the learners use their study time judiciously. Strategic planning should be developed as it will help the stakeholders to focus on key targets for improvement.

Key words: school principal, teachers, academic learners’ performance, Karas region.

Introduction

Background of the paper. The roles, recruitment, and growth of school leaders are reflected in the continual development of societies and their provision of education (Hakutumbulwa, 2021). Other scholars like Sovacool (2016) believed that the following sets of accidental forces could drive global transition: technological breakthroughs, deeper economic interdependence, and more intense competition from local to global levels, greater diversity of social status and identity from the 20th century, as well as ongoing power and responsibility dispersion.

The transition also occurred in schools starting from preschools, resulting in increased competition between schools, increased demand for financial accountability, recentralization of curriculum and assessment control, expanded powers of school principals, increased pressure for outcome-based assessment, public scrutiny of school performance, teacher evaluation against employers’ defined competencies, and tighter controls on teachers teaching profession (Hakutumbulwa, 2021).
Educational transformation in Namibia has effects on learners’ success. There are a variety of tools used to assess learners’ performance, but according to Mouton (2015), school evaluation is based on the following performance indicators: provision of resources, teaching and learning processes, the school as a social unit, management and leadership of the school and hostel, links with parents and community, and links with other schools and the region. On the contrary, education is established on inputs, processes, and outputs. Academic achievement in some schools stays high, while it remains low in other schools in the same neighbourhood (Norviewu-Mortty, 2012). This is also the case in Namibia, particularly in the Karas region, where from preschool, principals and teachers continue to face challenges that hinders learners’ learning.

**Problem statement.** According to Beukes (2014), the Minister of Education, Dr. Namwandi says the Karas region is ranked the 11th out of the 14 regions and attained 46.4 percent pass rate in the 2013 grade 10 national examination for Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC). Over the previous six years the regional pass rate has wavered between 41 percent and 46.9 percent without ever overpass the 50 percent mark that the region has set itself as a target. He condemned the use of Afrikaans in public schools. While the minister was addressing the principals and teachers at the principal’s meeting in Keetmanshoop, the Karas region Governor Bernadus Swartbooi also highlighted issues that put the performance of the region at stake: thorough foundation is not laid at some primary schools in the region and learners who do not master the essential skills at primary level end up performing poorly at secondary level. He also enquired the allocation of continuous assessment marks linked to the real performance of learners, which illustrated an alarming picture of discrepancies and was a true illustration of laziness on the part of school leaders.

However, there are a few schools in the area that excel. The researcher is interested in learning more about the role of teachers and principals in increasing students' academic achievement at one of the highest performing schools so that the information can be shared with struggling schools with comparable backgrounds. One of Vision 2030’s goals is to see Namibia evolve from a literate society to a knowledge-based society where information is constantly acquired, refreshed, and applied to improve quality of life (Hanse-Himarwa, 2016).
The researcher is concerned that if these substandard schools continue to exist, Namibia would not be able to achieve its 2030 vision.

**Research question(s).** The following research questions are used to guide this study about the principal and teachers’ roles in improving learners’ academic performance at a selected school:

RQ 1. What role do the principal and teachers play in improving learners’ academic performance at a selected school in the Karas region?

RQ 2. What challenges do the principal and teachers face in improving the academic performance of learners at the selected school in the Karas region?

RQ 3. How can the challenges of principal and teachers in improving learners’ academic performance at a selected school in the Karas region be handled?

**Literature Review**

**The Principal and Teachers’ Leadership Role in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance**

*Leadership Activities of the Principal*

Principals provide instructional support by encouraging teachers collaboration, providing more time for teacher planning, observing teachers work, offering constructive feedback, providing instructional guidance and developing an atmosphere of caring and trust (Krasnoff, 2015). However, novice principals in rural schools have a challenge of developing a good relationship and trust among their teachers, learners and parents as well as developing skills to fulfil responsibilities such as mentoring and professional development programs (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018).

