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Principals' individualized consideration communication and teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Kenya

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of principals' individualised consideration communication strategy on teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory and employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Data were collected from 52 teachers and 5 principals using questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed significant positive relationships among indicators of individualised consideration communication, with recognition of teachers' achievements correlating strongly with incorporation of teacher suggestions ($r = .80$, $p < .01$). The study concluded that individualised communication practices enhance teaching effectiveness. The study recommends strengthening principals' communication competencies through leadership training programmes.

Key terms: Individualised Consideration, Transformational Leadership, Leadership Communication, Teaching Effectiveness, Secondary Schools, Kenya

Background of the Study

Principals' communication with their teachers promotes a constructive school environment that supports collective decision-making and continuous instructional improvement (Wehmeyer, 2026). An individualized consideration communication strategy involves giving personalized support, mentorship, and encouragement. It involves recognizing individual teachers' abilities and fostering an engaging environment for effective teaching (Dalkie & Botha, 2024). It involves active Listening, empathy, and

tailored guidance, ensuring teachers feel valued and motivated. It is where the principal builds meaningful professional relationships with teachers to enhance their commitment and performance through active Listening, giving personalized Feedback, having One-on-One Interactions, recognizing and appreciating teachers' efforts, and having an open-door policy for communication (Mba & Okoko, 2024).

Studies show that principals who show individualized consideration substantially improve teacher commitment, professional growth, and student outcomes. A study by Matos & Kasztelnik (2021) on transformational educational leadership and innovative strategies engaging online faculty for excellent teaching performance in the United States revealed that principals foster inclusion and provide consistent support to improve teaching performance by recognizing teachers' efforts. The study further established that individualized strategies, such as recognition of the value of teachers, significantly enhance their engagement in teaching and commitment to institutional goals (Matos & Kasztelnik, 2021).

Bessong (2024) showed that principals in South Africa created participative decision-making structures in which teachers freely suggest solutions to problems, and principals share their visions through open communication, which created opportunities for teachers to explore the curriculum as a way of enhancing effective teaching.

In Kenya, educational reforms such as the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) have elevated the importance of principals' communication in shaping teaching effectiveness (Kavua, 2020). The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) emphasize principals' roles in curriculum implementation through supportive communication, supervision, and mentorship (MOE, 2021). A study by Awili and Begi (2021) on the relationship between instructional leadership and implementation of competency-based curriculum in early years' education in Nairobi, Kenya, showed that most principals focused more on administrative roles rather than effective leadership communication. Koskie et al. (2020) on how head teachers' communication competencies influence school management in public primary schools in Narok County, Kenya, emphasized that principals' communication competencies had a positive influence on effective school management. However, this was not the case in some of the schools in the county. Shitambasi, Okemasisi, and Kimotho (2022) investigated how principals' effective communication can be applied as a conflict management strategy to enhance teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Kisii County. The study revealed that the principals' communication, creativity, motivation, and team spirit as strategies in conflict management positively influenced the teachers' job performance. This shows that the communication strategies used by principals were useful in explaining teachers' job performance.

The 2019 census shows that Athi River Sub-County faces significant demographic and industrial growth, which is translating into increasing student enrolment and pressure on educational institutions. These pressures manifest as overcrowded classrooms, diverse learner needs, and constrained resources (Statistics, 2019). All these factors pose challenges for school leaders in fostering effective teaching. Some school principals occasionally adopt open-door policies, recognition, and motivational communication strategies that nurture teamwork and innovation. Others rely on hierarchical, directive practices that may decrease morale (Mavindu et al., 2024; Mugambi, 2018). While emerging evidence indicates principals' support for teacher professional development in Athi River, systematic research exploring their communication strategies and how this shape teaching effectiveness is still limited (Mavindu et al., 2024).

Despite growing evidence that leadership communication contributes to instructional effectiveness, an important gap remains regarding the specific role of individualized consideration communication strategies in enhancing teaching effectiveness. Individualized consideration, which involves attentive listening, personalized feedback, mentorship, empathy, and support for teachers' professional growth,

represents one of the most people-centred dimensions of transformational leadership. However, most studies in Kenya have examined leadership styles broadly and have typically combined individualized consideration with other leadership dimensions, making it difficult to determine its unique contribution to teaching effectiveness. As a result, the influence of principals' personalized communication practices on teachers' instructional performance, professional growth, and commitment remains insufficiently understood. Furthermore, existing studies have largely relied on cross-sectional designs and have paid limited attention to the specific context of Athi River Sub-County, where schools face challenges associated with rapid population growth, increasing enrolment, diverse learner needs, and resource constraints. Consequently, there is limited context-specific evidence on how principals' individualized consideration communication strategies influence teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools. This study was therefore conducted to address this gap by examining the influence of principals' individualized consideration communication strategies on teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Kenya.

Despite the growing body of international and national scholarship affirming the role of leadership communication in enhancing instructional effectiveness, several gaps remain evident. Many Kenyan studies focus broadly on leadership styles. However, they do not always separate communication as a distinct strategy worthy of independent investigation. This leaves an incomplete picture of how communication, as an impartial leadership function, influences teaching effectiveness. Another limitation lies in the methodological approaches used in existing studies. Most of the research relies on cross-sectional designs, which provide only a snapshot of relationships between leadership and teacher outcomes. Such approaches restrict the ability to capture the sustained influence of communication strategies on teacher performance, retention, and school culture over time. Scholars such as Onumah et al. (2022) and Ajape and Ayuba (2024) have noted more robust designs to unpack these long-term dynamics. There is also an apparent lack of evidence at the local level. In contexts like Athi River Sub-County, where schools face unique pressures of rapid population growth, limited resources, and diverse student needs, little empirical research has examined how principals' individualized communication strategies shape teacher effectiveness. This lack of localized data creates a critical knowledge gap. It underscores the need for studies that generate context-specific insights to inform policy and practice in the Kenyan education system.

There is a notable gap in empirical research examining specific communication strategies used by principals and how they influence teaching effectiveness in local settings. This study addresses these gaps by exploring Individualized Consideration communication strategy and how it influences teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in the Athi River Sub-County. The research aims to contribute practical insights for enhancing instructional leadership and policy in Kenya and similar settings by bringing localized, contextually grounded evidence to bear.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching effectiveness is a critical determinant of students' learning outcomes and the overall quality of education. School principals contribute significantly to teaching effectiveness through leadership practices that provide instructional support, professional guidance, motivation, and opportunities for teacher development. Effective leadership has been shown to enhance teacher job satisfaction, teacher self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and instructional performance, all of which contribute to improved educational outcomes (Haug & Wasonga, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Winn et al., 2021).

Despite the acknowledged importance of leadership in schools, concerns regarding teaching effectiveness continue to be reported in many public secondary schools in Kenya. Studies have demonstrated that principals' leadership practices influence teacher motivation, performance, and school

effectiveness (Hasibuan, 2022; Mgaiwa & Hamis, 2022; Nachshoni, 2024). Similarly, effective communication between school leaders and teachers has been associated with improved morale, conflict management, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Koskie et al., 2020; Saddique & Raja, 2022; Shitambasi et al., 2022). However, much of the existing literature has examined leadership and communication as broad constructs, with limited focus on the specific role of principals' individualized consideration communication strategies.

Individualized consideration, a key dimension of transformational leadership, involves recognizing individual teacher needs, providing personalized feedback, demonstrating empathy, supporting professional growth, and fostering meaningful interpersonal relationships (Khan et al., 2022; Adeoye et al., 2025). Although research has established positive relationships between transformational leadership and teacher performance (Normianti et al., 2019; Matos & Kasztelnik, 2021; Dalkie & Botha, 2024), few studies have isolated individualized consideration communication strategies to determine their unique influence on teaching effectiveness. In Kenya, available studies have largely focused on instructional leadership, communication competencies, teacher professional development, and other dimensions of transformational leadership, leaving limited empirical evidence on how individualized consideration communication influences teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools (Awili & Begi, 2021; Musyoki et al., 2021; Mavindu, 2024).

Furthermore, although Komen, Munene, and Mwawasi (2026) examined principals' individualized consideration and teacher job performance in public integrated secondary schools in Rabai Sub-County, Kilifi County, limited evidence exists regarding this relationship in public secondary schools within Athi River Sub-County, Machakos County. Differences in school contexts, leadership practices, teacher characteristics, and institutional environments necessitate context-specific investigation. Consequently, a knowledge gap exists regarding the influence of principals' individualised consideration communication strategies on teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County. This study therefore sought to address this gap by examining how principals' individualized consideration communication strategies influence teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Kenya.

