

**INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON
STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN KENYA CERTIFICATE OF
SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION IN KIRINYAGA
COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

I confirm that this research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for certification. The project has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other works – including the internet, the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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DEDICATION

Special dedication to my household for tirelessly offering me the requisite support and continually encouraging me to achieve the highest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The compilation of this report wouldn't have materialized without the assistance, backing and guidance of innumerable characters and parties whom I am obliged to thank. Firstly, I give my sincere appreciation to God Almighty for the robust health granted unto me during the development of this project. Secondly, I profoundly acknowledge my supervisors, Dr. Mukirae Njihia and Dr. Joseph Mungai for their persistent advice and supervision throughout the entire period of doing this work. Their feedback in the development of this work greatly influenced its success. I also recognize my colleagues for their moral encouragement in seeing that this work was completed successfully. In addition, I give thanks to the management and administration of Kenyatta University who granted me a chance to undertake my postgraduate degree programme in this prestigious institution. Lastly, I am grateful to my family for their perseverance in times of my absence just to guarantee the accomplishment of this project.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APA	:	American Psychological Association
BoM	:	Board of Management
CEP	:	Centre for Economic Performance
DEB	:	District Education Board
H/M	:	Head Master or Mistress
HoD	:	Head of Department
KCPE	:	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KEMI	:	Kenya Management Institute
KNEC	:	Kenya National Examinations Council
NACOSTI	:	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
PED	:	Primary Education Development
PTA	:	Parent Teachers Association
SIP	:	School Improvement Project
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UAE	:	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

Studies globally have attempted to examine the influence of managerial practices of principals on academic performance of the students. However, no published studies have been done to establish the influence of principals' management practices on students' academic outcome in secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of principals' school management practices on students' academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County. The objectives of this study were to: find out the influence of school leadership on students' performance in KCSE; establish the influence of monitoring on students' performance in KCSE; find out the influence of personnel management of students' performance and to establish the influence of target setting on students' performance. The study was based on contingency theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study target population was 432 comprising of school principals, heads of departments, boards of management chairpersons, parent teachers association chairpersons and student council chairpersons all drawn from 36 secondary schools. The respondents were grouped into strata and simple random sampling technique used to select a sample of 207 subjects. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20. The overall response from all the respondents was 73.91%. The study established that the principals practised more than one leadership style with the most preferred being instructional and transformational leadership. Further, 78.4% of the participants strongly held that principals' leadership influenced students' academic performance. It was also established that monitoring had great influence on student academic performance given a mean of 4.36 (SD = 0.61). Further, the study established that 67.3% of the respondents were skeptical on whether motivation influenced students' academic performance. In addition, with overall mean of 4.61 (SD = 0.49), it was revealed that target setting had influence on students' academic performance. The study concludes that the principals adopted contingency measures in their leadership styles. The study also concludes that leadership, target setting and monitoring have a high influence on students' academic performance. The study recommends that Teachers Service Commission should recruit adequate teachers in public secondary schools so that the principals may focus on school management as opposed to being in classes most of the time. The study also recommends that the political leaders should work harmoniously with school management for the benefit of the students and schools. The study further recommends that the principals should continue exercising instructional and transformational leadership styles in their schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, the problem statement, and objectives of the study as well as the research questions that the study sought to answer. In addition, the chapter presents the significance of the study, the scope of the study and the assumptions made during the study. Lastly, the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and definition of terms as used in this study is also presented.

1.2 Background to the Study

The determinants of students' academic performance and on policies that improve performance have been largely documented particularly in societies where emphasis is laid on performance rather than acquisition of skills and knowledge. Similarly, school performance, frequently, is solely evaluated through output measures such as wastage rates, completion rates, progression rates and more so through examination classification (Sarrico, Rosa, & Manatos, 2012). Although there are varying aspects with the potential of negatively affecting educational standards, a fundamental factor to be considered in this regard is school management practices of the principals. Despite the literature providing detailed discussions on school performance measures, gaps still exist and which warrant investigation with regard to contributing factors of that performance in as far as school managerial practices is concerned (Sarrico et al., 2012).

According to the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), better management of school has been associated with improved pupil academic achievement in both the developed and the developing countries (Lemos, 2014). In fact, Lemos (2014) posits that school management practices, in comparison to other factors such as teaching quality, competition and class size, has been found to have a superior impact on students' academic outcome. The management practices are classified under 5 specific key areas which include incentive/personnel management, leadership, target setting, monitoring and operations (Liberto, Schivardi, & Sulis, 2013). These practices differ significantly across countries with regard to their adoption (Lemos, 2014) as Figure 1.1 illustrates.

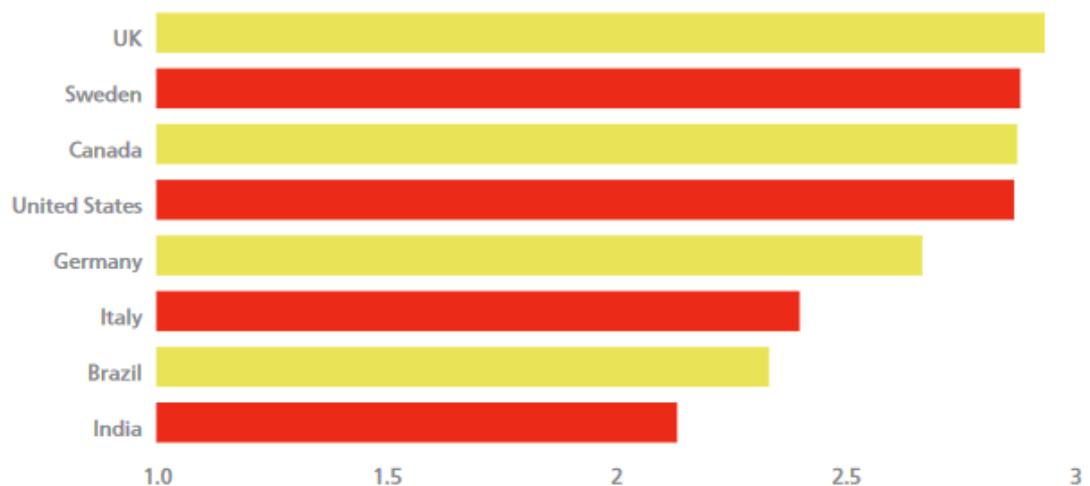


Figure 1.1: School Management Index Score by Country

Source: Lemos (2014)

The centrality of effective leadership has been supported by various research studies in successful and effective schools as well as student academic outcomes (Salfi, 2011). From time to time, different countries globally have had educational reforms with emphasis on the value of school leadership in its enhancement as well as effectiveness. Wide ranging research has shown the substantial outcome of leadership

on the academic performance of the learners in schools (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). It is contended that leaders considered effective employ ancillary but weighty influence on students' academic outcome and on school effectiveness (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2005). Today, the current practice is one in which educators are moving from heroic leadership that is considered obsolete (Lashway, 2003) to distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006). Distributed leadership, for instance in Washington, D.C has been found to have statistical significance particularly in Mathematics subject (Monique, 2009). In Kenya, Mathematics subjects was one of the poorly performed subjects in 2017 KCSE with nearly 90% of the candidates scoring grade C and below (Otieno, 2017).

In the United States of America (USA) many districts and states are spearheading reforms aimed at making principals to be accountable for school performance (Heck, 2011). This was necessitated by the realization that strong leadership by the principle indirectly affects school academic performance. Similarly, Australia has over the last 30 years pursued educational reforms with the intention of raising the achievement standards of students (Cruickshank, 2017). An area of interest in education reforms in Australia is the school leadership. England too has over the couple of years witnessed a remarkably consistent effort in education reforms that are aimed at holding school principals accountable for improving student performance on whether national or state tests (Leithwood & Day, 2008). The interest on school leadership demonstrates the seriousness with which it is considered to be influencing student academic outcome.

Personnel management is concerned specifically with human resource management and entails rewarding and promotion of employees, sanctioning non-performing teachers, recruiting the best teachers and retaining the best ones (Liberto et al., 2013). Student achievement data (Heck, 2009) is logically used as the base upon which school management and teacher performance could be judged. It is not uncommon to observe celebrations and rewards among school management and teachers whose schools are greatly ranked through exam classification. In Chile, for instance, tutors working in well performing schools are rewarded collectively by the National Performance Evaluation System of Subsidized Schools (OECD, 2017). This is part of key specific management area (incentive/personnel management). Equally, there should be sanctions for underperformance because in as much as those producing better results are appreciated and rewarded, it is essential that school management and teachers shouldn't fail to be blamed or fail to take a portion of blame when the learners perform poorly.

Keller, Neumann, & Fischer (2016) note that in Germany and Switzerland, teacher motivation predicts student interest in a subject and subsequently their academic performance. The fact that teachers matter was found to be central as determinant of learners academic accomplishment (Hattie, 2009). Empirical evidence shows the criticality of roles that teachers play in as far as student outcomes is concerned (Abell, 2007; Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005; Kunter et al., 2013; Sadler, Sonnert, Coyle, Cook-Smith, & Miller, 2013). The Kenyan education system is one in which teachers have limited chances of being extrinsically rewarded and perhaps it could be a cause for the bad performance of students in their national examinations. It is worth noting that

manpower is the chief resource in any sector. Therefore, the hallmark of school success and progress is dependent on the adoption of best practices in personnel management (Mugera, 2015).

Namfukwe (2016) in Zambia reveals that monitoring and evaluation influences teacher performance towards the improvement of teaching as well as learning. Ideally, this means that it will have a spiral effect by influencing the students' performance. Tools for monitoring progress have in the recent past been considered core in achieving success (Scherman & Fraser, 2017). Performance monitoring has been established to have positive impact on mathematics subject scores in public secondary schools in Sao Paulo, Brazil (Tavares, 2015). This influence was primarily observable among learners with major learning disabilities as well as low performing students. In monitoring, principals have to exhibit such behaviors as individually meeting with teachers and discussing student progress, discussing academic performance results with teachers, using tests in assessing progress towards goals of the school, apprising tutors in writing of the performance of the school and informing students of the academic progress of the school (Chappelear & Price, 2012).

Target setting motivates an individual to exert effort, persist and focus their attention to produce the desired outcome. According to Idowu, Chibuzoh, & Louisa (2014), target setting for the students in Nigeria showed that their performance improved when closely monitored. Where targets are set, students usually make an observation, judgment and react to their inner perception of target progress and where there are commitments made, then it becomes a base against which comparison can be made

between performance and the set targets. Whereas self-assessment of improvement raises and sustains incentive, apparent incongruity between the targets and performance creates a dissatisfaction whose effect will be demonstrated by one putting in extra effort (Idowu et al., 2014). Target setting does not only exert pressure to the students to deliver but also teachers as well. This means that teachers will also put in extra effort to achieve the set and maintain or to continuously improve on the targets.