School principals can play an important role in promoting teacher leadership by delegating authority and empowering teachers in ways that allow them to influence the key organizational decisions and processes. However, it is unclear whether instruction and student learning are enhanced by promoting teachers influence in all aspects of school organization or whether it is better for principals to work directly on certain processes while delegating influence on others (Sebastian et al., 2016).
Teachers’ Leadership Role in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

There are various dimensions teachers’ leadership has on learners’ achievement such as: promoting a shared school vision, mission and goals of learners; coordinating and managing beyond classroom; facilitating improvements in curriculum, instruction and assessment; promoting teachers professional development; participating in policy and decision making; fostering a collaborative culture and in school as well as improving outreach and collaboration with families and community (Shen et al., 2020). A study by Nadelson et al. (2020) emphasized that tasks performed by teacher leaders include: monitoring improvement efforts, selecting curriculum and participating in administrative meetings, participate in peer coaching, engage parent and community participation. However, there are things that hinder the development of teachers’ leadership like: inadequate time for collaboration, learning and leading as well as lack of incentives for engaging in leadership activities.

The Principal and Teachers’ Management Role in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Administration essentially includes the planning, coordination, and management of the various aspects of the project. Within the school setting, however, the school administrator (principal) usually performs these aforementioned functions. Apart from that, teachers use a variety of instructional materials to motivate learning, such as textbooks, charts, models, graphics, real objects, and improvised materials. The success of achieving what they set out to achieve in an instructional situation is determined by the suitability, adequacy, and effective utilization of the instructional materials (Ajoke, 2017).

The Principal and Teachers’ Planning Role in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Planning is the most crucial aspect of any change attempt inside an educational institution and having a defined strategy to work toward is critical for school leadership to achieve academic achievement. Planning, on the other hand, cannot be done hastily because it is a project that involves strategic plans that will guide the school toward actionable objectives. In this view, the school leadership's professional duty becomes strategic planning, which is explicitly tailored to improve academic success (Jerry, 2017). A good principal should gather information every time he visits a classroom. This allows him
to have more evidence on evaluation. A good evaluator always let his teachers know what his expectations are and offer suggestions for improvement if expectations are not met (Meador, 2019). He further stated that, proper preparation and planning makes you a better teacher, boost learners performance, make the day go by fast and minimize classroom indiscipline.

The Principal and Teachers’ Role in Assessment and Evaluation of Learners

Teacher’s Roles in Assessment and Evaluation of Learners

Teachers’ engagement in assessment is an important aspect of curriculum implementation since it allows them to track and quantify their students’ progress and adapt their instruction accordingly. It keeps learners and their guardians up to date on their progress (Magpoc, 2020). Several factors must be examined in order to improve teachers’ assessment techniques, including a thorough examination of classroom evaluation protocols, assessment before and during instruction, researching and interpreting data, and much more. Teachers must be taught in the use of assessment instruments and techniques, as well as how to conduct high-quality classroom evaluations. It is a procedure for keeping track of the learners’ progress (Magpoc, 2020).

Principal’s Roles in Assessment and Evaluation of Learners

External forces such as policy mandates without funding, implicit bias and low expectations, the political climate, racial and social injustice manifest in the school each day. The challenge is being an instructional leader in the world of standardized testing. Schools and teachers are evaluated based on standardized data that the standardized test given to them. However, this does not give the whole picture of our learners (Ferlazzo, 2018).

Challenges Experienced by the Principals and Teachers in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Challenges Experienced by Teachers in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Charles and Mkulu (2020) conducted a study and the findings revealed that lack of motivation creates an ethos of complacency in school; teachers become unconcerned about the learning of pupils, as a result of which pupils do not aspire to improve their overall academic achievement. Policy interpretation, overcrowding, support, parental participation, moderation mechanisms (internal and external),
evaluation planning, implementation, and communication, as well as a lack of resources, were all identified as important issues (Sethusha, 2012). Some of the obstacles faced by the teachers are scheduling limits, class sizes and inadequate funding by the government as well as stringent conditions attached to grants from the government which relegate buying of teaching and learning resources (Muzyamba & Changala, 2019).