Research Question

How do principals' individualised consideration communication strategies influence teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Kenya?

Specific Areas of Investigation

The study explored teachers' and principals' perceptions of how individualized consideration communication practices influence teaching effectiveness through:

individualized feedback on teaching performance;

promotion of inclusive teaching and learning practices;

regular academic discussions with teachers;

empathy and personal support for teachers and learners;

recognition and celebration of teachers' achievements;

incorporation of teachers' suggestions in school decision-making; and

one-on-one engagement focused on professional growth.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory, originally developed by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass and Avolio (1994). The theory explains how leaders influence followers by inspiring, motivating, intellectually stimulating, and providing individualized support. Transformational leaders encourage commitment to organizational goals by building positive relationships, creating a shared vision, and addressing the unique needs of individuals. In educational settings, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding how principals' leadership behaviours influence teacher effectiveness and school performance.

Among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, individualized consideration is the most relevant to this study. Individualized consideration refers to a leader's ability to recognize and respond to the unique needs, abilities, aspirations, and challenges of individual followers through personalized support, coaching, mentorship, active listening, empathy, and constructive feedback. Leaders practising individualized consideration establish meaningful interpersonal relationships that make followers feel valued, respected, and supported in their professional growth (Khan et al., 2022). Such leadership behaviours are particularly important in schools, where teachers require continuous professional guidance, emotional support, and recognition to perform effectively.

The theory proposes that when principals communicate through individualized consideration strategies, teachers are more likely to develop higher levels of motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and professional confidence. Individualized feedback, one-on-one consultations, recognition of achievements, empathy during personal challenges, and support for professional development allow teachers to improve instructional practices and remain committed to school goals. Research has demonstrated that transformational leadership contributes positively to teacher performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment through supportive and relationship-oriented leadership practices (Adeoye et al., 2025; Matos & Kasztelnik, 2021; Normianti et al., 2019).

Within the context of this study, Transformational Leadership Theory explains how principals' individualized consideration communication strategies influence teaching effectiveness. By providing personalized guidance, encouraging professional growth, recognizing teachers' contributions, and maintaining open and supportive communication, principals create conditions that enhance instructional quality, teacher motivation, collaboration, and commitment to learners' success. The theory therefore provides an appropriate lens for examining the relationship between principals' individualized consideration communication strategies and teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Kenya

Review of Related Literature

Principals' Individualized Consideration and Teaching Effectiveness

Individualised consideration is a key dimension of transformational leadership that focuses on recognising and responding to followers’ unique professional and personal needs through mentorship, support, coaching, empathy, and personalized feedback. In educational settings, principals who practise individualised consideration foster positive professional relationships, enhance teacher motivation, and promote instructional effectiveness by creating a supportive environment in which teachers feel valued and professionally supported (Khan et al., 2022; Adeoye et al., 2025).

Mba and Okoko (2024) investigated the relationship between individualized consideration and teacher productivity in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Using a correlational survey design, the study established that principals who demonstrated sensitivity to teachers' individual needs and

professional concerns contributed significantly to improved teacher productivity. The study concluded that leadership development programmes should strengthen principals' capacity to provide individualized support to teachers. However, the study relied heavily on self-reported data, creating the possibility of response bias. The current study addresses this methodological limitation by employing a convergent mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative data sources.

Similarly, Komen, Munene, and Mwawasi (2026) examined principals' individualized consideration and teacher job performance in public integrated secondary schools in Rabai Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya. The study reported positive and statistically significant relationships between individualized consideration and multiple dimensions of teacher performance, particularly professional development. The researchers recommended structured feedback mechanisms, mentorship programmes, and leadership training to strengthen teacher performance. Although the study provides valuable Kenyan evidence, its cross-sectional design, relatively small sample, and reliance on self-reported data limit the generalizability of its findings. Further studies are therefore needed in different Kenyan educational contexts.

Research has further demonstrated that transformational leadership practices characterized by individualized support, recognition, constructive feedback, and professional development opportunities contribute positively to teacher motivation, commitment, and instructional improvement. Matos and Kasztelnik (2021) found that transformational leadership practices enhanced teacher engagement and instructional performance through recognition and supportive leadership behaviours. Similarly, Mgaiwa and Hamis (2022) established that supportive leadership practices improved teacher job satisfaction and commitment by creating conducive working environments and providing meaningful professional support. These findings suggest that principals who communicate through individualized consideration strategies are better positioned to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates that individualized consideration contributes positively to teacher motivation, professional growth, job satisfaction, teacher productivity, and overall performance. However, several gaps remain evident. Contextually, most studies have been conducted outside Kenya or in settings that differ considerably from Athi River Sub-County. Conceptually, previous studies have primarily focused on teacher productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, with limited attention to teaching effectiveness as a distinct outcome. Methodologically, many studies have relied on cross-sectional survey designs and self-reported data, limiting deeper understanding of how individualized consideration communication strategies influence instructional practice. Consequently, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding the influence of principals' individualized consideration communication strategies on teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Kenya. This study therefore sought to address these contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps.

Methodology

The research was conducted within public secondary schools in Athi River Sub-County, Machakos, Kenya. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design combined quantitative and qualitative data, collected concurrently and analyzed separately. A cross-sectional survey collected quantitative data and evaluated communication strategies and their influence on teaching effectiveness, while experiences of principals and teachers with communication strategies were explored using a phenomenological approach. This design provided broader statistical insights and a deeper contextual understanding of how principals' individualized consideration of communication strategies enhances teaching effectiveness. The study targeted 17 principals and 262 teachers from 17 public secondary schools, selected for their central roles in leadership and instruction. Their inclusion ensured focused data collection and allowed for meaningful

generalization across diverse school contexts.

Table 1 Sampling Matrix for Schools, Principals, and Teachers.

Participants Category	Target population (N)	Sampling technique	Sample size (n)	Percentage
Schools	17	Stratified Sampling	6	35.29%
Principals	17	Purposive Sampling	6	35.29%
Teachers	262	Proportionate Random Sampling	52	20%
Total	279		58	

Source: Researchers (2025)

Description of Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. Questionnaires collected data from teachers using closed-ended and open-ended questions, while interview guides collected principals' experiences, emphasizing phenomenological analysis, focusing on meaning and personal interpretation.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The instruments underwent face and content validity to ensure consistency of the data. Two university supervisors with academic research expertise examined questionnaires and interview schedules. The assessment improved the instruments to ensure the reliability of the data. The instruments were pilot-tested with a small sample similar to the main study's population. Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which tests the reliability of the questionnaires at a threshold of $\alpha = 0.8$ or higher, was considered, suggesting that the instruments are reliable. The researcher administered the questionnaire in person. With the help of SPSS software, the results obtained were subjected to the Cronbach alpha coefficient to ascertain the degree of correlation or consistency of the item content. A Cronbach's Alpha value $\alpha) = 0.97$ was attained. Credibility and dependability were established to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research and enhance the overall validity of the qualitative findings. Credibility was achieved through triangulation, where multiple data sources, including interviews and open-ended survey responses, were used to validate the findings. Member checking was conducted, where participants reviewed and verified interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. Dependability was maintained by ensuring consistency in data collection through a well-defined interview protocol.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought an introductory letter from the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA). Second, the researcher sought a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Third, the researcher sought a letter of authorisation from the Athi River Sub-County Director of Education. Fourth, the researcher sent a text message and directly called principals and teachers to request their participation in the study. The researcher administered survey questionnaires and interviews himself once permission was obtained. A letter explaining the purpose of the research accompanied all questionnaires and interview guides.

Each teacher received an information sheet explaining the study's purpose, research procedures,

expected time commitment, potential risks, and intended use of the findings. The researcher obtained informed consent from all participants; participation was entirely voluntary, and teachers could decline to participate or withdraw at any stage. The researcher communicated directly with participants and emphasised that participation is an individual decision. Principals were not informed about the teachers who participated. Questionnaires were completed independently and returned directly to the researcher through secure collection arrangements.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. Identification codes were used to identify the questionnaires. The interview records and transcripts were anonymised by removing names and other details that could reveal participants' identities or schools. Research data were securely stored in a password-protected electronic file accessible only to the researcher. The findings were presented in aggregated form, while interview quotations were reported using participant codes.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were cleaned, coded, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarise respondents' perceptions of principals' individualised consideration communication practices. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was employed to examine the interrelationships among selected dimensions of individualised consideration communication strategy. This analysis provided insights into the extent to which individualised consideration communication practices occurred together within schools. Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, categorised, and analysed thematically. Emerging themes from interviews and open-ended responses were triangulated with quantitative findings to provide a deeper understanding of how principals' individualised consideration communication practices support teaching effectiveness.