Student performance in KCPE in Kirinyaga County is good and this is not reflected in their performance in KCSE or even when compared to the neighbouring counties (see Figure 1.2). In an investigation by District Education Board [DEB] (2013), it was revealed that the average entry behaviour of students in this sub-county who were joining form one was 59.2 percent at KCPE level and this mark continually declined to 45 per cent at the time the students undertake their KCSE examinations. This revelation in the considered opinion of the researcher warrants to be investigated in order to establish what transpires to lead to the decline of the marks since these students are from same geographical area and family background and join post primary schools in the same locality. There is a perception among parents that the academic performance of students is influenced by the school management and teachers.

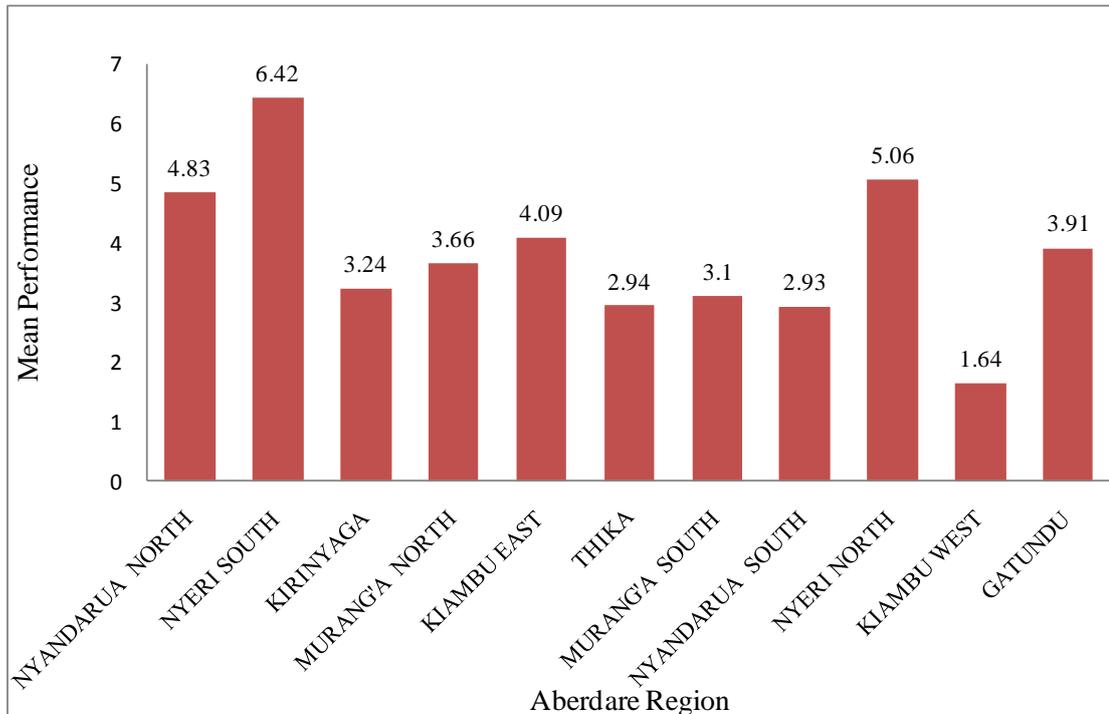


Figure 1.2: Average Mean Performance in Aberdare Region (2013-2017)

School principals being the principal managers in educational institutions are considered as playing a central role in educational achievement while the teachers translate policy into action. The foregoing discussion imputes that ineffective teachers and school management would have the students whose academic progress is inadequate. The pattern of low performance would run across regardless of individual student potential in their achievement academically. The fact that the students perform better in KCPE perhaps would mean that their background may not be significant leaving emphasis to be laid on school management in secondary schools. It is against this argument that the study sought to find out the influence that school managerial practices has on the academic performance of students. Specifically, the practices are studied are leadership, monitoring, target setting and personnel management.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), better school management has been associated with better student academic performance. Much literature on educational outcome in Kenya has been dominated with such factors as quality of teaching, class sizes, instructional resources, competition and background of the learners among others with little emphasis being attributed to school management practices. Despite the primary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County performing well in KCPE examinations, the same performance is not translated in KCSE examinations as the performance in almost all schools is below average. This lower performance in KCSE comes in light of the foregoing factors that have been studied and their impact on educational outcome established. Unless, the causal factor of the below average performance in Kirinyaga East Sub-County is established, the performance of the students could continue to deteriorate and spark an uproar among concerned educational stakeholders. It is against this background of below average performance and the less studied concept of school management practices that this study sought to investigate secondary school management practices that could be contributing to this state of affairs.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish ways of improving secondary schools students' academic performance in KCSE examinations in Kirinyaga East Sub-County by studying school management practices.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to;

1. Find out the influence of school leadership on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County.
2. Establish the influence of monitoring on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County.
3. Find out the influence of personnel management on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County.
4. Establish the influence of target setting on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County.

1.6 Research Questions

The following are the research questions that the study sought to answer.

1. What is the influence of school leadership on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County?
2. What is the influence of monitoring of students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County?
3. What is the influence of personnel management on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County?
4. What is the influence of target setting on students' performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study may be significant to various parties and groups who are interested in educational matters. First the study may be significant to the school management and administration personnel as they would understand the influence of management practices on students' performance. Correctional strategies would be taken by the school managers with the aim of improving the students' academic performance in the likely event that management practices are considered the possible cause of poor performance. Secondly, the study may be of significance to the teachers. The study may provide an opportunity for the teachers to improve their decision making strategies. It would serve as an eye opener to the teachers who are involved in the decision making of the school in order to yield outcome that may be considered appropriate in enhancing the student performance.

Thirdly, the study may be significant to the researchers who would be interested in conducting related studies. It would provide literature that may form the basis of their work as well as for comparison purposes. The study may also provide foundation for further research among scholars in the education field through suggestions that are provided in this work. In addition, the study may provide literature to those who are interested in general knowledge on the impact of school management practices on students' academic performance in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. Lastly, the study contributes to the body of literature by offering an understanding on managerial practices in secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County.

1.8 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

Presented hereunder are the study limitations and delimitations.

1.8.1 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered uncooperative respondents who were unwilling to respond to the questionnaires as they believed the study was about a fault-finding mission on the school management practices that were contributing to the poor performance in examinations. However, to overcome this limitation, the researcher succinctly explained the purpose and significance of the study to the respondents as well as assuring them of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. In addition, given that the study was conducted during the official school working hours, this meant that the researcher had limited time to conduct a comprehensive study. To counter this limitation, the researcher was able to seek permission so as to have adequate time to conduct the study.

1.8.2 Delimitation of the Study

The study was carried out solely in the secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County despite there being other schools in the larger Kirinyaga County. The researcher had to confine the study to one region due to financial and time constraints that would not allow the study to be conducted in an expanded geographical region. The defined regional scope of the study also meant that the findings of the study could not be generalized to all the secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. Furthermore, despite there being wide ranging factors that contribute to poor academic performance

in secondary schools, the study only concentrated on understanding how the school management practices were influencing the students' academic performance.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the assumptions that;

1. School management practices have an influence on the students' academic performance.
2. The management practices were practised by the principals.
3. The respondents were honest, sincere and truthful in their responses.

1.10 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was based on contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964). The theory was proposed in 1964 by Fred Edward Fiedler, an Austrian psychologist. This theory works on the presumption that there is no single best way to organizational leadership and decision making, but the optimal course of action is one that is contingent (dependent) upon the external and internal situation. The theory offers no specific management principles that are applicable in any situation. Contingency theory emphasizes both the situation in which the leader operates and the leader's personality.

The situation concept of this theory comprises three factors which determine the favorableness of the various situations in an organization. The first factor is the leader-member relations which deal generally with the group atmosphere and feelings such as confidence, loyalty and trust that the group has for its leader. Similarly, in the school scenario, the relations between the principals and the parents, staff, students as well as the community is integral in ensuring the effective and successful

management of the schools. School managers must be in a capacity to inspire confidence, loyalty and trust among their members.

The second factor related to the concept of situation in contingency theory is the task structure. Task structure according to Fiedler refers to the clarity of tasks and the means to the accomplishment of the tasks. The tasks of the teachers have to be clearly explained and structured by the school principals. Tasks are viewed unfavorably when they are vague and unstructured and the team as well the leader have little knowledge on how they could be achieved. A high degree of task structure increases employee motivation and this could probably be observed in the students' academic achievement.

The third factor is position power which refers to the amount of reward-punishment authority that the leader can exercise against the group members. School principals possess inherent power in their position to direct their members and provide punishment or reward. The reward and punishment system could aid the members to perform better in fear of sanctions or strive towards being rewarded. This could essentially be seen in the students' performance.

This theory was appropriate as it deals in particular the manner in which managers have to approach situations which is all about management. There are numerous situations that are bound to occur in a school setup. In recognition of the fact that there is no single best way to managing the school situations, it will be incumbent upon the principals to make use of the contingency perspective. The principal has to

determine the managerial approach that would be the most effective in handling a given situation. There is need for principals to understand situational differences and avoid the classical “one best way” arguments and respond appropriately to these situations given their management roles. This management approach means that the principals have to depend on their judgment and experience in responding to a given situation.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

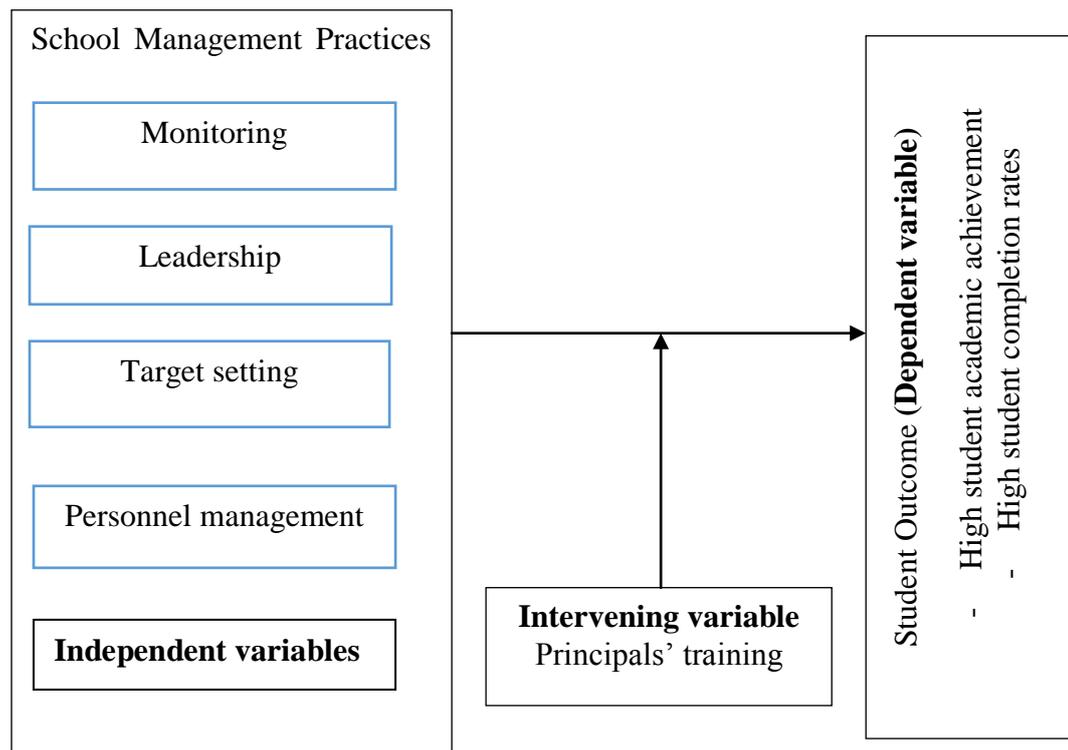


Figure 1.3: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2019)