Challenges the Principals Encounter in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Exam results and curricula monitoring by the principal will be poor unless there is a comprehensive and consultative strategy to addressing the learners’ difficulties. According to Ehiane (2014), violence disrupts the regular operation of African schools, affecting the efficacy of school leaders. According to Kidane (2013), the principal may encounter a lack of support from the parents who have little regard for the educational system, which can impair the principal’s role in boosting the learners’ performance. The fact that the principal is overwhelmed with administrative duties is a problem that could prevent him/her from supervising the process of teaching and learning.

Large class numbers, inadequate school infrastructure, a lack of manuals, a limited follow-up assistance and feedback system on the implementation of continuous assessment, and a shortage of material and equipment in schools were all identified as major problems of continuous assessment (Kidane, 2013). Principals spend the majority of their time dealing with parent issues, community-related tasks, discipline, and facilities administration, leaving little time for instructional leadership, teaching, and learning. Modern principals face two major challenges: a lack of time and excessive managerial responsibilities (Wieckzorek & Manard, 2018).

Strategies Used by the Principal and Teachers to Overcome their Challenges in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Professional Learning

Effective professional development is based on the following elements: active learning, collaboration, models and modelling of effective practice, coaching and expert support feedback and reflection as well as adequate time to learn, practice and implement new strategies that facilitate change in their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Professional learning is essential because, it allow educators opportunities
to directly improve teaching and learning, build strong relationship between team members, help teachers stay on top of new research and emerging technology tools for the classroom and it helps teachers reflect on ideas (Serviss, 2021).

**The Motivation of Teachers**

Teachers can have an impact on learners for better or for worse but if teachers are motivated, this influence will be more positive. Sources of loss of motivation among teachers are extrinsic e.g. workload, salary, lack of resources, lack of social recognition and curriculum limitations. However, teachers are motivated by intrinsic factors such as enjoyment or satisfaction when teaching (Kamstra, 2020). However, there are preservice and inservice factors that influence teachers motivation such as helping teachers when needed, publicly praise teachers, leave some room in the budget for small gifts, encourage teachers to seek out professional development opportunities, give teachers a voice, empower each teacher’s strength, recognize key stress times and encourage collaboration.

Transformational leadership practices by teachers and principals that have a positive impact on learners’ academic achievement (see Figure 1).

The theoretical framework (see figure 1) in the sense of this study reveals the relationship between the instructional leadership practices of the principal, the approaches to instructional management, the responsibilities of teachers and the difficulties faced in enhancing the academic performance of the learners. For a school to achieve the better academic performance, the principal needs to harmonize the four integrated variables, because the school is an open structure rather than a closed entity.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design.** This study employs a qualitative research method. A case study is used to portray what it’s like to be in a specific situation and it is usually explanatory in nature (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher aims at capturing the reality of the participants’ experiences and beliefs about a particular circumstance. This study adopted a case study because more and in-depth information was
required about the matter under investigation, and it used a single case (one selected school). The researcher selected a single case study which focused on a single entity because, the researcher had limited resources.

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Population and Sample. The target population, according to Asiamah et al. (2017), is the distinct population from which the sample was drawn. A total of 19 schools in the Karas region were included in the study. The study’s participants are all of the principals and teachers in the Karas region. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define sampling as the process of choosing which people, settings, events, or behaviors to be considered. A sample is a subset of a population chosen to research the population without collecting data from the entire population.

The selected school has a total 26 educators and 14 educators who taught the students of Grade 10. This is because these individuals deem to have more information and better understanding of their roles towards these academic learners’ performance. The 15th participant was the principal and he was selected because he was the head of the school and he was at a better position of knowing what was going on in the school in terms of leadership and management that influenced learners’ academic performance. A purposive sampling technique was utilized in the study because, it recruited participants who provided in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation.