This approach enabled the researcher to examine patterns and associations among individualized consideration communication practices and to triangulate quantitative findings with qualitative evidence. Qualitative data were transcribed, familiarized, coded, and grouped into themes related to principals' communication practices and perceptions of teaching effectiveness. Emerging patterns from the interviews and open-ended responses were compared with quantitative findings to enhance the credibility and depth of interpretation

Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of Research Findings

The total targeted respondents for the study were 279, drawn from principals and teachers. Questionnaires collected quantitative data from 52 teachers, while 6 interviews were conducted with principals.

Table 2 Instrument Return Rate

Instruments	Category of respondents	Number of instruments distributed (N)	Number of instruments returned (n)	Return rate (%)
Interview guide	Principals	6	5	83.33
Questionnaires	Teachers	52	52	100
	Total	58	57	98.28

Source: Field Data (2025)

The data in Table 2 shows that a total of 57 instruments were successfully returned out of 58 distributed, with an overall return rate of 98.28%. This rate was well above the 50% minimum threshold required for the reliable and valid interpretation of research findings (Babbi, 2021). This high return rate affirms the level of cooperation received from participants and reflects the relevance of the research problem within the school setting.

The interview guide achieved a high return rate of 83.33%. The researcher contacted the principals before scheduling the interviews, explained the study's purpose, and presented permits. Interviews were scheduled at times and venues convenient for the principals, mostly in their schools. This considerate approach made participants feel valued and respected in the process.

Questionnaires achieved a remarkable 100% return rate, with all 52 distributed questionnaires completed and returned. The researcher distributed the questionnaires in person and clarified the purpose of the study to the respondents, which helped the respondents receive instant clarification of any issues. The questionnaire items were direct, easy to understand, and reflected the teachers' daily experiences. The researcher also worked closely with principals to encourage teacher participation, which reassured teachers and increased their willingness to respond.

Influence of Principal's Individualised Consideration Communication Strategy on Teaching Effectiveness.

The study sought to investigate the influence of individualised consideration communication strategies on teaching effectiveness. Questionnaires with Likert-scale statements were used to assess participants' perceptions of whether their principals recognise and respond to teachers' unique teaching needs in ways that enhance teaching effectiveness. They were required to give their responses by putting a tick (√) on the best option by use of the following: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). Teachers' responses were presented in Table 8.

Table 3: Teachers' Response to the Influence of Principals' Individualised Consideration Communication Strategy on Teaching Effectiveness. (n = 52)

Statement	n	SD 1	D 2	UD 3	A 4	SA 5	Mean	Std. Dev
		f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)		
My principal gives individualized feedback on strengths and areas of improvement in teaching effectiveness.	52	1(1.9)	3(5.8)	6(11.5)	25(48.1)	17(32.7)	4.04	0,93
My principal promotes inclusive teaching and learning methods.	52	1(1.9)	2(3.8)	6 (11.5)	26(50.0)	17 (32.7)	4.08	0.88
My principal holds regular meetings with individual teachers and students to discuss academic progress.	52	1(1.9)	1(1.9)	3 (5.8)	24(46.2)	23(44.2)	4.29	0.83

My principal encourages peer teaching to help struggling teachers to improve.	52	3(5.8)	1(1.9)	10(19.2)	22(42.3)	16 (30.8)	3.90	1.01
My principal gives differentiated assignments that caters for individual students' ability.	52	2(3.8)	3(5.8)	13(25.0)	20(38.5)	14 (26.9)	3.79	1.04
My principal communicates with empathy to teachers and students facing personal challenges.	52	4(7.7)	1(1.9)	5(9.6)	23(44.2)	19 (36.5)	4.00	1.12
My principal recognizes and celebrates individual teacher's achievements and improvements.	52	2(3.8)	2(3.8)	4 (7.7)	20(38.5)	24(46.2)	4.19	1.01
My principal incorporates teacher's/students' suggestions.	52	2(3.8)	5(9.6)	5 (9.6)	21(40.4)	19(36.5)	3.96	1.10
My principal holds one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss teaching progress.	52	1(1.9)	2(3.8)	4 (7.7)	22(42.3)	23(44.2)	4.23	0.90
My principal encourages remedial instruction to cater for unique learning needs.	52	2(3.8)	0(0.0)	4 (7.7)	17(32.7)	29 (55.8)	4.44	0.78

Source: Field Data (2025)

Note: SD = strongly disagree, D = Disagree, UD = Undecided, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

Data revealed a moderately high perception, with a weighted average of 4.09, suggesting that principals implement key aspects of individualized consideration communication strategy. Teachers generally recognize that their principals provide personalized support and consider individual teacher and student needs.

On the first item, 42(80.8%) of the respondents perceived that their principals give individualized feedback, pointing out both strengths and areas of improvement, geared towards teaching effectiveness. Four teachers (7.7%) disagreed with the statement, while six teachers (11.5%) remained neutral. These findings reflect a positive view of how principals support their teachers through tailored feedback. This strategy supports the significance of individualized communication as an essential component of instructional leadership.

From teachers' open-ended comments, it became clear that individualized feedback serves as both an administrative function and a developmental practice that teachers deeply value. Most teachers emphasized that feedback from their principals focused on performance evaluation through constructive dialogue, offering practical and specific strategies to help teachers enhance their classroom practices. Respondent 45, a teacher wrote, "Our principal often praises teachers and suggests practical teaching methods that we can use to improve our classroom engagement." This statement demonstrates how effective and consistent feedback can become a facilitator for instructional improvement and reflective practice.

The interviews with principals also reinforced teachers' views. Most principals noted that structured lesson observation tools, student performance data, and curriculum standards guided their feedback. One principal commented: "I take time to prepare individualized reports for each teacher after observing his/her lessons. I highlight what he/she has done well and then suggest areas the teacher can refine, including references to specific teaching techniques or resources." (HOI 01, Personal Communication, May 22, 2025).

The practice aligns with Naguit's (2024) framework on the role of school leaders in influencing classroom instruction through targeted supervision and coaching. The study suggested that effective classroom observations that include identification of teacher's strengths and limitations and designing interventions, contribute significantly to enhanced instructional observation and teacher routine. Additionally, effective instructional leaders are characterized by how thoroughly they are in classroom observation, providing strategic intervention, and giving feedback that supports teachers' instructional improvement, which is instrumental in promoting academic excellence (Naguit, 2024).

Personalized feedback contributes to teaching effectiveness and professional confidence to teachers, where teachers felt supported and professionally acknowledged. This observation echoes the findings by Mejia (2025), who argues that individualised feedback facilitates self-awareness, which enhances the emotional, cognitive, and social domains of a teacher. Moreover, integrating guided self-awareness into teachers' personal development programs helps enhance their personal growth and offers a valuable tool for meaningful personal transformation (Mejia, 2025). It was also evident that where principals actively communicated with individual teachers about their strengths and areas of improvement, the professional culture of the school was more positive, open, and improvement oriented.

Nonetheless, the few dissenting voices (19.2%) of teachers who either disagreed or remained undecided served as a reminder that feedback must be both consistent and equitable. Some teachers raised concerns about how their principals offer individualised feedback, noting that feedback was not consistent and heavily focused on shortcomings without sufficient guidance for improvement. These views complement the need for training school leaders on how to offer balanced, developmental feedback that is timely, specific, and grounded in mutual respect from all parties. Additionally, these findings underscore that individualised feedback is a powerful vehicle for professional growth when carried out with intentionality, empathy, and pedagogical insight.

Teachers generally felt that their principals promote inclusive teaching. Out of 52 teachers who responded to the item, 43(82.7%) agreed with the statement, suggesting a widespread sense that school leaders are fostering teaching practices that accommodate all learners. Specifically, 26(50%) of respondents agreed, while 17(32.7%) strongly agreed. A small number of teachers (5.7%) expressed disagreement, and 6(11.5%) remained neutral. The mean (4.08) and standard deviation (0.88) suggest a general consistency in how teachers experience this aspect of leadership across the sampled schools.

Most teachers are interpreting their principals' communication, whether through staff meetings, classroom observations, or informal interactions, as supportive of inclusive practices. This includes differentiated instruction, learner-centred strategies, and efforts to respond to the diverse academic, emotional, and social needs of students. From what these numbers suggest, teachers are not only hearing messages about inclusivity but also seeing principals actively model and reinforce such values in their leadership behaviour.