Figure 1.1 shows the dependent variable (students’ academic outcome) as being influenced by the independent as well as intervening variable. The figure shows that variables such as performance monitoring, school leadership, target setting and incentives/personnel management have direct impact on the student outcome both in

terms of academic achievement and completion rates. In the event that these independent variables are not fully realized by the school principals, training of principals which is an intervening variable could be vital in the attainment of student outcome.

1.12 Operational Definitions of Terms

Attitude – How educational stakeholders feel or think about school management practices in relation to the students’ performance in KCSE.

Communication – The process and medium employed by principals to pass information in the school.

Decentralization – The transfer of authority from central school board to other unit heads of the school.

Expertise – The managerial competence, skills and knowledge that principals exhibit in an effort to improve the students’ academic performance.

Governance – It relates to the power to define expectation or verify performance or decision-making.

Impact – The influence or effect that management practices has on the students’ academic performance.

Leadership – The process of guiding and enlisting the energies and talents of parents, students and teachers towards achievement of common educational goals.

Management – The act of the principals in utilizing the leadership skills of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling and decision making with the intent of improving academic performance.

Management practice – Managerial skills and behavior exhibited by school managers and administrators in performance of their duties.

Monitoring – Observation of students’ academic progress in their subjects on an ongoing basis.

Personnel management – Encompasses leading, motivating, training, inspiring and encouraging teachers.

Performance – The level of students’ academic achievement in examinations.

Target setting – The identification of academic milestones to be achieved by the students.

Teaching/learning resources – All the materials used by the teachers to enhance the delivery of the content of the lesson.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study presents the literature review based on various themes arising from objectives of the study. The literature is reviewed from such sources as journal articles, published theses and dissertations, books, conference proceedings, internet and other credible information sources. The chapter eventually concludes with a summary and the gaps identified in the course of the literature.

2.2 Influence of School Leadership on Students' Academic Performance

Numerous educational reforms in the past years have purposed to raise the academic achievement standards among students and in Australia, these reforms have placed school leadership in a position of being great interest in global education (Cruickshank, 2017). The interest in school leadership is based on the belief that it can significantly influence whether directly or indirectly, the teaching and learning quality in schools, and as a result student achievement. School leadership is increasingly gaining recognition in the role it is playing in improving the academic outcomes of learners (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016) and hence the need to interrogate how it influences academic performance of students in Kirinyaga East Sub-County.

Leithwood, Jantzi, & McElheron-Hopkins (2006) suggest that besides classroom teaching, leadership style is the biggest second influence on student learning. In educational related literature, the most and regularly cited theories are transformational leadership and instructional leadership (Robinson, 2007). These two

theories have been endorsed by researchers as being appropriate leadership models for school principals despite the availability of various theories on leadership (Hallinger, 2010; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014). Instructional leadership model posts that the principal should concentrate his/her efforts in promoting better student academic outcomes as well as being keen on the improvement of classroom teaching and learning quality (Day et al., 2016). According to Muasya (2018), instructional leadership practices and student academic performance are strongly associated. Transformation leadership, on the other hand, strives to establish a school culture and vision in which school teaching and learning quality is enhanced, personnel are developed which overly improves the institution (Shatzer et al., 2014).

The study by Salfi (2011) in Pakistan sought to identify elementary and secondary school principals' successful leadership practices. The study was confined to the principals who were working in government institutions and the data collected from students, parents, teachers and principals. The study findings revealed that according to majority of the principals whose schools were successful, the principals involved the community and parents in the school improvement process, emphasized their self-professional development as well as that of their teachers, developed and maintained rapport among the school community personnel and involved various stakeholders in the decision making process. In addition, the principals empowered others to lead by distributing leadership responsibilities through delegation in the entire school, promoted a culture of trust, support and collaboration. The principals also developed a shared and common school vision. This study finding imply that principals may adopt leadership qualities that are effective for school improvement. However, it raises

questions as to whether the findings can only be applicable to countries with similar socio-economic status and hence the need for other studies on this aspect of leadership.

Wang, Drysdale, & Gurr (2016) explored the characteristics and practices of principals in four Singaporean primary schools that were considered successful. The data were collected from school board members, parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff and the school principal. The study established the school principals contributed greatly to success in their respective schools. The principals were found to display various characteristics. Among them are enhancing the professional development of both teaching and non-teaching staff, establishing meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders both within and outside the school. Worth noting in this study was the principals describing as their leadership style as having been built upon the legacy of the principals they were succeeding. This may imply that regardless of the characteristics of leadership of the principals, they are expected to match those who precede them. Whilst this study focused on primary schools, the current study focused on secondary schools. Furthermore, the fact that the study only studied four schools may imply that the sampled schools could be inadequate to generalize the findings. Hairon & Goh (2015) in Singapore noted that distributed leadership was exercised within relatively tight empowerment boundaries. However, it was also noted that there was evidence of genuine collective engagement and shared decision making.

In Cyprus, Kyriakides, Kythreotis, & Pashiardis (2010) interrogate through a longitudinal study the effects of school heads' leadership on learner academic achievement. The study findings inferred that the leadership style of school principals plays a prominent role in learners' academic outcome. Despite this study stressing the role the leadership style plays as a factor in contributing to student academic achievement, Kyriakides, Kythreotis, & Pashiardis (2010) note that a debate exists about this factor as one category is edged on the proposition that there is a direct influence of this factor on student academic achievement whereas another category opines that there is an indirect influence of this factor on student academic achievement. It was thus necessary to conduct this study so as to interrogate these claims and see which studies would be supported.

Alhosani, Singh, & Al Nahyan (2017) identify educational leadership as a variable that plays a significant role in aiding enhance academic attainment of the learners in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Khaki & Safdar (2010) refer to educational leadership as the guiding process in which energies of parents, students and teachers are directed towards the achievement of common educational goals. Educational leadership is thus aimed at creating a synergy among teachers, students and parents in order to realize what the school stands for and work towards its attainment. This means that despite the principals being the managers and administrators of the institutions, they have to consult with parents, teachers and students and not make unilateral decisions.

2.3 Influence of Monitoring on Student Academic Performance

According to Lezotte (2010), monitoring of teaching and learning entails close examination of both learner academic results as well as the effectiveness of classroom procedures. Monitoring of learning is tracked through parameters such as assessment of test scores, products developed by students, performances among other learning evidence. Monitoring of teaching is through self-reflection of teachers themselves and by their supervisors through teacher evaluation. Assessment results of test scores is used in the planning of individual learner instruction as well as in informing decision making and planning for the entire school. Data realized from school and classroom practices in monitoring is used to modify the teaching of the teachers so as improve student performance.

Sarrico et al., (2012) examine school management practices and their influence of school academic outcome in Portuguese secondary schools and monitoring was once of the objective under study. The study found that the schools do not have well developed performance management and self-evaluation measures. Despite majority of the schools monitoring examination results, completion and progression rates, the schools lacked a systematic and formal way of doing this and hence found difficulties in understanding the reasons for the obtained results. This implies that unless the Portuguese secondary schools develop a systematic and formal framework for performance management and self-evaluation, the schools are likely to make no improvement in the academic outcomes. This is because, the reasons underlying the results obtained are yet to be ironed out. The stakeholders involved in the monitoring exercise in this study were teachers with more responsibilities such as class teachers,

heads of departments and directors. The study fails to include other stakeholders who have vested interests in educational performance and among them are the parents as well as the board of management.

In Mombasa County, Mwatsuma, Mulambe, Mrope, & Cherutich (2012) interrogate the role of leadership in primary schools performance. The study findings show that effectiveness of principals in monitoring the staff has a significant correlation with the mean score of the school. The fact that there is an improved school mean score demonstrates that in one way or another, student performance is influenced by monitoring practices of the principals. Staff monitoring entails, the attendance of classes by the teachers as well as their teaching methodologies. Unlike this study which was conducted in primary schools in Mombasa, the present study was conducted in secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. The study locale differences constitute a research gap that the study sought to fill and determine whether there could be any association between monitoring practices in primary and secondary schools in as far as performance is concerned.

Waweru & Orodho (2014) in their study in Kiambu County sought to establish the impact of monitoring teaching and learning process has on learners' performance academically. Contrary to other studies, this study findings illustrate that monitoring of teaching and learning process, singly, does not translate to enhanced learners' performance academically. This finding contradicts the findings of many scholars who hold the view that strict monitoring practices by principals has a positive influence on students' academic performance. This contradictory findings are an indication of existence of a research gap. Hence it was vital for this study to be

conducted in order to establish whether the present study would agree or disagree with the other majority of scholars.

Monitoring of learner progress has been identified as a strong indicator of their academic achievement. Continuously monitoring the student progress could help evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning process and consequently help teachers to make better informed instructional decisions (Safer & Fleischman, 2005). Essentially, this means that by making informed decisions about instructions, the teachers can adjust their instructions to the benefit of the learners. However, this could be problematic as each student could have their own progress and therefore for the teachers to adjust their mode of instructions to suit all the students may not be tenable.

The commitment of the school managers towards ensuring success is also determined through internal school assessment as determined by the number of examinations that students undertake in a certain period. The number of examinations sat for instance in a particular term is an important way of evaluating the learners' performance. The internal determination of student assessment is a managerial function of the school principals. The number of internal assessment could help the students improve their academic performance. In as much as internal assessment could help improve students' academic performance, this cannot be done in isolation. Multi-faceted approaches have to be adopted as no single strategy could work alone in increasing student engagement and performance (Cunha & Heckman, 2008). Guinea and Indian observations indicated that teachers who are ill-trained in instructional methods and evaluation techniques are unable to gauge individual learning needs of the students

and consequently could not produce the desired enhanced academic performance of the students (Carron & Chau, 2006). The administration of examinations should promote higher order thinking skills as opposed to promoting rote memorization which is achieved from exclusively the use of traditional paper and pencil test.