Data Collection Methods

Interview

An interview is a collaborative interaction in which the interviewer asks questions of participants in order to obtain information and learn about their ideas, beliefs, perspectives, opinions, and actions (Creswell, 2013). An open-ended interview is used to gain the viewpoints of the principal and teachers on their role in enhancing learners’ academic progress. The interview was done telephonically due to COVID-19 implications. The researcher scheduled a meeting with the participants and discussed the research project’s goals, to make sure the participants know the kind of information expected from them. The researcher obtained the participants’ approval and ensured that classes were not disrupted. The researcher performed the interview over the phone at the time set by the participants (appointment) which enabled the researcher to collect data on time and avoid disappointment with participants.

Data Analysis

The researcher used the following steps to examine the data after obtaining it. The information from the recorded audio is transformed...
The information was transcribed, coded, and categorized into themes and subheadings. The research questions guided the creation of themes and subheadings. The researcher used thematic analysis because it endorsed her lot of flexibility in interpreting information and it as well allowed her to approach large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes. Written transcriptions allowed her to quote the interviewee. This helped her to adhere to the standard protocol that the qualitative research required credibility, context, and transferability.

Results

The Principal’s Point of View

Principal’s Roles of Shared Supportive Leadership in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance

Motivation, mentorship, decision making, delegation and supervision are some shared supportive leadership the principal use. “Principal lead by example since he is the head of the school, delegate tasks and monitor progress. Therefore, colleagues will follow his good examples of commitment and punctuality”. T 3.

“By allocating responsibilities to those who like them and interested in leading others e.g. coaching different sport codes, mentoring especially novice teachers, conducting choir, hostel supervision etc.”. T 10.

How the Principal Manages the School

There are different ways the principal manages the school such as: through curriculum and policy implementation, school rules, class visits, monitoring school resources and finance, target setting and teamwork. “The principal check teachers’ preparation files and monitor school finances to see how money is used in the school”. T 10.

“The principal consult meetings to communicate the progress and needs of the school. Apart from that, he make sure physical and human resources are enough at school”. T 12.

How the Principal Facilitates the Planning Process

Planning at school can be done in different ways such as lesson planning, sharing information in a meeting, and drawing up a budget, drawing up annual calendar of activities as well as drawing up a plan of action for improvement. “The principal help with drawing up the
calendar of activities that stipulate all the events which are supposed to take place throughout the year”. T 5.

“*The principal schedule staff meetings and parents’ meetings as well as management meetings. He also plan or and facilities school projects such as fund raising*”. T 12.

“I communicate how things are supposed to be done and monitor different departments to see how they are progressing. As a school, we analyze the results at the beginning of each term and discuss the plan of action for improvement”. Principal.

**How the Principal Facilitates Assessment and Evaluation Process**

The principal monitors the assessment and evaluation process by doing class visits, moderating continuous assessment tasks, doing result analysis, giving positive feedback. “*The principal together with the HODs check the quality of tasks given to learners by moderating them before they are handed to learners*”. T 2.

“Our principal encourages teachers to give more activities to learners and the overall school is evaluated through school self-evaluation that is facilitated by the principal”. T 9.

“The principal ask teachers and learners to set their targets, do different assessment activities, record the marks and see if they met the targets set. He also moderates activities and the exam with the assistance of HODs”. T 10.

**Challenges Experienced by the Principal**

Challenges experienced by the principal when executing the role of shared supportive leadership are: biasness, work not done on time, teachers or learners not cooperating, late coming and some colleagues challenging authority. “*Some colleagues challenge the authority by doing wrong things on purpose*”. T 1.

“*When some leaders at different levels of organization are arrogant and become biased in considering others opinions during decision making*”. T 11.

**Management Challenges Faced by the Principal**

The following challenges are experienced by the principal while managing the school: not handing in of preparation files, not meeting targets set, disobeying school rules, teachers or learners not cooperating, leave issues, refusing or withdrawing from responsibility and not adhering to COVID-19 regulations. “*Some colleagues do not respect
the morals and values of the school e.g. by not writing lesson plans or coming late to school”. T 5.