However, the presence of a few dissenting voices, those who disagreed or were neutral, reminds us that these practices may not be uniformly felt across all schools. Some teachers may have felt that their principals do not do enough to support inclusive teaching, and that communication around inclusive teaching may be less clear or actionable. This could be because of inadequate resources, time

constraints, or even inconsistencies in leadership emphasis. In these settings, inclusivity might be more of a theoretical value than a lived classroom experience.

From a leadership perspective, this pattern of responses reflects the influence of what transformational theorists refer to as individualised consideration. Teachers recognised the efforts of their principals in understanding and supporting their unique instructional challenges, especially those involving diverse learner needs. As Leithwood et al. (2020) point out, leaders who listen, personalise support, and remain accessible tend to inspire more substantial instructional commitment among staff. The data also suggest the presence of individualised consideration, where principals encourage their teachers to think beyond conventional methods and explore inclusive pedagogical strategies. These are intentional acts of communication that shape how teachers approach their work in the classroom.

Teachers' open-ended comments further illustrate how they interpret their principals' support. Teacher no. 2 noted that their principal always encourages teachers to use differentiated instruction and regularly reminds them to involve every learner, regardless of their learning abilities. Teacher participant no. 43 added: "Inclusive teaching is a regular topic in our staff meetings. Our principal always encourages us to use teaching strategies that meet our students' need.

These insights suggest that inclusive teaching is a value that is consistently communicated and reinforced through daily interactions with school leadership in most schools in Athi River sub-county. Principals also offered insights that confirm this trend. One principal explained during the interview that inclusive teaching is discussed during classroom observations and scheme reviews, and that they routinely ask teachers how they handle learners with learning difficulties or behavioural challenges. Another principal shared that they urge teachers to plan lessons with the entire class in mind, reminding them that each learner must gain something meaningful from each lesson. These statements reflect a practical and intentional effort to embed inclusivity into teaching through consistent communication and leadership presence.

Although the majority response was positive, a few neutral and dissenting voices provided important nuance. One teacher mentioned that while inclusive learning is often discussed, they experienced limited follow-up on how the process is being carried out in classroom practice. Another respondent added that inclusivity tends to be assumed rather than practically supported, with some colleagues still relying on uniform instructional approaches. These perspectives suggest gaps in the implementation of inclusive learning, which could be due to limited resources, varying school cultures, or inconsistencies in follow-through by school leaders.

These findings reflect key principles of transformational leadership, such as exceptionally individualised consideration, where principals challenge teachers to reflect more critically on their teaching approaches and adopt inclusive practices. Teachers noted that their principals listen attentively to their instructional needs and value equity in the classroom. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), leaders who provide personal support and maintain open communication channels enhance teacher motivation and engagement.

The impact of these communication strategies on teaching effectiveness is evident. Teachers felt supported and valued by their principals and were likely to explore a variety of teaching approaches that reflect on their practice and engage all learners more intentionally. One teacher wrote that they feel encouraged when their principal acknowledges inclusive efforts and they keep innovating and seeking new strategies to reach every student. This type of feedback loop between leadership communication and instructional practice underscores how school leadership directly contributes to improved teaching outcomes.

In the context of study locale, with diverse classrooms in terms of socio-economic status, language, and

learning needs, inclusive leadership is especially relevant. The strong positive response from teachers suggests that principals are aligning with national education goals such as those outlined in the Competency-Based Curriculum, which calls for learner-centred, flexible teaching approaches. Principals create a professional setting that supports teachers in meeting the needs of all learners when they promote inclusivity through consistent and purposeful communication,

Both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that principals are perceived as active promoters of inclusive teaching and learning. The findings clearly demonstrate that communication in this area has a positive influence on teaching practice while there are areas that may require further reinforcement or support. These insights reinforce the broader argument that effective communication strategies from school leaders are essential in shaping the instructional culture and improving teacher effectiveness.

The item, " My principal holds regular meetings with individual teachers and students to discuss academic progress, received relatively high agreement, with most teachers perceiving that their principals hold regular meetings with individual teachers and students to discuss academic progress. Of the 52 teachers who responded, 47 (90.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed, with only three teachers (5.8%) disagreeing, while two teachers (3.8%) remained neutral on the matter. This statistic suggests a strong perception from teachers on how their principals actively initiate and sustain structured academic dialogue with individual teachers. This data point reflects on the frequency of such meetings and their value in enhancing instructional accountability and professional collaboration. It implies that the principals in the study setting are committed to fostering instructional leadership through regular engagement with teachers and learners on matters of academic performance.

The findings reflect a positive change toward a more participatory and data-informed school leadership culture within schools. This strategy helps in evaluating teachers' teaching techniques and guides them on how to adjust these approaches to meet dynamic learners' academic needs. This approach aligns with the transformational leadership approach, which emphasizes individualized consideration as a tool for empowering staff (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2020).

Open-ended comments from teachers further substantiate the quantitative findings. Teachers consistently cited regular meetings with their principals to discuss academic matters as enabling them to grow professionally and improve their classroom instruction. One teacher wrote: "We sit regularly with the principal to discuss class performance and strategies for improvement." (Teacher no.50, Personal Communication, May 24, 2025). Such comments reflect the developmental nature of these interactions and highlight the importance of dialogue over directive leadership. Teachers expressed that these sessions allow for early identification of learning gaps, joint problem-solving, and shared planning, especially in cases where learner performance data is reviewed collectively.

Besides, interviews with principals highlighted importance of personalised meetings as a linkage between teachers’ efforts and learner outcomes. One principal observed: "These one-on-one sessions help us go beyond surface-level discussions. We analyse exam performance, lesson coverage, and student engagement trends. It is a routine I take seriously." (HOI 04, Personal Communication, May 24, 2025). Such statements reveal a positive approach to instructional leadership, where performance dialogue is based on practical data, aligned with school improvement targets, and aimed at building teacher ownership of learning outcomes. This practice aligns with what Ventista and Brown (2023) describe as high-impact leadership, where routine, focused dialogue drives both teacher improvement and student achievement.

Additionally, several schools further extended this practice to students, particularly class representatives and academic prefects. Meeting with students helped principals to create feedback from the classroom experience, reinforcing shared accountability for academic outcomes. As one principal explained that

they sometimes get more insight from students about what is really going on in the classroom than from raw data. The respondent added that students' feedback helps them to understand teaching effectiveness from the learner's perspective.

These insights support the fact that regular academic review meetings serve as a high-impact strategy for improving both teaching quality and learner performance. Principals can identify instructional gaps early, mobilise support mechanisms, and guide teachers toward targeted interventions by institutionalising a routine of reflective dialogue. This aspect of communication indicates that continuous, structured academic meetings are a key component of effective school leadership, which promotes a culture of transparency, collaborative inquiry, and data-driven decision-making. There is a need for policy frameworks that recognise and support the professional time, tools, and training necessary for principals to engage in high-quality instructional dialogue for these practices to be sustained and scaled.

In response to the statement, my principal encourages peer teaching to help struggling teachers improve; most of the teachers reported a strong sense of agreement. Out of 52 respondents, 22 (42.3%) agreed, and 16 (30.8%) strongly agreed, resulting in an overall agreement of 73.1%. Only three respondents (5.8%) strongly disagreed, while one (1.9%) disagreed, and 10 (19.2%) remained neutral. The findings suggest that many principals are actively promoting peer-based instructional mentorship, a key feature of inclusive leadership.

Teachers elaborated on how their principal encourages peer teaching to help struggling teachers improve in their open-ended responses. Teacher no. 37 noted that their principal always encouraged them to observe each other's lessons, especially when a teacher was struggling with a concept or a new teaching approach. Another teacher no. 27 added that their principal created a culture where they learn from each other without fear of judgment, which has helped them to improve their classroom delivery. Principals interviewed further reinforced this outlook. One principal mentioned that he always tells his staff to learn from each other as a way of growing and thriving together. The respondent added that he always tries to pair teachers during lesson observations and when planning for workshops (HOI 02, Personal Communication, May 22, 2025). HOI 3 explained that they encourage peer mentorship within staff development routines by identifying teachers who excel in specific areas, then have them guide others informally or through co-teaching. (HOI 3, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025).

These sentiments underscore leadership communication that encourages collaboration and fosters psychological safety among staff, which creates a learning environment where teachers learn and support each other. They also demonstrate a communication strategy grounded in individualised consideration that encourages peer support, aligning with what Leithwood and Jantzi (2020) identified as fostering a professional learning community, where knowledge is shared collectively and constructively.