2.4 Influence of Personnel Management on Student Academic Performance

The task of managing the school including human resources solely rests with the principals, in their absence the deputy principals. Their management practices have the potential of impacting the performance of the student either positively or negatively. The management of a school is comparable to the management of a state. As such, principals have to be sociologists, psychologists, economists and politicians (Farah, 2013). The tasks of principals are unique and extra knowledge and standards are required to apply it. Just like citizens are after deliverables in managing a state, the principals must also have deliverables in the management of schools evaluated through academic performance. Quality education through school management cannot be achieved when the school managers and administrators are not trained and their skills in personnel management are wanting. In order to acquire managerial skills and competently implement them, school managers need training in not only school management but also personnel management. The need of the principals to undertake training in educational management cannot be overemphasized.

Motivation, rewards and sanctions are among the personnel management managerial practices that principals perform to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved. Clearly spelling out the motivation, rewards and sanctions will help teachers to know what is expected in the unlikely event that they perform otherwise than expected. Mose

(2015) in Nyamira County examines the effect of motivating teachers on the performance of students in public secondary schools. The study findings showed that in highly performing schools, all teachers, including those recruited by the Board of Management (BoM) are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. It was established in the study that intrinsic motivators can help teachers to perform beyond the expectations of educational stakeholders. Although the researcher also cautions that extrinsic motivators cannot be ignored because of the influence it has on teachers. Motivated teachers will tend to work in a manner that would produce the desired outcome. In a similar way, the teachers will also work while trying to ensure that they are not sanctioned for their performance. Their performance would be notable through the academic performance of the students.

Jerotich (2015) conducted a study in Elgeyo Marakwet County on the influence that motivation of Kiswahili teachers has on student academic performance. The study collected data through document analysis and questionnaires. The study found a statistically significant relationship between levels of Kiswahili teacher motivation and student performance in Kiswahili subject. The study solely examined the Kiswahili teachers who teach the languages. Perhaps there could be differences on the impact that motivation has on different subjects. However, the current study examined the influence that motivation of teachers has on the student academic performance in general without delimiting to any specific subject or group of subjects.

Sobe (2013) examines the motivational practices of principals in Kuria West and their effect on teacher performance. The study identified motivational practices such as recognition of teachers' efforts through material incentives, tours and oral praises.

The study also identified motivational practices such as sharing of co-curricular activities and sharing of responsibilities like those of guidance and counselling. Ocham (2010) on the other hand, postulates that recommendations from their principals on attending workshops and seminars as well as participating in decision making in the school tended to motivate the teachers. Whereas the study by Sobe (2013) examined the primary schools principals, the current study examined the principals in secondary schools with an expanded sample size from different target populations.

2.5 Influence of Target Setting on Students' Academic Performance

Target and goal setting allows learners to choose the milestones they want to achieve in their academic life. Principals should be able to set their school targets and have them cascaded down to individual teachers as well as the students. Learners who know what they want to achieve know where they have to concentrate and make improvement. Target and goal setting gives teachers and students short-term motivation and long-term vision. Idowu et al., (2014) in Nigeria interrogated the effectiveness of target setting on academic performance of students in English language. The study findings revealed that the performance in English language performance among the students improved given the higher mean scores that were reported. The researcher subsequently recommended target setting as a strategy towards enhancing academic performance of students, particularly in English language.

In Kentucky, Dotson (2016) notes that students, teachers and school managers have been using target setting in the previous years. The utilization of target setting,

according to Dotson (2016) has seen tremendous improvements in both local and state assessments. Furthermore, the study reports that the students who are now meeting the benchmarks for tertiary education minimum qualification for enrolments has significantly increased. This means that target setting by school principals, teachers and students is a strategy that can be used to enhance student academic performance. The performance targets piloted was on a short-term basis and produced the desired results. It may as well be possible for student academic performance targets set to produce or over-achieve the desired outputs in the long-term.

Hastie (2013) considers target setting as important academic achievement indicator in schools. Students were used as the respondents in this study in which Hastie (2013) sought to find out whether their own target setting would have an influence on their academic achievement. The study findings established that majority of the students who had set their own academic targets were typically showing improved academic performance as opposed to those who had no set academic targets. Students can easily set their own academic targets in schools which have also set targets. The targets set by the school should be the minimum threshold expected of the students in their academic performance. Students who set for themselves targets higher than those of the school are likely to exceed those set by the school and strive to achieve their own set targets.

Despite some studies indicating that target setting is related to improved academic performance among the students, other studies report otherwise, arguing that there is little theoretical rationale in supporting target setting as leading to enhanced student academic performance. In Missouri, United States of America, Conley (2016)

explored target setting on student academic achievement using mixed-methods design. The study findings established that target setting did not have any adverse influence on student academic performance. This controversy in literature about the influence of target setting on students' academic performance necessitated this study to be conducted to determine what the findings may agree with in relation to previous related studies.

2.6 Summary and Research Gaps

School management and administration lies within the powers bestowed upon the principals. The management practices employed by the principals has in one or another a direct or indirect influence on the students' academic performance. However, some researchers argue against some of the managerial practices having influence on students' academic performance. Although some of the managerial practices may have been done in other countries and other counties in Kenya, it was noted that there were no published studies that focused on secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. Furthermore, the fact these studies were done elsewhere means that these findings cannot be automatically generalized to be a true reflection of the all the schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County as there could be unique conditions that may determine the outcome of the findings. In addition, it is worth noting that the reviewed studies employed different data collection instruments, different research designs and different study participants. It was thus necessary to fill these gaps in relation to these identified differences through this current study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents details about the research design adopted in implementing the study, the study locale, the target population and the sampling techniques as well as the sample size. In addition, the chapter presents the research instruments used to collect the data, piloting aspects of validity and reliability. Lastly, the chapter presents how data were analyzed and the logistical as well as the ethical considerations that were observed in conducting the study.

3.2 Research Design

This study was implemented through the use of a descriptive research design. According to Martens et al., (2009), descriptive research design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomena to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in the situation. The design was chosen because it enabled the researcher to collect data to assess current managerial practices for improvement. In addition, this design was considered suitable because the instruments used collected data that could be analyzed descriptively.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried in all the secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County in Kirinyaga County. The choice and suitability of this locale was due to logistical reasons particularly in terms of ease of access and proximity to the researcher. Furthermore, this locale was chosen by the researcher based on the fact there are no

published studies or literature concerning principals' school management practices in as far as this locale is concerned.

3.4 Target Population

The study target population was 432 drawn from all the secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. The population comprises of BoM, PTA, student councils, HODs and the school principals. The BoM, PTA, student councils chairpersons and HODs were included in the study as they were deemed to privy to the management practices of the school principals.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

The fact that the population is not homogenous informed the researcher to group it into strata that comprised of the principals, HODs, BoM, PTA, student council. Simple random sampling technique was employed to recruit the chairpersons of BoM, PTA, student council and the principals as well as HODs.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The sample size for the study was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n= Sample size

N= Population size

e= 0.05 (level of precision)

Hence, the sample size is calculated as

$$n = \frac{432}{1+432(0.05)^2} = 207$$

The sample size for the study was thus 207. The sample size is presented in the sampling frame in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

Strata	Population Size	Sample Size	Percentage
Principals	36	17	8.2126
HODs	288	139	67.1498
Student Council Chairpersons	36	17	8.2126
BoM Chairpersons	36	17	8.2126
PTA Chairpersons	36	17	8.2126
Total	432	207	100.002

3.6 Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used as the data collection instruments. The researcher adopted the use of questionnaire given the distributed nature of the respondents. Using other data collection instruments would have been costly in the long run. The researcher prepared two sets of questionnaires. The first set of questionnaire was for the school principal who is involved in the day-to-day management of the school. The other set of questionnaire was for the other respondents and had similar questions. The questionnaires were structured based on the objectives of the study. The first section collected general. The remaining four sections which were arranged based on the study objectives had questions under each of the objectives.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study of the research tools was done in two schools that were earmarked after the pilot study. It was necessary to earmark these schools so as to avoid picking the same schools during the actual data collection exercise. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the worthiness of the instruments and ensure that they are suitable for the study. The pilot study assisted the researcher to identify flaws in the research tools and ensure that there was no ambiguity in the questions. Based on the responses from the pilot study, the researcher made adjustments to the research instruments in order to ensure their clarity and that the respondents understand the questions as intended.

3.7.1 Validity of Instruments

Content validity was achieved by ensuring all the study objectives had adequate representation in terms of the questions asked. In addition, content validity was also achieved through supervisors review and judgment of the instrument as they are experts in the educational field. Their feedback and suggestions were incorporated in the final instrument.

3.7.2 Reliability of Instruments

The internal consistency reliability was determined by conducting pilot studies twice over different periods in the same environment and with the same subjects and thereafter correlated the scores of both tests to determine the stability of the instrument by computing the Cronbach's Alpha value. The reliability coefficients were determined based on George & Mallery's (2003) guidelines where ">0.9 – Excellent, > 0.8 – Good, > 0.7 – Acceptable, > 0.6 – Questionable, > 0.5 – Poor and < 0.5

– Unacceptable.” A reliability coefficient of 0.796 was obtained from the pilot study and the instruments were therefore considered acceptable for the study.

Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	N of items
.775	.796	10

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first obtained permits to conduct the study from relevant authorities. The researcher then booked appointments with the principals of the relevant schools and explained the purpose of the study. Further, the researcher sought consensus from each school principal on the appropriate date and time when the data could be collected from all the respondents. In scheduling for the data collection, the researcher ensured that there would be no clash of time or dates. On the agreed data collection dates and time, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The researcher was available the entire period of data collection to clarify issues that the respondents raised. The filled in questionnaires were collected after giving the respondents adequate time to answer them.

3.9 Data Analysis

The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data obtained from the closed ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and the descriptive statistics computed included frequencies, percentages and mean. The output was presented through the use of frequency distribution tables, pie charts, and bar graphs.

Qualitative data were analyzed through the content analysis technique in which the data were organized into broad themes and interpreted based on the study objectives. Table 3.3 provides a summary of how each section in the questionnaire was analyzed.