“When the targets set by teachers and learners are not met, the principal together with teachers come up with the plan of action which some people take personal and feel more vulnerable”. T 14.

**Planning Challenges**

These are the shortcomings experienced by the principal: not handing in preparation files, disagreements among committee members, prolonged feedback from colleagues, ignorance and inadequate resources. “Some teachers do not attend to their learners during non-promotional subjects and their learners disturb the next class that is being taught”. T 7.

“Some of us do not hand in the preparation files but on the other hand our learners perform well”. T 14.

**Assessment and Evaluation Challenges**

The principal experienced the challenges during assessment and evaluation: teachers being nervous during class visit, incomplete continuous assessment, learners’ marking themselves, inadequate stationeries and inappropriate conduct. “I do not like the way the principal pop up at windows sometimes while I am teaching”. T 3.

“Some teachers do not mark and return learners work on time so that learners get to know how their progressing”. T 5.

**How the challenges faced by the principal are overcome?**

**How shared supportive leadership challenges are overcome?**

This is how the principal deal with leadership problems: he encourages teamwork and transparency, give warnings, encourages teachers to have a positive interrelation with others, discuss the problem with victims; do team building activities and being approachable. “Teachers should acquaint themselves with the information through reading policies and know their rights”. T 3.

“We do more of team building activities to enhance teamwork. The principal is approachable and he advices everyone to feel free to approach him in case there is something that may require his attention”. T 6.

**How Management Challenges are Overcome?**

The principal uses the following management strategies: discussing the plan of action, motivation, teamwork, discussing issues, cleaning
campaigns and following correct grievance procedures to deal with some problems. “He follows the correct grievance procedures to deal with the issue”. T 5.

“How planning challenges are overcome?

The principal overcome planning issues by motivating teachers, reshuffling committees; enforce democracy, encouraging teamwork, rims of papers by learners and fundraising projects. “Learners are asked to bring rims of papers to school to ensure there are enough copy papers. Fund raising is done to get money to buy some facilities”. T 4.

“How assessment and evaluation challenges are overcome?

The principal communicates, analyse exam results, and encourage teachers to mark 90% of learners’ work, advocate for honesty, and give feedback on time, coming up with the plan of action and test week. “Remind teachers to give feedback to learners on time”. T 5.

Teachers’ point of view

Teachers’ roles of shared supportive leadership

In teacher leadership, teachers participate in decision making, lead various school improvement teams and work with other stakeholders to initiate change in the school. In short, teachers’ roles in shared supportive leadership are: delegation, teamwork, transparency, collaboration, mentorship and empowering of teachers. “By delegating tasks to class monitors of recording attendance and making sure the class is clean”. T 1.

“Responsibility and authority is shared through high collaboration and teamwork e.g. collaborative teaching and planning”. T 7.

Teachers’ role in managing their classrooms

Teachers’ roles in management are: enforcing school and class rules, motivation, being well prepared, good classroom setting, taking
attendance and discipline. “I let the problematic child to sit in front to make it easier to control them. I facilitate setting up of class rules that are done by learners and each rule is set with consequences”. T 2.

“I punish the learners who fail the task or misbehave, as long as I am not using corporal punishment. I also motivate learners to have a positive attitude towards school”. T 6.

“Class attendance should be recorded to follow upon absentees. Be well prepared and make the lesson interesting to avoid the learners from getting bored and misbehave”. T 11.

**How teachers plan for academic as well as extramural activities at school?**

Teachers plan for lessons, school functions, budget, and take part in decision making, departmental meetings and teambuilding activities.

“We put measures in place to vindicate COVID-19 by having buckets of water in place, sanitizers and masks. I also plan for my lessons including remedial teaching”. T 4.

“Teachers plan for their lessons, certain programs that take place at school are planned for and organised by teachers. I assist with drawing up of a budget and discuss it with teachers so that they can also have their inputs”. Principal.