However, some critical voices emerged. Teacher no.17 noted that peer teaching rarely happens in their school. The respondent further noted that their principal mostly talks about the issue during formal appraisals. This reveals a possible gap between intention and execution, where administrative support for peer collaboration exists in principle but lacks consistent structural follow-through. Studies indicate that peer teaching without adequate time, planning, and monitoring, collaborative efforts may remain superficial. This feedback underscores the importance of sustained and deliberate leadership actions in bridging the gap between policy rhetoric and classroom practice.

On this item, my principal gives differentiated assignments that cater to individual students' abilities; teachers responded with slightly less intensity but still generally positive views. Out of 52 respondents, 20 (38.5%) agreed, and 14 (26.9%) strongly agreed, totalling a 65.4% agreement rate. Thirteen (25.0%) remained neutral, while two (3.8%) strongly disagreed and three (5.8%) disagreed. The pattern of responses suggests that although many teachers acknowledge their principals' efforts to support

differentiated instruction, this practice may not be consistently applied across schools in the same manner as peer collaboration. While the idea of catering to diverse learners is well communicated, its implementation in the classroom varies.

Some teachers shared encouraging experiences in their responses to an open-ended question. One teacher, no.27 reflected on their experience by saying that the principal consistently reminds them to plan lessons with all types of learners in mind, whether fast, average, or those who need more time. This comment revealed a principal who is not only instructional minded but also aware of the different learning paces within a classroom. Another teacher, no. 18, shared that differentiated instruction often comes up during staff meetings, and it is something their principal actively encourages.

According to teachers, the principal urges teachers to design tasks that can engage learners at varying levels of ability, making sure no student is left behind. These insights point to a leadership approach that genuinely values inclusion and responsiveness in teaching practice. Comments like these show that some principals are deliberate in guiding teachers to think about their learners' diverse needs and design lessons accordingly.

Engaging learners at varying levels of ability ensures that no child is left behind by recognising and addressing their diverse learning needs, strengths, and paces. Differentiated instruction through varying content, processes, and assessment methods creates inclusive classrooms where every learner feels supported and valued. This approach not only boosts academic outcomes but also promotes confidence and motivation among struggling learners while challenging those who are advanced (Tomlinson, 2017). When teachers intentionally design lessons that include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies, or adjust complexity based on readiness, they help all students progress meaningfully. As UNESCO (2023) emphasizes, inclusive education is key to equity, ensuring that learning environments are responsive and accessible to every child, regardless of ability.

These accounts reflect a leadership approach that values inclusivity and sees differentiation not just as a strategy but as a daily practice worth prioritising. They echo what Tomlinson (2014) describes as a leader's responsibility in nurturing differentiated instruction and ensuring that teachers are not only aware of their learners' varying needs but also feel equipped and encouraged to respond to them. When principals consistently communicate this expectation, and teachers internalise it, classrooms begin to reflect a more learner-centred and responsive teaching environment.

However, the variation in responses also hints at some unevenness in implementation, possibly due to differences in school culture, resources, or support structures. This signals a need for principals to not only speak about differentiation but also walk alongside their teachers’ offering tools, training, and practical examples that make these strategies more visible and manageable in daily classroom practice.

Nevertheless, as with peer teaching, some teachers voiced concern about the sustainability and depth of differentiation strategies. A teacher no. 22 noted, when answering an open-ended question: "It is mentioned often, but we need more training or practical strategies. Otherwise, it becomes difficult to do regularly." (Teacher no 22, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025) This feedback illustrates the challenges of moving from strategic intent to day-to-day practice. According to Fullan (2014), instructional leadership is only effective when communication is supported by professional development, resourcing, and modelling. Principals who merely communicate expectations without providing practical scaffolding risk limiting the impact of their efforts.

Taken together, these two data points highlight the importance of communication strategies that foster inclusive practices among teachers and within classrooms. Encouraging peer teaching enables shared professional responsibility, reduces instructional isolation, and aligns with Vygotskian principles of social learning. Differentiated assignments, on the other hand, reflect a leadership commitment to learner-

centred education and inclusion. Looking at the two sets of findings together, it becomes clear just how much a principal's way of communicating can influence how inclusive teaching becomes in a school. When a principal encourages peer teaching, they're really encouraging teachers to lean on each other to share ideas, to support those who might be struggling, and to grow together. It helps reduce the feeling of being alone in the classroom and builds a real sense of teamwork. This idea ties in well with what Vygotsky believed that people learn best when they learn with others. In the same spirit, when a principal push for differentiated assignments, it shows they care about every learner in the room. It's a way of saying that no one should be left behind, and that good teaching means recognising how students learn in different ways and paces. These leadership practices reflect the values of transformational leadership by inspiring teachers to adapt their instruction in ways that benefit all learners. More importantly, these strategies support the national education goals that emphasize equity, learner responsiveness, and professional collaboration in the teaching process.

From the experiences shared by teachers, it is evident that many principals are deliberately working to promote inclusivity and professional growth through thoughtful communication. Majority of the respondents seemed appreciative of the efforts their principals make in promoting inclusive teaching practices. Their responses reflected a sense of acknowledgment that something positive was being done. However, a few teachers shared concerns that what principals say doesn't always match what happens on the ground. This points to a real need for school leaders to move beyond just talking about inclusive strategies. For these efforts to have lasting impact, principals need to back up their communication with real, tangible support things like giving teachers time to plan, setting up peer support structures, and offering training that's relevant to their daily work. When that kind of support is consistently available, it helps to build a school culture where teachers feel empowered to collaborate, adapt, and grow together which ultimately benefits the learners too.

The ninth statement examined teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their principals communicate with empathy to them and students experiencing personal challenges, and how such communication contributes to teaching effectiveness. Based on responses from 52 teachers, 22 (42.3%) strongly agreed and 23 (44.3%) agreed that their principals exhibit empathy in their communication with staff and learners facing personal difficulties. Collectively, 86.5% of the teachers affirmed the presence of empathetic communication within their schools. A smaller number of teachers, 5 (9.6%), were undecided, while another five teachers (9.6%) expressed disagreement, suggesting a situation where their principals were not communicating with empathy in such situations. The high perception suggests that teachers widely recognize empathetic communication as a valuable component of school leadership with a view to improving teaching and learning.

Teachers' narratives further stressed the need for principals to demonstrate care and concern for the welfare of their teachers and students as a way of boosting their morale. This action of principals may lead to improved commitment and instructional effectiveness. Georgiadis and Arvanitidou (2025) noted that principals who communicate with empathy contribute significantly to creating a positive climate and enhancing teaching effectiveness in their schools. The findings also backed the individualized consideration communication strategy, which refers to the leader's ability to address the individual needs of their juniors and offer emotional support that nurtures professional growth (Khan & Khan, 2021). It was noted that principals who communicate with empathy could recognize and respond to the individual needs of their teachers and students during emotional circumstances. This practice promotes trust and enhances psychological safety, which is a key factor in professional effectiveness and motivation.

This communication behaviour is consistent with Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Communication Theory, which asserts that principals who communicate with empathy and are open to listening to their teachers' concerns are more likely to improve teachers' morale, which aligns with teaching effectiveness (Krikorian,

2023). This assumption aligns with transformational leadership, which emphasises supportive and individualised attention to followers. Teachers are likely to feel satisfied in their work and have inherent motivation and possess a sense of belonging when they feel heard, understood, and emotionally supported by their principals. In contrast, where such communication is inconsistent, emotional disconnects may emerge, which may undermine teachers' engagement and reduce overall effectiveness.

Qualitative intuitions from teachers' open-ended responses supported quantitative findings.

A teacher wrote in open-ended comments:

My principal gave me time off when I lost a relative; he followed up with a call and even initiated a support mechanism with the other staff members. I felt valued by this action. I returned to work when I was more motivated and had a sense of belonging in this school. These comments show how empathetic gestures contribute to teacher resilience and institutional loyalty. A second teacher also noted that their principal once called on him privately for a talk when he noted that the teacher was unusually quiet in a staff meeting. He added, "This action made a huge difference in me, and I felt valued." These narratives reflect emotionally intelligent leaders who adopt relational communication.

However, some experiences were also negative. Some teachers noted that their school principals were not engaging much in empathetic communication.

One teacher no. 28 wrote in an open-ended comment:

Our principal rarely engages with teachers on personal matters. He only communicates in professional matters that are related to work. I feel that here, when you are going through something, you are on your own with some colleagues getting concerned, but really from the principal. (Teacher no 28, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025)

This variance in experience may be attributed to inconsistent communication practices, which emphasises the importance of normalizing emotional intelligence training, especially in schools for leaders. Principals' views also supported teachers' views.