Table 3.3: Data Analysis Matrix

Section	Data analysis technique	Presentation
General information	Descriptive statistics using SPSS	Graphs, pie charts and tables
Objective one	Descriptive statistics using SPSS	Tables and graphs
Objective two	Descriptive statistics using SPSS and content analysis technique	Tables, graphs and thematic narration.
Objective three	Descriptive statistics using SPSS	Graphs and tables
Objective four	Descriptive statistics using SPSS	Graphs and tables

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Presented hereunder are the logistical requirements that the researcher fulfilled in order to gain lawful access to the data collection locale as well as the ethical issues related to researching human subjects.

3.10.1 Logistical Considerations

Logistical requirements in this study were the authorizations that the researcher obtained in order to ensure successful access to the data collection field. The researcher obtained various permits and authorizations among them a permit from National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), authorization from Kirinyaga County Commissioner and a permit from Kirinyaga County Director of Education. All these documents were presented to the school heads after which the researcher was granted successful access to the data collection fields.

3.10.2 Ethical Considerations

According to Neuman (2007), “ethics refers to principles of conduct that are considered correct and appropriate especially to those of a given profession or group.” Ethical considerations are part and parcel of everyday practice of doing research. This study abided by the ethical practices in the field of research. It is important that research ethics are observed in order to protect the participants against psychological, social and financial harm arising from the research process as well as the research output (Creswell, 2012). The American Psychological Association (APA) Ethics code provides the basis for research ethics. The Ethics code offers general guidelines and specific guidance for research activities.

As a matter of general guidelines, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study; their right to decline participation and or withdraw from the study once it has started; reasonably foreseeable factors that may influence their willingness to participate; the significance of the study; the limits of confidentiality and privacy and who the participants can contact with questions during the data collection process. The respondents were informed of their rights through a consent letter attached to the questionnaire. Furthermore, the researcher did not present the work of others as his own. Appropriate citations were made to give credit to the work of others where reference was made. The researcher did not also falsify the data and this was ensured by the researcher’s supervisor.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, interpretations and discussions according to the study objectives as the follows;

1. Influence of School Leadership on Students' Academic Performance.
2. Influence of Monitoring on Students' Academic Performance.
3. Influence of Personnel Management on Students' Academic Performance.
4. Influence of Target Setting on Students' Academic Performance.

4.2 General and Demographic Information

This section presents general as well as demographic details of the study respondents.

4.2.1 General Information and Return Rate

This study was conducted in 36 secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County with a total population of 432 and a sample size of 207 respondents. The data were collected from principals, HODs, student council chairpersons, BoM chairpersons and PTA chairpersons. The major problem encountered by the researcher was that the study was being conducted during the official classroom hours. This meant that the researcher had limited time in distributing the questionnaires to the respondents who were spread across the sub-county. However, the researcher in some instances requested for permission from the school management in order to get adequate time to collect the data from the respondents.

The researcher thoroughly examined all the collected filled in questionnaires to ascertain their completeness. Any questionnaire that would be have been more than 10% incomplete would have been discarded as they would have had missing data that could mar the quality of the research. Category of respondents by size based on their response is as presented in Figure 4.1 based on proportional representation of each category of the sample size.

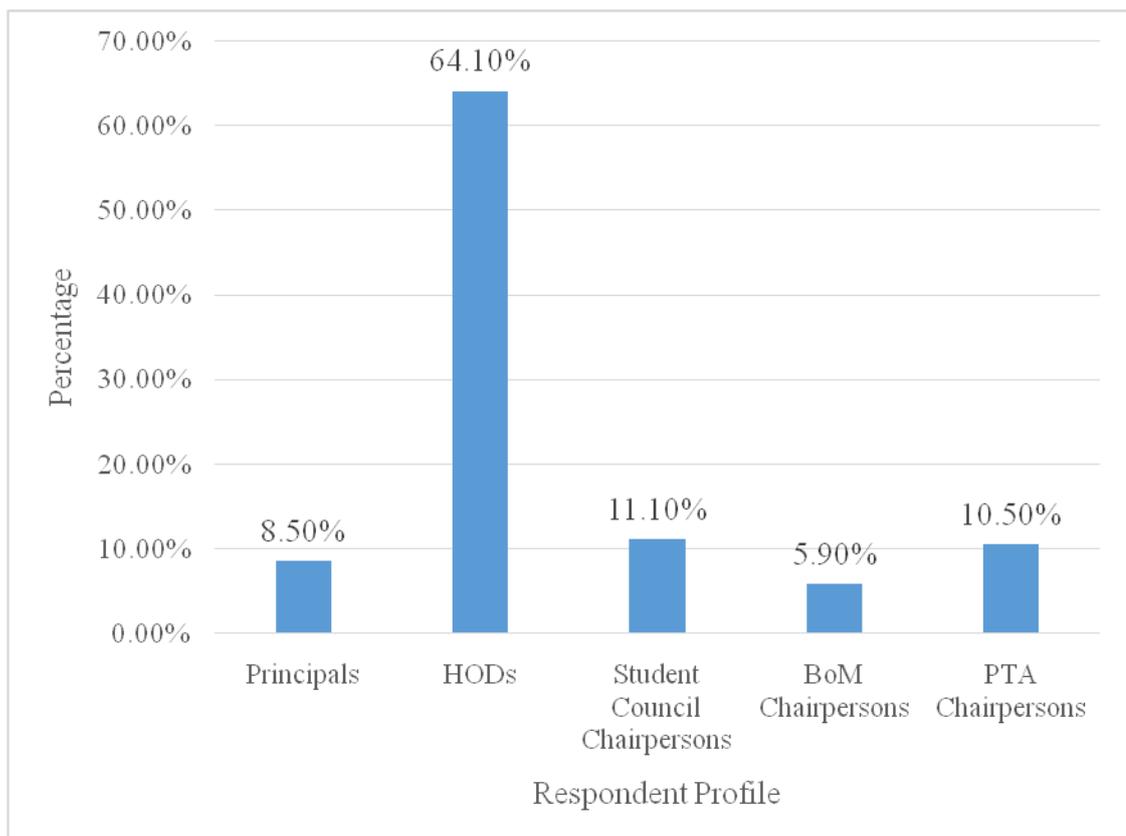


Figure 4.1: Categories of Respondents by Size

Figure 4.1 shows that 13 (8.5%) of the respondents in the returned questionnaires were principals, 98 (64.1%) were HODs whereas the response from chairpersons of student councils was 17 (11.1%). In addition, the questionnaires were received from 9 (5.9%) chairpersons of BoM while 16 (10.5%) were PTA chairpersons. Based on the sample size of all categories of respondents, the cumulative response rate as a

percentage of the sample size was 73.91%. The acceptability of the completion rate was based on the guidelines by Gordon (2002) where a response rate of “60% - Marginal, 70% - Reasonable, 80% - Good, 90% - Excellent”. With the overall rate of 73.91%, the return rate was considered reasonable and hence suitable for the study. The researcher was unable to collect the other questionnaires since at the time of collection, some of the respondents were not available in their stations neither had they left the filled in questionnaires with any other person to facilitate their collection by the researcher.

4.2.2 Respondents’ Highest Educational Qualifications

The researcher sought to find out the highest educational qualification of the principals, HODs, chairpersons of BoM and chairpersons of PTA. This was considered important because theoretical foundation of managerial practices is core in the successful management of any institution. The findings are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Academic Qualifications of Respondents

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Master’s Degree	75	55.1
Bachelor’s Degree	57	41.9
Higher Diploma	4	2.9
Total	136	100

Note n = 136

Table 4.1 shows that the number of respondents was 136 as opposed to 153 because the chairpersons of the student council were not among the respondents to this question. The findings show that 75 (55.1%) of the respondents had master’s degree,

57 (41.9%) had bachelor's degree whereas 4 (2.9%) of the respondents had their highest qualification being higher diploma. None of the respondents had Ph.D. nor certificate as being their highest qualification. The study shows that, school principals, who are charged with the responsibility of school management had 11 of them with master's degree whereas only 2 had bachelor's degree as their highest educational qualification. Educational qualification is relevant as it is designed to offer professionals in the educational field the opportunity to engage in systematic and analytical enquiry into the theory and practice of leadership and management in education. The knowledge and skills gained from educational courses could be used to improve their own practice in their educational institutions managerial roles.

The study findings mean that the respondents are able to critically examine the educational institutions and systems in which they work and achieve outcomes for stakeholders. Achieving academic outcomes in a school in a collaborative effort that cannot be left with the principals alone. In addition, the fact that some of the respondents undertook master's degree courses means that they want to enhance their scope of understanding about managerial skills and practices that today's learning environments demand. Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, & Martinez (2015) stress the importance of educational qualifications in management positions. The scope of management widens when one progresses educational qualifications and particularly in curriculum which has in it elements of management embedded.

4.2.3 Respondents' Length of Service in their Current Position

The researcher sought to find out how long the respondents had held their current positions. This was necessary as the respondents would be more informed of the

managerial practices of the principals since they occasionally met to discuss matters concerning their schools. The findings are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Length of Service of Respondents

Length of Service	Category of Respondent				Total	
	Principals	HODs	BoM Chairpersons	PTA Chairpersons	f	%
Less than 1 year	0	7	0	9	16	11.8
Between 2-3 years	1	27	0	7	35	25.7
Between 4-6 years	8	23	3	0	34	25
Above 7 years	4	41	6	0	51	37.5
Total	13	98	9	16	136	100

Note n = 136

Table 4.2 shows that the total number of respondents is 136. This is because the student council chairpersons were not asked to respond to this question. The findings show that 16 (11.8%) of the respondents had served in their current position for a period of less than one year while 35 (25.7%) of them had served for a period of between 2-3 years. In addition, the findings show that 34 (25%) of the respondents had served in their current position for a period of between 4-6 years whereas 51 (37.5%) had served in their current positions for at least 7 years. It has to be noted that BoM chairpersons serve for a term of 3 years that can be renewed once up to a maximum of 6 years whereas the PTA chairpersons serve for a period of 1 year but eligible for reelection to represent parents up to a maximum of 4 years.

These findings imply that the respondents, in particular, HODs, BoM and PTA chairpersons have had at least a considerable time to have experienced the managerial practices of the principals in their respective schools. All the principals except one

have been in leadership positions for at least four years. This period could be considered as relatively adequate having exposed them to school management and administration environment. From the study findings, it could be inferred that given the years of service in their positions, the respondents would comfortably respond to the questions asked as they are familiar with their school principals and all practices related to school management that they exhibit.