**How teachers assess and evaluate learners?**

Assessment activities are the ones that guide the teachers on what to do when they reflect on their work. Teachers are also responsible for giving feedback after evaluation so that learners know where they stand in terms of performance and discuss the way forward with their teachers. Teachers’ engagement in assessment is an important aspect of curriculum implementation since it allows them to track and quantify their students' progress and adapt their instruction accordingly. It keeps learners and their guardians updated on their progress. “Check learners’ progress and level of learning by asking random questions (informal) or through tests, project, exam etc. (formal)”. T 2.

“HODs moderate tests and exam to make sure that learners are given quality tasks and they also do formal class visits”. T 4.

“Through activities and exam. It can also be done through extramural activities like sports, debate etc. This is because academics alone do not give a true reflection of ones’ capabilities”. T 14.

**Problems experienced by teachers at school**

**Shared supportive leadership challenges**
Here are challenges that teachers face when executing their leadership role: autocratic leadership by subordinates, lack of experience, people refusing to do the task, biasness and communication that cease between some colleagues. “When you give directives for some people to do certain work but they refuse”. T 2.

“When the colleagues are not cooperating”. Principal.

Management challenges

Difficulties encountered by teachers while managing a certain group of people: learners intimidating class monitor, disobeying rules, too much administration work, overcrowded classrooms, peer pressure among learners, bullying and COVID-19 implications. “COVID-19 disturbs everything. Learners in isolation do not do activities given to others at school, learners learning from home do not submit activities given to them and it hinders learning process”. T 7.

“Sometimes if a teacher is not well prepared, he or she does not go to class or leave the class earlier and that class disturb the next class”. T 11.

Planning challenges

During the planning process, teachers experience the following problems: inadequate resources, too much work load, poor time management, financial and COVID-19 implications. “COVID-19 interrupted the planning process. We do not plan for sports and other extramural activities anymore, only lesson plans”. T 1.

“Teachers clashing during meetings when decisions are made because some teachers refuse the tasks given to them”. T 6.

Assessment and evaluation challenges

These are the challenges faced by teachers during assessment and evaluation: learners failing, COVID-19 implications, cheating, absenteeism and learners not giving their reports to parents. “Learners are now divided into groups of how they are supposed to attend school due to COVID-19. If you give activity to some learners of the same grade, they may share questions with those who were not at school”. T 1.

“Most of the classes consist of more than forty learners and it makes it difficult to finish marking on time”. T 8.

How challenges faced by teachers are overcome?

How shared supportive leadership challenges are overcome?
This is how the teachers overcome the challenges of shared supportive leadership: communication, teambuilding activities, motivation, leading by example, collaboration, teamwork and continuous professional development programme. “Through collaboration and empowerment of teachers”. T 3.

“Advise colleagues to behave according to the code of conduct. We do more teambuilding activities to get to know each other more outside the school and know a better approach for each individual”. T 14.

**How management challenges are overcome?**

The following strategies are used by teachers to handle management challenges at school: communication, good class setting, marks at least 90% of learners’ work, involve different stakeholders and continuous professional development programme. “Resolve the issue by involving different stakeholders like life skills teacher and learners parents”. T 1.

“Use continuous professional development platform to discuss problems, overview of educational policies and come up with solutions”. T 4.

**How planning challenges are overcome?**

For planning to go smoothly, this is how teachers tackle the issues regarding planning: teamwork, transparency, improvising, discussing the issues, fundraising, delegation, and decision making and positive feedback.

“Involve all teachers in decision making and give positive feedback during class visit”. T 4.

“Talk and agree upon one thing. This is done by emphasizing the importance of delegation and teamwork”. T 6.

“The school looks for sponsors and do fundraising activities to raise some fund to use in that regard”. T 8.