During the interview, a veteran principal commented:

I find myself in a position to support my teachers and students better when I get to understand their circumstances. I occasionally adjust their workload if they are going through a tough situation, like losing a loved one. I often appreciate that it is not always about output, but rather human connection and relationships. (HOI 01, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025).

Another principal noted, "Empathy builds loyalty. When teachers know you care, they work harder and stay longer." (HOI 02, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025). These accounts illustrate that principals view empathetic communication as an ethical responsibility and as a strategy that enhances organizational cohesion and performance in schools.

On the other hand, one principal cautioned that empathy must be balanced with responsibility: He commented: "Sometimes, balancing professionalism and empathy is hard. A few teachers may take advantage of leniency. It is important to show care without losing focus on accountability." (HOI 03, Personal Communication, May 24, 2025). Empathy should be guided by discernment and context sensitivity, especially in school environments where the resources may be scarce. The findings also correlate with the Transactional Communication Model, which recognizes communication as a dynamic process influenced by context, feedback, and relational history (Bragg et al., 2021). It predicts a mutual understanding between the parties, especially where empathetic communication is limited, explaining the uncertainty and disagreement expressed by a minority of teachers.

Additionally, these findings underscore the importance of empathetic communication in enhancing

teaching effectiveness. School principals who consistently demonstrate empathy in their communication and empathetic psychological well-being of the teachers and students foster professional trust and encourage commitment to instructional goals. However, the variability in practice among different schools calls for structured interventions aimed at enhancing principals' communication strategies. Emotional intelligence training, reflective practice, and supportive policy frameworks are recommended to institutionalize the Empathy leadership norm across schools.

A sizable portion of 44 teachers (84.6%) strongly perceived that their principals recognize and celebrates individual teachers' achievements and improvements. 24(46.2%) strongly agreed, while 20(38.5%) agreed. According to the majority (84.6%), educators see that their principals recognize and celebrate individual teachers' achievements and improvements. However, four teachers (7.7%) were unsure, suggesting that some principals might not celebrate their teachers' achievements and improvements. A smaller group of 4 teachers (7.7%) disagreed with the statement, suggesting a lack of these communication strategies in their schools.

Most teachers (84.6%) appreciated that their principals recognize and celebrate them when they make individual teacher achievements and improvements, with 46.2% strongly agreeing and 38.5% agreeing. This data suggests that many school principals intentionally recognize their teachers' contributions, a motivational communication strategy that contributes positively to teaching effectiveness. However, the presence of a minority (15.4%) who disagreed or were unsure highlights a lack of consistency in practice across schools.

Qualitative responses reinforce the observation from quantitative data. Most respondents noted that principals often mention their achievements during staff meetings or reward their excellent performance during school assemblies.

One teacher wrote when responding to open-ended questions:

Our principal highlights individual teacher performance during meetings and even gives small tokens as a sign of appreciation to teachers and students in assemblies after every exam circle. I find this gesture motivates us more to produce better results. (Respondent 24, personal communication, May 23, 2025).

The same sentiments were revealed from the interviews conducted with principals, where some schools had awarding systems to appreciate teachers' efforts, including teacher-of-the-term awards, performance certificates, and public commendations. One principal mentioned: "When teachers feel seen and appreciated, they invest more in their work. It boosts morale and encourages peer learning." (HOI 04, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025).

These findings correlate with the individualised consideration strategy, where school leaders acknowledge the efforts and needs of their staff (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Principals who adopt this strategy foster a culture of appreciation, encouraging commitment, job satisfaction, and professional growth, which enhances teaching effectiveness. A study by Coskun, Katitas, and Arslan (2023) on the effects of school principals' transformational leadership behaviours on teachers' organisational commitment in Turkey found that teachers who felt appreciated by their school leaders demonstrated higher levels of teaching commitment and innovation in the classroom. Another study by Mgaiwa and Hamis, (2022)M showed the influence of primary school head teachers on teachers' job satisfaction by meeting their job expectations in rural Tanzania. The results indicated that head teachers attempted to meet teachers' job satisfaction by creating a conducive and supportive work environment, facilitating their continuous professional development, and offering them the much-needed feedback regarding their job performances (Mgaiwa & Hamis, 2022).

Similarly, Khasawneh and Ahmad (2024) researched the influence of private school teachers' motivation

level on their teaching effectiveness in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, noted that principals who used communication strategies such as recognizing teacher achievements, sharing motivational stories, and inviting inspirational speakers, enhanced teachers' job satisfaction, external motivation, and personal drive (Khasawneh & Ahmad, 2024).

Teachers felt the need for principals to adopt more consistent and inclusive communication strategies. Recognition should be part of a deliberate and equitable leadership approach rather than reserved for a few or used sporadically. Fullan and Kirtman (2019) argue that effective leaders should consistently create conditions for continuous teacher motivation through building relational trust and affirming professional contributions (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019). The findings support the importance of recognition as a strategic communication tool that principals should adopt to celebrate their teachers' efforts to enhance staff morale and promote a culture of professional excellence. However, school leaders must ensure such recognition is intentional, inclusive, and aligned with teachers' authentic professional growth to sustain long-term teaching effectiveness.

On item five, 40 teachers, or 76.9% of the respondents, believed that their principals incorporate teachers' and students' suggestions when making decisions about academic performance in their schools (19 strongly agreed = 36.5%, 21 agreed = 40.4%). Data demonstrates that educators recognize the importance of incorporating their views in academics. However, five teachers (9.6%) were unsure, maybe due to the absence of proper communication in their respective schools. Further, seven teachers (13.5%) disagreed, and 5(9.6%) disagreed.

The analysis shows that majority of the teachers, 76.9% perceived that their principals value their input and that of students when making academic decisions. This is a strong sign that many principals are trying to build inclusive environments where teachers are not just implementers but contributors to the academic direction of their schools. Participatory leadership is practiced in several schools, where teacher voice is acknowledged and used to shape policies and practices that affect learning. However, 13.5% of teachers disagreed, and 9.6% were unsure, which shows that communication is not happening consistently across all schools. For some teachers, the absence of clear channels for giving input or a lack of follow-through may make them feel excluded from key decisions.

During the interviews with principals, some openly explained that they hold regular discussions with teachers and learners to get their views on academic issues such as syllabus coverage, student performance, and exam scheduling. One principal mentioned, "We hold termly academic meetings where everyone can give their suggestions, and most of these are taken seriously." (HOI 03, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025). On the other hand, a few principals admitted that while they would like to involve teachers more, pressure from higher offices or time constraints often force them to make quick, top-down decisions. This inconsistency creates a gap between intention and practice.

Teachers who responded to the open-ended questions added depth to this picture. One teacher wrote, "When our ideas are used, we feel part of the school, and it pushes us to do better in class." Said teacher participant no. 34. However, another participant mentioned that "Sometimes we give suggestions but never get feedback, so we do not know if our views count." These views highlight that while efforts are being made, communication and follow-up need strengthening in some schools.

When principals fail to provide feedback to teachers, it can significantly hinder teaching effectiveness. Feedback is a vital component of professional growth, helping teachers understand what they are doing well and where improvement is needed. Without it, teachers may feel unsupported, unsure of their performance, and disconnected from the school's instructional goals. Lack of feedback can also lead to stagnation in teaching methods. Teachers may continue using ineffective strategies simply because no one has guided or challenged them to grow. This absence of constructive dialogue reduces opportunities

for reflection, innovation, and ultimately student achievement (Jensen et al., 2023).

Furthermore, when teachers perceive that their efforts are unnoticed or undervalued, morale can drop, leading to disengagement or burnout. Effective schools foster a culture of continuous improvement, where feedback is part of everyday practice (Ingersoll & Collins, 2022). Without it, schools risk creating an environment of complacency or confusion, negatively impacting both teaching quality and student outcomes. Principals, therefore, play a key role not just in evaluation, but in cultivating trust and professional learning through timely, specific, and supportive feedback. This is the reason why the teachers who participated in the study want to be heard, but also want to see their feedback reflected in decisions.

These findings connect well with Transformational Leadership Theory, primarily individualized consideration, encouraging leaders to involve others in thinking and problem-solving (Bass & Riggio, 2006). When principals ask teachers for input, they promote a culture of creativity and shared responsibility. The findings also relate to Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Communication Theory, which emphasizes open, respectful communication where people feel genuinely heard and valued (Rogers, 1980). In schools where this kind of communication happens, teachers are more likely to feel motivated and take ownership of academic goals.

