

**STRATEGIES HEAD TEACHERS USE TO IMPROVE WORK
PERFORMANCE OF SUPPORT STAFF IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN GATANGA DISTRICT MURANG'A COUNTY.**

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THK/ MED 111/04310

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN
EDUCATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY.**

NOVEMBER 2013

ABSTRACT

Support staff includes those who support in often unrecognized way the quality of learning experience. School heads are central in the successful management of the education institutions and implementation of education programs. It is quite clear that the head teacher cannot manage the institution without the important role of the support staff. If the support staff does not perform their duties then the head teacher will fail. The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies head teachers use to improve the work performance of support staff in public primary schools in Gatanga district Murang'a county. The study employed both sample survey and naturalistic designs in collecting information. The study was carried out in Gatanga district because of the upcoming boarding wings and special units that have been established since the district was started in the year 2010. Currently there are 14 special units in Gatanga and two other public primary schools with boarding wings. This calls for more support staff and hence the need for this study. Gatanga district is one of the eight districts in Murang'a County and is a constituency. There are three large education zones in the district which include Kariara, Gatanga, and Kihumbuini zones. Both purposeful and simple random sampling designs were used in this study so that the schools with boarding wings would be included in the study. The sample was 12 head teachers, 12 deputy head teachers and 25 support staff. Two types of data collection instruments were used to collect data for the study. A semi structured interview guide was used to collect data from the head teachers. Two questionnaires were used to collect data from deputy head teachers and support staff. Ten percent of the sample size was used to pre-test the instruments. One school head teacher, one deputy head teacher and 2 support staff were selected using simple random sampling technique. SPSS computer program was used to analyze the data generated from the study. The questionnaires were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The study revealed existing gaps concerning improving the work performance of the support staff and deliberated on how the head teachers can use the strategies to improve the work performance of support staff in public primary schools in Gatanga district. Findings revealed that the support staffs play an important role in the achievement of educational goals. It was found out that the roles performed by support staff could not be performed by the teaching staff. Therefore the support staff is essential in the attainment of educational goals. The study found out that different strategies are essential in improving work performance of the support staff. These include regular motivation of support staff, which when backed up with enough and modern facilities will create enthusiasm and the zeal among the support staff to do their work regular training as well as empowering the support staff would update their skills and help them grow professionally. Open communication came out as one of the best ways to deliver information to the staff members and to enhance delegation of duties. It also emerged that regular supervision will put the support staff in the right track and help them put more efforts in their work. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that head teachers find diverse ways of motivating support staff. Diverse channel of communication be set so as to pass information accurately. Regular supervision will reveal what is going on in the school. Workshops seminars and exposure (trips and visits to other institutions) are means of sharing experimental knowledge and mutual support of the support staff thus it was recommended that the head teachers find alternative sources of funds example income generating projects so as to cater for staff seminars, workshops or educational trips since the support staff members play an important role in the school.