**How assessment and evaluation challenges are overcome?**

Assessment and evaluation problems are tackled in the following ways: motivation, punishing learners, moderation of tasks, give more tasks, use various teaching methods and give positive feedback. “Give positive feedback to learners and parents through meetings and report cards for learners”. T 2.

“I advise teachers to deal with the situation e.g. punishing the learners before they bring them to me. Tasks are moderated to check learners’ progress”. Principal.
Discussion

**Leadership role.** Shared leadership is linked with distributed leadership, (teacher leadership and student leadership), and participative leadership. Shared leadership requires the principal to work with other stakeholders as peers (Nkengbeza, 2014). Motivation is one of the qualities every leader is supposed to have. Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic; however it should help in improving learners’ academic performance. School principal and teachers inspire learners by walking the talk. They can be exemplary in various ways; being punctual, self-disciplined, well dressed, caring, being professional and through sense of humor. In shared leadership, everyone staff member has a chance to lead by chairing a meeting and some people are chosen to be committee head for certain committees. Besides that, novice teachers are given mentors to help them. Peer monitoring and evaluation empower other stakeholders by involving them in decision making.

**Management role.** The teachers are responsible for displaying rules in classes and explain them to learners. They are also responsible for arranging chairs and tables in a good order that support a conducive teaching and learning environment. Problematic children should seat at the front to make it easier to control them. There should also be enough spaces between the tables to make it easier for the teacher to move around easily and see what is going on in the class. Class rules should be set with consequences. Apart from classroom rules, some teachers manage their classrooms by giving more class activities to the learners to keep them busy. Some appoints class monitors to report ill-disciplined peers.

Class attendance should be recorded to enable teacher to follow up on the ones absent. Teachers should plan thoroughly and use teaching aids that will stimulate learners to learn. One scholar emphasized that students have to adhere to the allocated time, knowing well that there will be no time compensation (Ehiane, 2014). The principal should walk around the school and see what is happening e.g. checking which teachers are not going for classes by checking the timetable and walking around to see how learners are in the classes. When it comes to finance, the principal should know how money is used at the school and he or she should also know the school needs, for example, if the school...
need brooms or other stationaries. The principal also make sure human resources are adequate at school.

**Planning.** A school can only be successful if it has a strategic plan, which helps identify and explain priorities, key improvement targets, action plans, and eventually measure and assess the school’s effectiveness for change management purposes (Meador, 2019). HODs meet with teachers at the beginning of the year and discuss how things will be done in their departments. Involvement of teachers in decision making and positive feedback during class visits is very important. Teachers plan for lessons using the syllabus and a scheme of work. There is a calendar of activities that clearly stipulates all the events that are supposed to take place in the course of the year and their target date. In various committees, members meet monthly to discuss issues pertaining to their committee.

**Assessment and evaluation.** It is increasingly recognized that the role of the principal is to assist teachers in learning and developing assessment literacy cultures by utilizing concepts such as assessment for learning and assessment as learning as vehicles to improve classroom and school planning and decision-making (McEwan, 2021). The principal have to monitor assessment given by teachers to learners by moderating them. They also do class visits to monitor teachers and give them positive feedback. On the other hand, teachers have to give learners various assessment activities and also give them feedback. Formal and informal assessment is done to check the progress and the learners’ level of understanding. Formal assessments are summative (exam) and formative (tests, projects etc.). Informal is oral or written (asking random questions).

**Recommendations**

The researcher recommends that the underperforming schools in the region can utilize the following measures to enhance their learners’ performance:

- Educators should implement strict rules to maintain discipline in school.
- Teaching and learning should be made interesting to catch the interest of learners and make them stay longer in school (reduce dropping out).
– Educators should be constantly in contact with parents so that they can inform parents about their kids’ behaviors and performance.
– Motivational speakers should be invited to inspire the learners about social life and professional development (careers).
– Management should make sure that teachers are happy at work and motivated to do their work well. This enables teachers to stay longer in the workplace.
– A continuous professional development program for teachers to help them to evaluate themselves constantly, keep their strength while working on the areas of improvement.