A study by Day, Sammons, and Gorgen (2020) found that principals who work with their teachers are more likely to perform better academically. In Kenya, Wambua and Mwania (2020) showed that involving teachers in decision-making led to improved classroom practices and more substantial commitment to school goals. These studies suggested that teachers are more engaged and effective in their roles when they are included in academic decisions in the school.

Additionally, the findings point to a generally positive trend in principal-teacher communication, revealing areas that need more work. Principals are encouraged to open up spaces for teacher and student voices by asking for their opinions, acting on them, and giving consistent feedback. This strategy will help build trust and help teachers feel that their work matters beyond the classroom. It is about making decisions and building a culture where every voice contributes to the school's success.

Regarding item six, 45 teachers of the 52 who responded believed that their principals held one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss teaching progress. (23 strongly agreed = 44.2%, 22 agreed = 42.3%). According to this finding, most respondents (86.6%) believed their principals hold one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss teaching progress. However, four teachers (7.7%) expressed uncertainty, which would indicate that some school principals do not hold regular one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss teaching progress. Three teachers deemed this communication strategy ineffective (2 disagreed = 3.8%, one strongly disagreed = 1.9%), indicating that principals do not hold one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss teaching progress in some schools.

The findings show that most teachers, about 87%, feel that their principals take time to hold one-on-one meetings with them to discuss teaching progress. This is encouraging because it shows many principals understand the value of personal, focused communication with teachers. These meetings allow teachers to reflect on their work, receive guidance, and raise concerns. When a principal creates time for such individual conversations, it often strengthens professional relationships and helps teachers feel seen, supported, and more motivated.

From the open-ended responses, many teachers described these meetings as helpful and empowering. One teacher wrote, "During our one-on-one, my principal not only asked about syllabus progress but also helped me plan better for struggling learners." (Teacher no 22, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025). Another noted that these meetings made them feel respected, adding, "It is good to know my voice matters, and I am not just being supervised." (Teacher no 12, Personal Communication, May 22, 2025).

These responses show that when done well, one-on-one meetings go beyond checking performance; they build trust and encourage professional growth.

However, a few teachers expressed that such meetings rarely happen in their schools or are only held when there is a problem. Teacher no. 29 mentioned, "We do not have regular one-on-one meetings, unless something has gone wrong." This observation supports the 7.7% of the unsure respondents and the small number who disagreed. It points to inconsistency across schools. Some principals may intend to engage teachers personally but are limited by time or workload, leading to missed opportunities for meaningful dialogue.

During interviews, principals gave different perspectives. Three of the five interviewed emphasized intentionally scheduling one-on-one meetings to check teachers' progress and offer support. One principal said, "These meetings help me understand where a teacher might be struggling, and we can plan support together." (HOI 03, Personal Communication, May 23, 2025). Others admitted that although they see the importance, time constraints sometimes make it difficult to follow through regularly. This mix of responses highlights a common leadership challenge: balancing administrative demands with personal engagement.

Theoretically, this practice strongly connects with transformational leadership theory, especially individualized consideration. When principals give personal attention to teachers and respond to their unique needs, they help build a more motivated and effective teaching team (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). The finding is in line with Carl Rogers's person-centered communication theory that emphasizes open, respectful, and empathetic dialogue precisely the kind of interaction that one-on-one meetings allow (Rogers, 1980). Regular individual conversations between principals and teachers play a vital role in enhancing teacher performance. These one-on-one interactions foster open communication, trust, and support, which are critical elements in creating a positive school culture and improving instructional practices. These conversations create a safe space for teachers to express themselves honestly, strengthening morale and performance. The findings concur with that of Day et al., (2020) that the teachers who feel heard and supported by their school leaders are more motivated and committed. Regular conversations show that the principal values their work, leading to higher job satisfaction and reduced burnout. It may also lead to improved professional development. This implies that when principals engage teachers in regular, personalised discussions, they are better able to identify specific areas of strength and growth for each teacher. This tailored feedback helps teachers improve their instructional methods, classroom management, and student engagement strategies (Nguyen & Springer, 2022).

Individual conversations have been pointed out to create stronger teacher and principal relationships. These interactions help build trust and rapport, which is essential for collaborative school improvement. A positive relationship with school leadership is one of the strongest predictors of teacher retention and effectiveness (Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsay, 2021). Another study by Waweru and Orodho (2014) in Kenyan secondary schools showed that principals who held regular individual conversations with teachers contributed to better lesson planning and improved classroom instruction.

In a nutshell, one-on-one meetings are a simple but powerful tool for improving communication and teaching effectiveness. While most principals are using this strategy well, some schools still need to be more intentional in making these meetings part of the school culture. When done regularly and sincerely, they can impact teacher motivation, performance, and the overall learning environment.

The data on the item, 'My principal encourages remedial instruction to cater to unique learning needs, strongly suggests a widespread perception among teachers that school leadership is actively facilitating inclusive instructional practices. Of the 52 teachers who responded, 29 (55.8%) strongly agreed and 17

(32.7%) agreed, resulting in a total agreement level of 88.5%. Four respondents (7.7%) remained neutral, while 2(3.8%) expressed disagreement.

The findings suggest that many principals are creating an environment where differentiated and remedial support is encouraged and gradually becoming an integral part of their school's professional culture. From a leadership standpoint, this suggests an intentional shift from uniform instruction to responsive pedagogy where learners who need more time, repetition, or alternative explanations are given equitable opportunities to succeed. Teachers recognize and value this effort, not just as a policy but as a lived reality in their classrooms.

Qualitative responses from teachers added depth to this view. Respondent 26, a teacher, explained that their principal regularly checks in during lessons to ensure teachers offer support to weak students and added that this practice had become a regular part of how teaching is taking place. Another respondent no.36 noted that teachers are encouraged to organize extra sessions, especially after assessments, to assist learners who perform poorly in assessments These reflections suggest that principals' support for remedial instruction is woven into the ongoing conversations, practices, and expectations within the school community.

This consistent reinforcement of remedial support aligns with goals of education in Kenya, which promotes inclusivity, learner-centeredness, and differentiated instruction. Principals enable those scaffolding processes to take place, helping learners make developmental leaps they might not achieve on their own.

From a transformational leadership lens, these behaviours represent the ideal of individualised consideration, where the leader demonstrates sensitivity to both student and teacher needs and provides tailored support to strengthen professional practice (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2020). Principals may reduce instructional inequities and promote teacher confidence in managing classroom diversity when they encourage remedial instruction to cater to unique learning needs.

Remedial instruction is becoming integrated into everyday teaching and is no longer being viewed as a separate and stigmatized intervention. Teachers are more likely to view remedial instruction as achievable and meaningful rather than as an additional burden when such support is consistent.

The high level of teacher agreement suggests that many principals are effectively communicating and modelling a strong commitment to inclusive teaching strategies. The challenge lies in how these efforts are sustained through continued professional development, structured peer learning, and leadership follow-through. These cultures reinforce inclusive, adaptive, and resilient qualities essential for both teacher effectiveness and learner success.

The researcher appreciates that an individualised communication strategy shapes teaching effectiveness. The findings strongly affirm that when principals intentionally engage teachers as individuals, recognising their distinct strengths, needs, and contributions, they cultivate a work environment where professional growth and instructional excellence are more likely to thrive. The impact of deliberate one-on-one engagements stood out from the teachers' responses. Personalised feedback, mentoring conversations, and opportunities for shared decision-making were meaningful interactions that made teachers feel seen, respected, and genuinely supported. Teachers described these moments as instrumental in helping them stay focused, reflective, and confident in their instructional practice.

This communication approach went far beyond being friendly or approachable. It is a conscious leadership communication strategy that built trust, opened space for professional vulnerability, and encouraged innovation. The majority of the teachers felt empowered to take pedagogical risks and adapt their approaches because they knew their principal understood their context and believed in their

capacity. In essence, an individualised communication strategy fostered both courage and clarity, qualities that are central to effective teaching. These findings are key in the implementation of competency-based Curriculum (CBC), which demands more adaptive, learner-centred approaches where teachers are expected to navigate shifting expectations and design learning experiences that meet diverse student needs. In such a context, principals who take time to communicate in differentiated and personalised ways are better positioned to guide teachers through these changes. Teachers under such leadership reported feeling less overwhelmed, more motivated, and better aligned with instructional goals, which is a strong indication that individualised communication is not just a leadership nicety but a necessity for reform success.