4.3 Influence of School Leadership on Students' Academic Performance

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of principal leadership on students' academic performance. Leadership is one of the core tenets of managerial practices in schools. The researcher sought to find out the leadership styles of the principals. This data was collected from principals, HODs, BoM chairpersons and PTA chairpersons with the student council chairpersons being excluded because they may not be conversant with leadership theories. The findings are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Leadership Styles of the Principals

Leadership style	Category of Respondent							
	Principals		HODs		BoM Chairpersons		PTA Chairpersons	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Instructional Leadership	10	7.4	38	27.9	3	2.2	6	4.4
Autocratic Leadership	0	0	0	0	1	0.7	0	0
Democratic Leadership	6	4.4	28	20.6	0	0	0	0
Transformational Leadership	4	2.9	42	30.9	7	5.1	10	7.4
Laissez-faire Leadership	0	0	16	11.8	0	0	2	1.5
Bureaucratic Leadership	0	0	0	0	5	3.7	7	5.1

Note n = 136

Table 4.3 shows the responses to the questions are more than the sample size of the study. This is because the question was a multiple response one and the respondents were allowed to indicate more than one response where applicable. The percentages are computed based on the sample size of the participants who did not include the chairpersons of the students' council. The findings show that 10 (7.4%) of and 38 (27.9%) of the principals and HODs respectively cited that they practised instructional leadership. Three (2.2%) and 6 (4.4%) of the BoM and PTA chairpersons respectively cited that the principals practised instructional leadership. One (0.7%) of the BoM chairpersons indicated that the principals practised autocratic leadership. None of the other respondents cited that the principals practised autocratic leadership.

The study further found that 6 (4.4%) and 28 (20.6%) of the principals and HODs respectively indicated that the principals practised democratic leadership. None of the BoM and PTA chairpersons cited that the principals practised democratic leadership. Four (2.9%) and 42 (30.9%) of the principals and HODs respectively cited that the principals practised transformational leadership. It was also found that 7 (5.1%) and 10 (7.4%) of the BoM and PTA chairpersons respectively cited that the principals practised transformational leadership. According to 16 (11.8%) of the HODs and 2 (1.5%) of the PTA chairpersons, the principals practised laissez-faire style of leadership. In addition, the study according to 5 (3.7%) of the BoM and 7 (5.1%) of the PTA chairpersons cited that the principals practised bureaucratic style of leadership.

It can be inferred from the study findings that the widely practised leadership styles were instructional and transformational styles. These findings concur with the assertion by Robinson (2007) who notes that instructional and transformational leadership styles are styles that are regularly cited in the educational literature as well as practised. These two leadership models have been endorsed by various scholars and this implies that they have been deemed to be of influence in the academic arena. By widely, practising instructional leadership, the principals can concentrate their efforts in promoting better student academic outcomes as well as being keen on the improvement of classroom teaching and learning quality. Furthermore, the study findings imply that by widely practising transformational leadership, the principals can inspire their teachers to perform better as well as engage them in ways that inspire them to higher levels of commitment with the intention of improving the academic outcomes of the students.

4.3.1 Principals' Leadership Behaviour Influence on Students' Academic Performance

The researcher sought to find out from the respondents whether principals' leadership had influence on students' academic performance. The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree on whether principals' leadership has influence on students' academic performance using a 5 point Likert scale. The findings are presented in Figure 4.2.

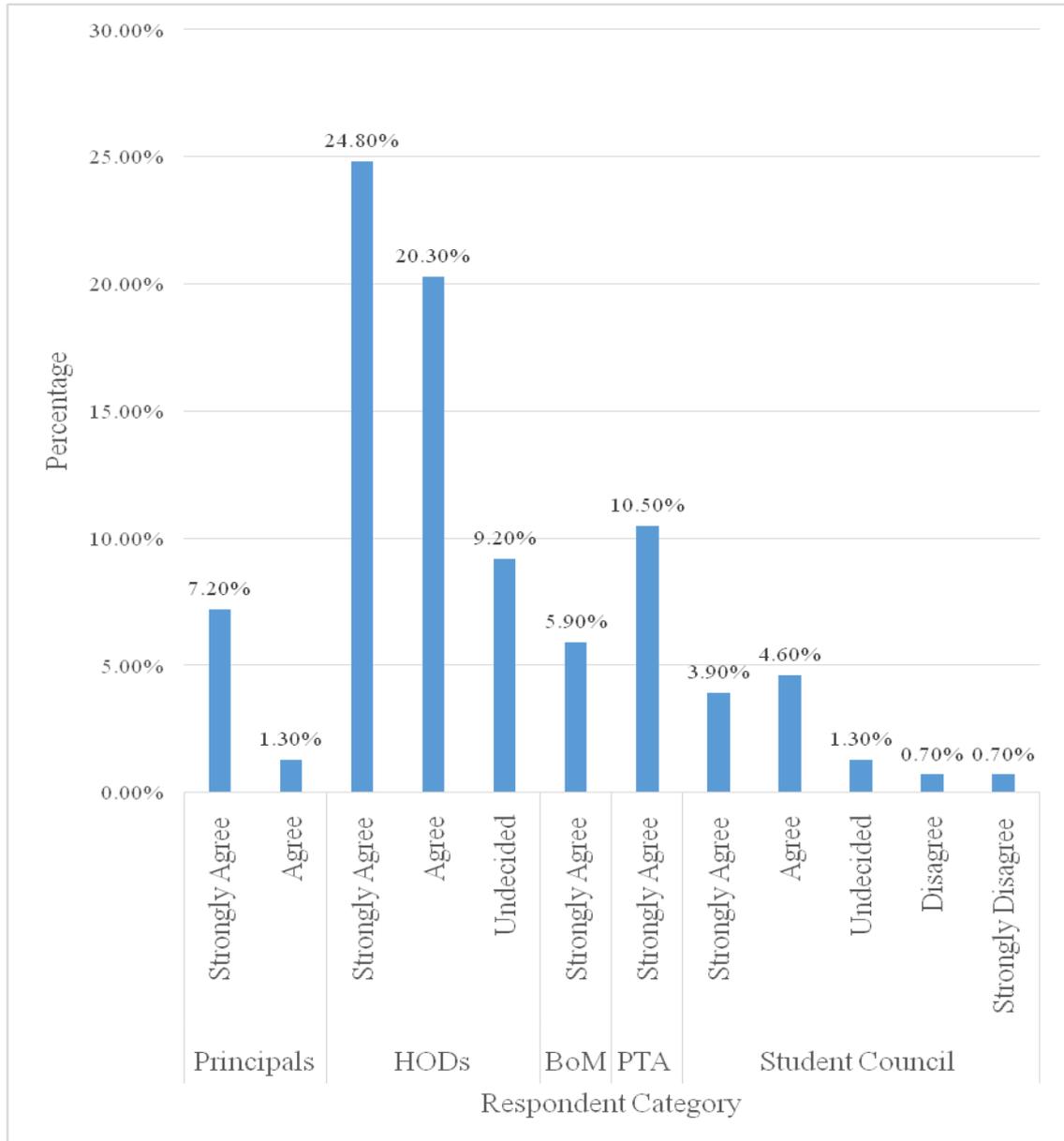


Figure 4.2: Principals' Leadership Behaviour Influence on Students' Academic Performance

Figure 4.2 shows that 11 (7.2%) and 38 (24.8%) of the principals and HODs respectively strongly agreed that leadership influenced students' academic performance. It was also found that all the BoM and PTA chairpersons strongly agreed that the principals' leadership had influence on the students' academic performance. Six (3.9%) of the student council chairpersons strongly agreed that

leadership influenced students' academic performance. Further, 2 (1.3%) and 31 (20.3%) of the principals and HODs respectively noted that leadership influenced students' academic performance. Seven (4.6%) of the student council chairpersons agreed that leadership influenced students' academic performance. Fourteen (9.2%) and 2 (1.3%) of the HODs and student council chairpersons respectively were undecided on whether the principals' leadership influenced the students' academic performance. Fifteen (9.8%) of the HODs and 1 (0.7%) of the student council chairpersons disagreed to the assertion that leadership influenced the students' academic performance whereas 1 (0.7%) of the student council chairpersons strongly disagreed that leadership influenced students' academic performance.

This finding resonates with those of Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe (2008), Alhosani, Singh, & Al Nahyan (2017) and Muasya (2018) who concluded that the leadership dimension has a greater impact on students' academic performance. This finding implies that schools where principals practice effective leadership are likely to have high retention. Learners tend to transfer out of schools characterized by managerial problems due to poor leadership. Furthermore, the findings may also mean that in schools where principals exhibit effective leadership and perform well, there may be high enrolment as parents would want to admit their children to such well performing schools. Through leadership, the principals may influence or inspire the attitude and behavior of teachers and ultimately students' outcomes. Contrary to the findings by Waweru & Orodho (2013) who noted that literature concerning school based leadership practices adopted by the principals aimed at improving the academic performance of the students presents a mixed range of results, the findings of this

study establish that there is a relationship between principals' leadership influence and students' academic outcomes.

4.3.2 Qualities of Principals' Leadership Behaviour Influencing Student Academic Outcome

The researcher sought to establish the qualities that the principals had which were considered as influencing the student academic performance. This was necessary as it would help the principals in low performing schools to adopt some of the best practices that would help them improve their schools' academic performance. The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements on a 5 point Likert scale. The findings of mean and standard deviation are computed and presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Leadership Qualities of Principals

Statement	Principals		HODs		BoM		PTA		Student Council	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality	4.44	0.75	4.21	0.78	4.09	0.91	4.35	0.66	4.37	0.54
The principal involves the community and parents in school improvement process	1.30	1.36	1.89	1.76	1.09	0.84	1.23	0.84	1.20	0.31
The principal emphasizes the professional development of their teachers	4.06	0.87	4.67	0.22	3.84	0.97	4.43	0.93	2.41	2.98
The principal builds and maintains rapport with the school community and other stakeholders	3.77	1.59	3.56	0.89	3.19	0.97	3.42	1.01	3.24	0.89
The principal involves various stakeholders in school decision making process	4.92	0.28	4.71	0.57	4.13	0.82	4.74	0.29	4.09	0.94
The principal delegates leadership responsibilities to other teachers	4.54	0.34	4.41	0.96	4.86	0.64	4.07	0.75	4.14	0.98
The principal supports the culture of trust, collaboration and support	3.81	1.05	2.19	1.98	2.09	2.58	1.35	2.04	1.88	2.34

Note n = 153

This was a multiple response question and the respondents were allowed to indicate more than one response where appropriate. This means that the number of responses to the questions was more than the number of respondents. Table 4.4 shows that several qualities were deemed by the respondents as those possessed by effective

leaders. According to the respondents, the principals' efforts in striving to improve classroom teaching and learning quality is a major given their mean on this statement which showed principals (M = 4.44, SD = 0.75), HODs (M = 4.21, SD = 0.78), BoM chairpersons (M = 4.09, SD = 0.91), PTA chairpersons (M = 4.35, SD = 0.66) and student council chairpersons (M = 4.37, SD = 0.54). It is established from this finding that almost all the respondents were of the same opinion that improvement of classroom and learning quality is a significant characteristic of effective leaders given that the standard deviations obtained from the respondents is very small.