In terms of upcoming research implications, methodological approach and findings from this study should be considered when developing future study in this area. Findings from this study could be strengthened if future study focus on individual learner accomplishment and this information can be associated with particular teachers. This can also assist in finding out how and which principals’ conducts could have influenced teachers causing enhanced learners’ performance.

**Conclusion**

This study provides information that links the principal and teachers’ leadership roles to the academic achievement of learners. It can be concluded that good school leadership and management creates a good climate for teaching and learning. If teachers are motivated and feel appreciated, they are likely to create a culture of teamwork and collaboration which help them enhance learners’ academic performance. On the other hand, planning and assessment are also essential in improving learners’ performance because they help to keep track of learners’ progress.

There is no doubt that the principal and teachers at the selected school face many challenges in improving the academic performance of their learners. These challenges include some teachers not taken up shared leadership responsibility, “Some leaders at different levels of school are arrogant and become biased in considering others opinions during decision making” (T 11), “Some leaders of different committees are biased because they consider opinions for some individuals only”
The School Principal and Teachers’ Roles in Improving... (Principal), “When the principal deal with disciplinary hearings, it takes up much time of other duties he is supposed to do that day” (T 2), “There are colleagues who do not submit their preparation files on time while some do not submit at all and by doing so they are undermining authority” (T 4). The authors of this study have suggested how the above challenges of the principal and teachers in improving learners’ academic performance can be handled at a selected school in the Karas region.

Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that this paper “The School Principal and Teachers’ Roles in Improving Learners’ Academic Performance at a Selected School in the Karas Region” is taken from Mrs. Saima Kaukewahulo Master thesis supervised by Dr David Nkengbeza at the University of Namibia.

ADHERENCE TO ETHICAL STANDARDS

Ethics Declarations. All procedures performed with the permission of the teachers who participated in the research for the processing and analysis of their data.

Funding. No funding was received to conduct this research.

Conflict of Interest. The author does not have any potential conflict of interests that may influence the decision to publish this article.

Author’s Contribution. Saima Kaukewahulo: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis and investigation; Writing – original draft preparation, Writing – review and editing; David Nkengbeza: Resources, Supervision, reviewing and editing the manuscript, shaping the article to meet journal’s requirements, verification etc.

Consent for publication. The authors approve of this submission and, conditional upon the decision made by the editorial board from the peer-review process, consent to the publication of the current work. The work has not been, nor has it been submitted to other journals in consideration for publication.

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Роль директора школи та вчителів у покращенні...

з одного директора та чотирнадцятьох учительів, що в цілому становило 15 учасників. Дослідження було проведено в одній з найкращих шкіл у регіоні, а для відбору учасників використовувалася цільова вибірка.

Результати. Результати дослідження показали, що роль директора школи та учителів у покращенні академічної успішності учнів полягає в нагляді та контролі учнів, дисципліні та прийняті рішення, оцінюванні, а також у залученні учнів до позанавчальної діяльності. У ході дослідження було з’ясовано, що існують певні труднощі, такі як нестача ресурсів для викладання та навчання, неналежна поведінка вчителів та учнів, недосягнення поставлених цілей, запізнення та переповнені класи. Ці виклики вдалося подолати шляхом мотивації, використання ресурсів, безперервного професійного розвитку та дій по створенню команди.

Висновки. У цьому сценарії директори шкіл повинні працювати зі стейкхолдерами для налагодження спільного викладання та обговорення, оскільки це допоможе вчителям покращити навчання та викладання. Директор школи та вчителі повинні постійно використовувати метод бесіди у роботі з учнями. Учителі зацікавлені у здійсненні керівництвом класом, використанні навчальних посібників, керуванні учнями у їхній навчальній діяльності та раціональному використанні навчального часу. Слід розвивати стратегічне планування, оскільки воно допоможе стейкхолдерам зосередитися на покращенні ключових цілей.

Ключові слова: директор школи, учителі, академічна успішність учнів, регіон Карас.