What also emerged is how this approach contributes to the emotional and relational fabric of the school. Teachers felt listened to and respected, and developed a stronger sense of belonging and commitment to their students and the broader mission of the school. Their engagement became a shared journey of growth and improvement beyond meeting professional obligations. That kind of relational trust is not easily built, but it becomes foundational when communication is done with intentionality and care. Based on these insights, our leadership development programs must do more to prepare school leaders in the art and discipline of individualized communication. It should not be treated as an optional skill but as a core component of instructional leadership. Education policies and school improvement frameworks in Kenya would benefit from recognizing this and creating structures that promote and support personalized engagement between school leaders and teachers.

When we communicate with intentionality, we do more than share information. We foster growth, inspire commitment, and strengthen the culture of learning within our schools. Individualised communication, as revealed in this study, is one of the clearest pathways to achieving lasting improvements in teaching quality.

Interrelationships Among Individualised Consideration Communication Practices

To further understand how individualised consideration communication practices operate within schools, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted among selected dimensions of individualized consideration communication strategy. The analysis examined the degree to which key communication practices occurred together in the participating schools. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Interrelationships Among Principals' Individualized Consideration Communication Practices

To further understand the implementation of individualized consideration communication strategies, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted among the various communication practices. The results are presented in Table 4 and indicate the extent to which individualized consideration practices were associated with one another.

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	My principal gives individualized feedback on strengths and areas of improvement on teaching effectiveness.	1					
2	My principal holds regular meetings with individual teachers and students to discuss academic progress.	0.78**	1				
3	My principal communicates with empathy to teachers and students facing personal challenges.	0.40**	0.45**	1			

4	My principal recognizes and celebrates individual teachers' achievements and improvements.	0.51**	0.52**	0.71**	1		
5	My principal incorporates teachers' and students' suggestions.	0.48**	0.49**	0.71**	0.80**	1	
6	My principal holds one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss teaching progress.	0.39**	0.49**	0.64**	0.64**	0.64**	1

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings indicate positive and statistically significant relationships among the various individualized consideration communication practices. For example, principals who recognized teachers' achievements were also more likely to incorporate teachers' suggestions in decision-making and demonstrate concern for teachers' well-being. Similarly, principals who held regular one-on-one meetings with teachers were more likely to listen to teachers' concerns and provide personalized support. These findings suggest that individualized consideration communication practices tend to occur together and form an integrated leadership approach.

Note: ** Correlation at the 0.01 significance level

Table 4 presents the results of a correlation analysis examining the interrelationships among selected dimensions of individualized consideration communication strategy. The findings indicate positive and statistically significant associations among the communication practices, suggesting that principals who demonstrate one aspect of individualized consideration are likely to exhibit other supportive communication behaviours. These relationships underscore the integrated nature of individualized consideration communication and its contribution to supportive instructional leadership.

Data revealed that several dimensions of individualized communication are positively and significantly related, indicating a pattern in how personal support and recognition by school leaders enhance teachers' instructional efforts.

A strong positive correlation exists between appreciating teachers and students' suggestions and celebrating individual achievements ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that principals who acknowledge teachers when they make even the smallest improvement in academic performance value their input, fostering a participatory and affirming school climate. Similarly, strong positive correlations were evident between principals who give feedback to individual teachers and those who hold regular one-on-one meetings with their teachers and students to discuss academic progress ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that feedback is effective when delivered through personal interactions, which reinforce both instructional support and teacher reflection.

Moderate to strong correlations also existed between principals who communicate with empathy and those who celebrate achievements made by their teachers and students ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$) and between principals who communicate with empathy and those who incorporate suggestions from their teachers ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$). These findings highlight the importance of principals possessing emotional intelligence in their communication with teachers and communicating with empathy. These communication strategies promote openness and place greater emphasis on recognizing teacher growth.

Furthermore, principals who hold one-on-one meetings with teachers showed significant associations with nearly all other communication aspects under this strategy. For instance, principals who recognize their teachers' efforts ($r = 0.64$), communicate with empathy ($r = 0.64$), and value their teachers' suggestions ($r = 0.64$; all at $p < 0.01$) suggest that individualized attention is a central component of effective instructional leadership.

Qualitative data reinforced these results. Teachers emphasized that they felt more respected, more motivated, and better equipped to improve their teaching when principals met with them individually to discuss their progress. They further noted that their principals were listening to their concerns and provided personalized feedback on classroom observations. Teachers also expressed that they tend to be more eager to teach when their principals recognize their abilities and show empathy, especially when they face professional or personal stress.

These findings recognize the importance of personalized support and recognition as key drivers of teacher motivation and performance. The literature shows that instructional leaders who communicate with empathy and provide individualized support to their teachers are more effective in developing teachers' capacities. Wanjiru (2021) found that principals who recognize and respond to the unique needs of their teachers enhance their job satisfaction and improve instructional practice.

Statistical data and qualitative insights suggest that principals who adopt individualized consideration communication practices create supportive instructional environments that teachers perceive as enhancing their professional growth and teaching effectiveness. The findings demonstrate that individualized consideration communication practices are positively and significantly related to one another. Practices such as personalized feedback, recognition of achievements, empathy, incorporation of teachers' suggestions, regular academic discussions, and one-on-one meetings appear to operate as complementary dimensions of a broader individualized consideration communication approach. The consistency of these relationships suggests that principals who demonstrate one individualized consideration practice are also likely to exhibit other supportive communication behaviours. Combined with the descriptive findings and qualitative evidence, these results indicate that individualized consideration communication contributes to a supportive instructional environment that teachers perceive as enhancing their professional growth and teaching effectiveness.

Summary

The individualised consideration communication strategy revealed how principals provided personal and professional support and how this support impacted teaching. Teachers appreciated how their principals understood their unique needs, offered one-on-one feedback, and followed up with tailored support. Individualised interactions between the teachers and principals built trust, where teachers were open about the challenges they faced. Teachers were willing to grow, ask for help, and stay committed to their work whenever their principals showed empathy and respect towards them. It was noted that simple efforts such as attentive listening, encouraging effort, or helping a teacher navigate difficult classroom situations influenced teachers' effectiveness. Teachers thrive when they are individually recognised. This pattern was evident in statistical data and supported by teachers' and principals' views. Teachers linked their sense of purpose, confidence, and instructional quality directly to how their principals communicated with them.

The study also revealed limited follow-up on classroom observation, individualised support for teachers, and few opportunities for professional dialogue, which pointed to an inconsistent application of transformational communication strategies in some schools. This limitation could be due to the time factor and resource constraints that hinder principals from fully engaging in regular instructional supervision. The intentional and relational communication grounded in ethical leadership creates a supportive learning environment where teachers feel motivated and professionally challenged to enhance teaching effectiveness. Transformational communication strategies are practical, observable actions that influence how teachers plan, teach, collaborate, and grow, and should be strengthened to offer a clear path toward improving instructional quality and building stronger teaching communities in schools.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that principals' individualized consideration communication practices play an important role in supporting teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools. Teachers perceived individualized feedback, empathy, recognition of achievements, one-on-one engagement, inclusive communication, and participatory decision-making as leadership practices that enhanced motivation, professional growth, commitment, and instructional improvement.

The study further suggests that principals who consistently demonstrate individualized consideration create supportive professional environments in which teachers feel valued, respected, and encouraged to improve their instructional practices. Through personalized communication and meaningful professional relationships, principals foster collaboration, trust, reflective practice, and continuous improvement in teaching. These findings support the central proposition of Transformational Leadership Theory that individualized support and attention to followers' needs contribute positively to professional effectiveness and organizational performance.

Recommendations

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education should strengthen instructional leadership programmes by integrating communication competency training into leadership preparation and professional development programmes for school principals. Particular emphasis should be placed on individualized feedback, professional dialogue, conflict management, teacher recognition, and collaborative decision-making to strengthen teaching effectiveness.

Teachers Service Commission (TSC)

The Teachers Service Commission should incorporate communication competency indicators into school leaders' appraisal and professional development frameworks. These indicators should assess principals' ability to provide individualized support, facilitate professional collaboration, communicate expectations clearly, and create supportive environments that promote teacher growth and instructional improvement.

School Principals

School principals should institutionalize regular one-on-one meetings, structured feedback mechanisms, teacher recognition programmes, mentorship initiatives, and participatory decision-making processes. These practices will enhance teacher motivation, professional growth, collaboration, and commitment to instructional improvement.

Future Researchers

Future studies should investigate the influence of individualized consideration communication strategies on teaching effectiveness using larger samples, longitudinal designs, and advanced statistical techniques. Further research may also examine how individualized consideration interacts with other transformational leadership dimensions to influence teacher performance and learner outcomes.

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