The study also found that emphasis on the professional development of the teachers is another quality of effective principals given their mean distribution which showed principals (M = 4.06, SD = 0.87), HODs (M = 4.67, SD = 0.22), BoM chairpersons (M = 3.84, SD = 0.97) and PTA chairpersons (M = 4.43, SD = 0.93). The small value of the standard deviations obtained means that the respondents were almost of the same opinion that emphasizing on professional development of teachers is a good quality of principals. The study findings further show that involvement of various stakeholders in school decision making process by the principals is another key quality of a principal given that the respondents' standard deviations were small where the principals (M = 4.92, SD = 0.28), HODs (M = 4.71, SD = 0.57), BoM chairpersons (M = 4.13, SD = 0.82), PTA chairpersons (M = 4.74, SD = 0.29) and student council chairpersons (M = 4.09, SD = 0.94).

In addition, the respondents cited that effective principals delegated leadership responsibilities to other teachers and the standard deviations computed was not spread which means that the respondents were of almost the same opinion given that

principals ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.34$), HODs ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.96$), BoM chairpersons ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 0.64$), PTA chairpersons ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.75$) and student council chairpersons ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.98$).

The findings of this study closely resonate with those of Salfi (2011) in Pakistan who identified various traits associated with successful and effective school principals and whose schools were performing well. This implies that the leadership practices of the principals in Pakistan could as well be generalized and applied in current study locale and produce the desired outcome regardless of the differences in socio-economic status of these regions. Furthermore, the findings also support those of Wang, Drysdale, & Gurr (2016) in Singaporean primary schools where they identified other characteristics key among principals in high performing schools.

4.4 Influence of Monitoring on Students' Academic Performance

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of monitoring on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. This was necessary as monitoring of the student performance helps the principals make informed decisions regarding the vision of their schools. The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements on a 5 point Likert scale. The findings of mean and standard deviation are computed and presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Principal Practices on Monitoring

Statement	Principals		HODs		BoM		PTA		Student Council	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers	3.52	1.06	3.02	1.98	3.13	1.62	3.47	1.71	3.06	1.83
The principal monitors the teaching methodologies of the teachers in class	2.36	2.45	1.31	3.12	3.49	2.01	3.61	2.37	3.58	2.49
The principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress	2.06	2.52	2.37	2.08	1.85	3.74	2.81	1.79	1.98	2.97
The principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school	4.25	0.95	4.36	0.92	4.58	0.77	4.22	0.89	4.64	0.63
The principal discusses the overall school performance	4.54	0.91	4.89	0.67	4.23	0.74	4.31	0.69	4.52	0.71

Note n = 153

This was a multiple response question and the respondents were allowed to indicate more than one response where appropriate. This means that the number of responses to the questions was more than the number of respondents. Table 4.5 shows that the mean scores of the statements ranged from 1.31 (SD = 3.12) to 4.89 (SD = 0.67) and the overall mean was 3.26 (SD = 0.89). The principals widely emphasized the need for regular internal assessments (M = 4.25, SD = 0.95) as well as discussing the overall school performance (M = 4.54, SD = 0.91). The least monitoring practice by the principals was monitoring and discussing individual learner academic progress (M = 2.06, SD = 2.52). This may perhaps be attributed to the observation that principals have a heavy workload which may make them not afford time for some monitoring activities. The HODs cited that the principals emphasized the need for regular internal assessments (M = 4.36, SD = 0.92) as well as discussing the overall school performance (M = 4.89, SD = 0.67). Further, according to the HODs, the least monitoring practice by the principals was monitoring the teaching methodologies of the teachers while they are in class (M = 1.31, SD = 3.12). This may be attributed to fears that one has when they are aware that they are being observed.

The study also noted that the BoM chairpersons cited that the principals insisted on the need for regular internal assessments (M = 4.58, SD = 0.77) as well as discussing the overall school performance (M = 4.23, SD = 0.74). In addition, the BoM indicated that the principals barely monitored and discussed individual learner academic progress (M = 1.85, SD = 3.74). The study also found that according to the PTA chairpersons, the widely practised monitoring activities by the principals were emphasizing on the need for regular internal assessments (M = 4.22, SD = 0.89) and discussing the overall school performance (M = 4.39, SD = 0.69). Similarly, the

student council chairpersons cited that principals' emphasis on the need for regular internal assessments ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.63$) and discussion of the overall school performance ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.71$) were widely practised.

It can be noted from all the respondents that their principals' widely emphasized on the need for regular internal assessments and discussing the overall school performance as part of monitoring activities. This finding implies that these monitoring activities could be having a higher influence on the academic performance of students in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. These findings corroborate the monitoring practices identified by Lezotte (2010) and Sarrico et al., (2012). They noted that the principal ensured that internal assessments were done regularly and the overall performance arising from these assessments were discussed. These findings mean that the principals are to develop performance management measures as well as self-evaluation measures for their schools and the frameworks developed be utilized in the improvement of student and school academic outcomes.

4.4.1 Principals' Monitoring Practices on Students' Academic Performance

The researcher sought to establish from the respondents on whether they thought the principals' monitoring practices have any influence on the students' academic performance. The respondents were requested to cite the extent to which they agree with monitoring influencing academic performance of students and this was determined on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The findings are presented in Figure 4.3.

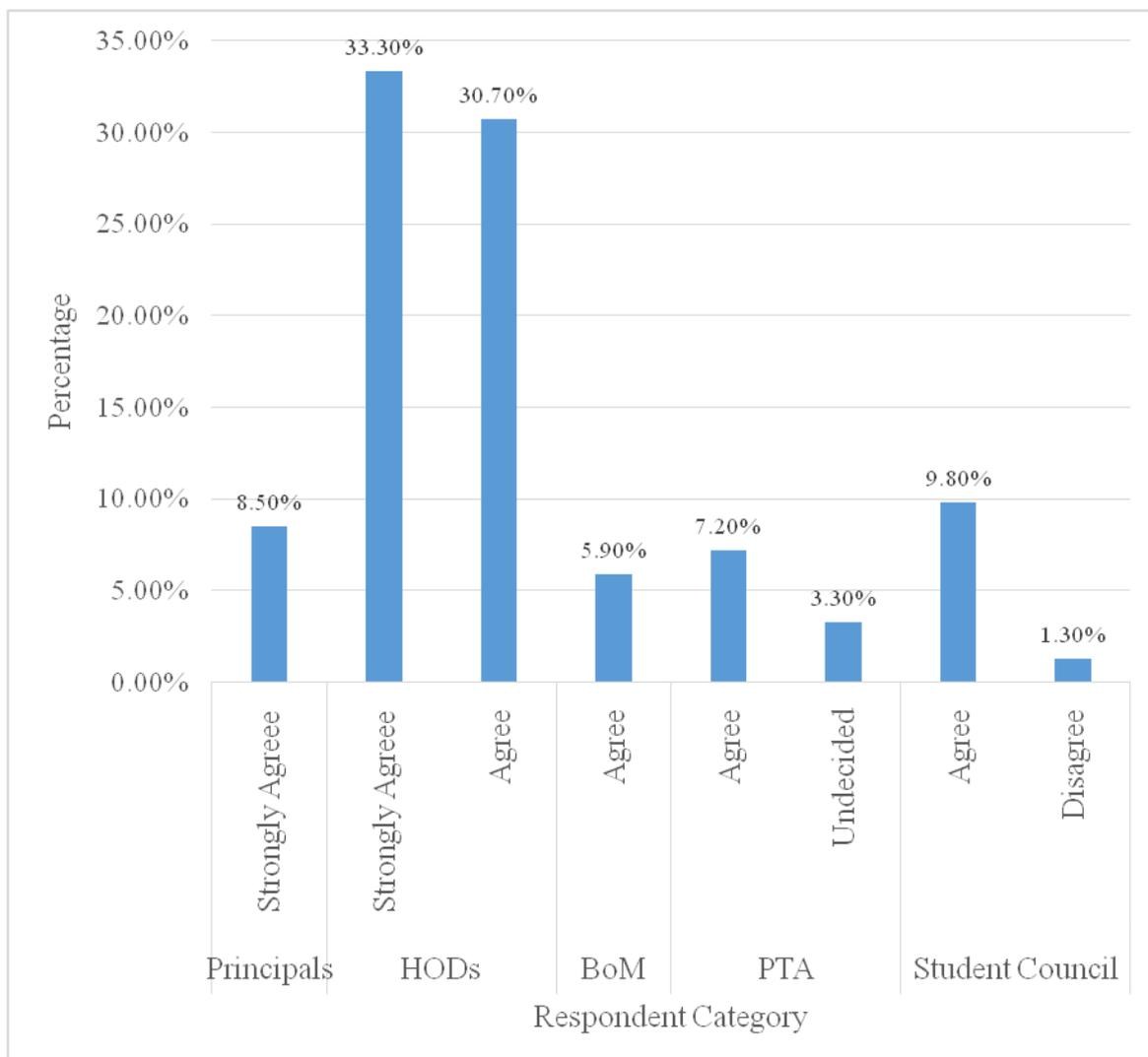


Figure 4.3: Influence of Monitoring on Students' Academic Performance

Figure 4.3 shows that all the 13 (8.5%) principals strongly agreed that monitoring influenced students' academic performance in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. In addition, 51 (33.3%) and 47 (30.7%) of the HODs respectively strongly agreed and agreed that monitoring influenced the students' academic performance. All the 9 (5.9%) BoM chairpersons agreed that monitoring influenced students' academic performance while 11 (7.2%) of the PTA chairpersons agreed that monitoring influenced students' academic performance whereas 5 (3.3%) were undecided on whether monitoring influenced students' academic performance. Further 15 (9.8%)

and 2 (1.3%) of the student council chairpersons respectively agreed and disagreed that monitoring influenced the academic performance of the students in Kirinyaga East Sub-County.

The findings mean that generally, the respondents were of the view that monitoring activities influenced academic performance of the students. This finding supports that of Mwatsuma, Mulambe, Mrope, & Cherutich (2012) in Mombasa County whose interrogation on role of leadership in primary schools performance established that there is a significant correlation between effectiveness of principals in monitoring and mean score of the school. The study findings imply that for a school to be well and high performing, monitoring would be key in ensuring that this is realized. Furthermore, the fact that monitoring has an influence on the academic performance in primary schools as well as in secondary schools means that this is a managerial practice that can be adopted in the learning institutions. Principals therefore, in being committed, will work towards ensuring there are strong monitoring practices and a framework as well as monitoring policy designed so as to have a standardized way of undertaking managerial activities on monitoring. Monitoring has to be multi-faceted as no single technique can produce the desired enhanced academic performance of the students.

