

**AN INVESTIGATION ON HOW UTILIZATION OF ALLOCATED
TIME INFLUENCES ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
KIRINYAGA COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, the means to judge academic achievement is through examinations. Previous studies in Kenya have shown that academic performance of students is affected by a number of factors, including student-related factors like motivation to learn; school-related factors like adequacy of resources and facilities; teacher-related factors like teacher morale, teaching methods and job satisfaction; and school administrators' leadership traits; among others. Researchers in Kenya have not given much consideration to allocated time and how it relates with students' academic performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate how utilization of allocated time influences academic performance of secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. The study was guided by the following objectives: to determine the amount of allocated time that is spent in active learning among students; to determine how utilization of allocated time influences students' academic achievement and to find out the factors associated with poor utilization of allocated time in secondary schools. Literature was reviewed on utilization of allocated time in schools, amount of allocated time spent in active learning among students, time utilization and academic achievement, and factors associated with poor utilization of allocated time. The study employed a qualitative methodology and a descriptive survey design targeting all the 124 principals, 1,365 teachers and 36,670 students from all the 124 public secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. Stratified sampling was used to select 40 participating schools; each stratum representing boys' only, girls' only, mixed day and mixed day and boarding schools. All the 40 principals from the sampled schools were purposively selected while simple random sampling was used to select 320 teachers. Two questionnaires, one for students and another for teachers, an interview schedule for principals and an observation check list were used to collect data. Data was both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data collected was coded and entered into an SPSS programme for analysis. Qualitative data was put under themes consistent with the research objectives. The study established that most of the sampled schools had a time plan but the time plan was not strictly adhered to. It was also revealed that schools experienced lesson interruptions whose causes varied, the major nature of interruptions were; other students, other teachers, unspecified visitors and school administrators. This was seen to cause time wastage. Time lost was also seen to affect student academic performance due to poor syllabus coverage and less time for revision. The major factors associated with poor utilization of time were; teachers and students absenteeism, teachers and students strikes, students indiscipline, inadequate teaching and learning facilities. The study recommends that schools should ensure there are enough teaching and learning facilities, teachers to prepare and be punctual for the lessons, students to adhere to the school rules and regulations, remedial classes to be conducted in order to cover for the time lost, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to disburse Free day secondary Education funds in time so that students are not sent home. The findings of the study will be of great significance to various stakeholders and agents in the Education sector since it will enlighten all on how time lost meant for learning leads to poor academic performance and wastage of resources.