4.4.2 Challenges Encountered by Principals in Monitoring

The researcher sought to find the challenges that were encountered by principals in monitoring as a managerial practices in their schools. This was necessary so as to inform the way forward and also provide the basis for giving recommendations and suggestions regarding school management. This was an open ended question in which

the respondents were required to give their own opinion on the challenges that were encountered by the principals in school management.

It was established that 126 (82.35%) of the respondents attributed a challenge to inadequate teachers available in their schools. Limited teaching staff in the schools means that the principals may be required to undertake class lessons and therefore fail to have time to conduct other practices related to monitoring which are key in school management and help impact on academic performance. This finding is related to the study by Silman & Simek (2009) in Turkey who also found that limited staff in the schools was burdening the principals who have to take classroom lessons as opposed to engaging in managerial practices that would influence academic performance. The situation is likely to be dire given the high transition from primary schools to secondary schools while the teachers' workforce yet to be increased.

Seventy four (48.37%) of the respondents cited political interference as a challenge encountered by the principals in school management. Political interference was also cited by Mutinda (2015) as in some cases the political leaders in the community would tend to micromanage the schools within their areas of jurisdiction. Furthermore, the recent policy by TSC on delocalization of teachers has seen political leaders mobilize their communities to eject newly deployed principals particularly those who had come from poorly performing schools. Such kind of actions would definitely have a negative implication on the school management. Some of the principals may succumb to the political pressure in the management of the school. In the event that they succumb to the political pressure, then they are likely to poorly manage the schools and as a result experience poor academic performance. It is only

the principals and their teachers who understand what it takes to monitor the school and be able to produce the desired academic outcomes.

Thirty seven (24.18%) of the respondents cited poor financial literacy as an impediment to effective school management. The school principals are the principal accounting officers in their respective schools. This finding means that some of the day to day activities that have financial implication and require funds to support monitoring, teaching and learning would be jeopardized if the funds are ill managed. Some of the actions that are unconsciously taken by the principals may lead to improper use of the school funds. A similar finding was made Mapolisa et al.(2014) in Zimbabwe who noted that some of the school principals lacked accounting literacy necessary for effective management of school finances. Financial resources are at the core of majority of the school activities including monitoring and lack thereof would mean that activities and managerial practices meant to improve the student performance would halt. Given the limited budgets that schools operate on, it would be disastrous for the financial resources to be misappropriated or misused.

The study also noted that 7 (4.58) of the respondents cited that there were no clear policies on what monitoring entailed. This is despite the fact that the respondents in their majority had agreed that monitoring had influence on the academic performance of students. The availability of monitoring policy tends to standardize the operations and practices in the school. Four (2.61%) of the respondents further cited poor school infrastructure as impediment to effective monitoring. Effective monitoring should be accompanied by adequate and relevant infrastructural structures meant to support the teaching and learning. Some of the subjects are practical-based and the absence of

proper and adequate infrastructure would make it difficult to achieve the objectives of monitoring.

4.5 Influence of Personnel Management/Incentives on Student Academic Performance

The third objective of the study was to investigate the influence of personnel management/incentives on student academic performance. This was important because human resource is the most important resource in any organization. The respondents were requested to cite the extent to which they agreed whether personnel management influenced academic performance of students and this was determined on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The findings are presented in Figure 4.4.

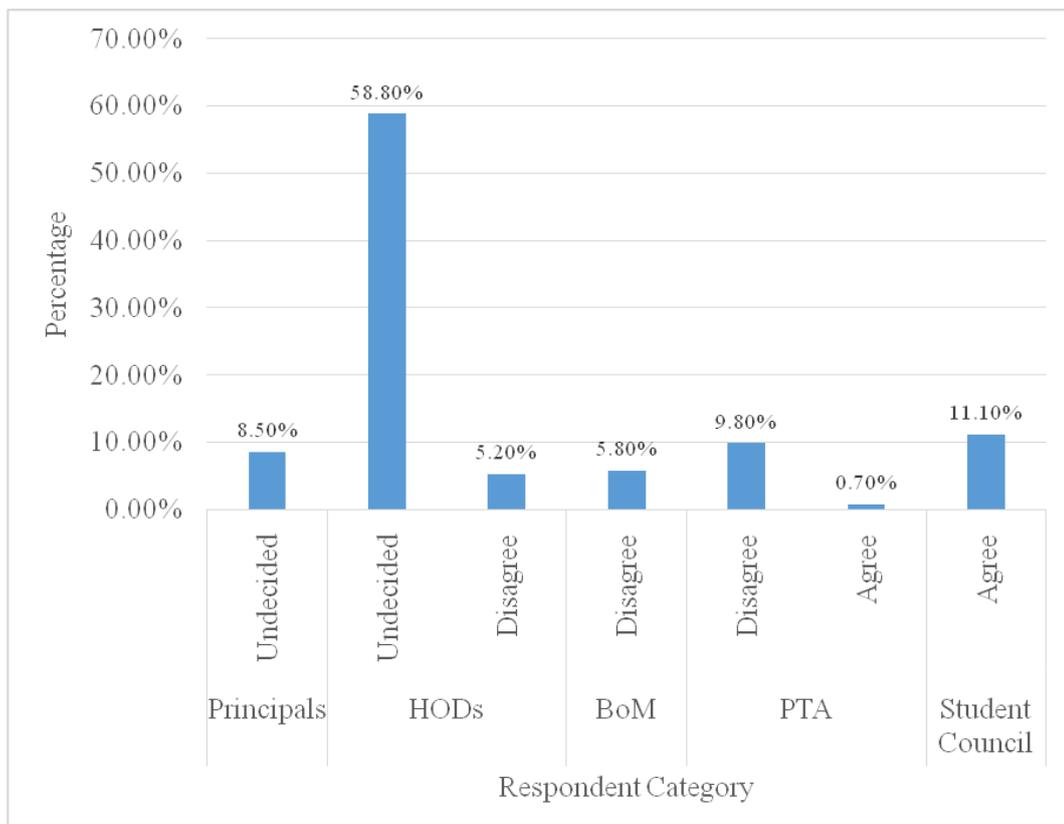


Figure 4.4: Influence of Incentives on Students' Academic Performance

Figure 4.4 shows that all the 13 (8.5%) principals and 90 (58.8%) of the HODs were undecided on whether incentives influenced students' academic performance in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. In addition, 8 (5.2%) of the HODs and 9 (5.8%) of the BoM chairpersons disagreed that incentives to the teachers by the principals influenced the academic performance of the students. Whereas 15 (9.8%) disagreed, 1 (0.7%) of the PTA chairpersons agreed that incentives influenced the academic performance of the students. Further, all the 17 (11.1%) agreed that incentives influenced the academic performance of the students. This finding is a clear indication that the respondents were skeptical about the influence that incentives/teacher motivation has on academic performance by students. This finding implies that in as much as teacher motivation may be having some influence on the academic performance of students, the gravity of its influence could not be comparable to the influence of other managerial practices.

The findings of this study do not fully concur with those of other majority of researchers such as Mose (2015), Jerotich (2015) and Sobe (2013) who postulate that teacher motivation has a strong influence on the academic performance of students. This finding may perhaps be attributed to the fact that majority of the teachers had their schools lacking motivational incentives and subsequently without being motivated, the teachers may not be aware of whether or not this could have influence on school performance. While motivating teachers, it is also important to sanction those who may be bad performing. It's worth noting when teachers get used to being motivated particularly, material incentives, then they are likely to drop making more efforts to help the students improve in their academic performance.

4.5.1 Motivation of Teachers by the Principals

The study sought to find out whether the principals motivated their teachers. This was necessary as it could perhaps help understand whether this may help in further understanding the foregoing finding. The researcher asked the respondents to indicate whether the principals motivated their teachers. The findings are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Motivation of Teachers by Principals

Category of Respondent	Motivation of Teachers					
	Yes		Not Sure		No	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Principals	13	8.5	0	0	0	0
HODs	2	1.3	56	36.6	40	26.1
BoM Chairpersons	0	0	0	0	9	5.9
PTA Chairpersons	0	0	0	0	16	10.5
Student Council	0	0	0	0	17	11.1
Total	15	9.8	56	36.6	82	53.6

n=153

Table 4.6 shows that all the 13 (8.5%) principals cited that they motivated their teachers while only 2 (1.3%) of the HODs cited the principals motivating their staff. This means that only 15 (9.8%) of the respondents cited that the principals motivated their teachers. It was also found that 56 (36.6%) of the HODs were not sure of whether the principals motivated their teachers whereas 40 (26.1%) cited never. It was also found that all BoM, PTA and student council chairpersons cited that the principals did not motivate their teachers. This implies that at least half (53.6%) of the

respondents indicated that the principals did not motivate their teachers. Interestingly, it was also noted that those who agreed that teacher motivation had influence on students' academic performance are those whose principals motivated their teachers. This may perhaps serve to explain why only 11.8% agreed to the view that teacher motivation improved the academic performance of students. As opposed to the findings of this study Crawford (2007) notes that rewarding teachers by whichever means is a passive way of improving performance of the students.

4.5.2 Modes of Motivating Teachers

The researcher sought to find the modes that the principals were using to motivate teachers in their schools. This was a question that was to be answered by the respondents who had indicated that the principals in their schools were motivating teachers. The findings are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Form of Motivation in Kirinyaga East Sub-County Secondary Schools

Category of Respondent	Form of Motivation					
	Material Incentive		Oral Praises		Certificate Awards	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Principal	2	13.3	10	66.7	1	6.7
HODs	0	0	2	13.3	0	0
Total	2	13.3	12	80	1	6.7

Note n = 15

The total number of respondents was 15 which corresponds to those who cited that the principals were motivating their teachers. The study findings from Table 4.7 show that 2 (13.3%) of the principals cited that they gave material incentives as a form of motivation whereas 10 (66.7%) simply orally praised their teachers while 1 (6.7%)

gave certificates as a way of motivating the teachers. In addition, 2 (13.3%) of the HODs cited that the principals orally praised the teachers as a way of motivating them. The study also noted that no principals facilitated the teachers through trainings nor gave them any tours. The respondents also did not cite any other modes of motivations that the principals were using to inspire the teachers. These findings imply that the principals were using both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to motivate their teachers. Such motivators were also found by Sobe (2013) in Kuria West as being used to motivate teachers. The fact that majority of the principals orally praised their teachers as a way of motivating them may be because this is the easiest motivator that incurs no costs.

4.6 Influence of Target Setting on Students' Academic Performance

The fourth objective of the study was to find out the influence of target setting on students' academic performance. The respondents were requested to cite the extent to which they agreed with target setting as influencing academic performance of students and this was determined on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The findings are presented in Figure 4.6.

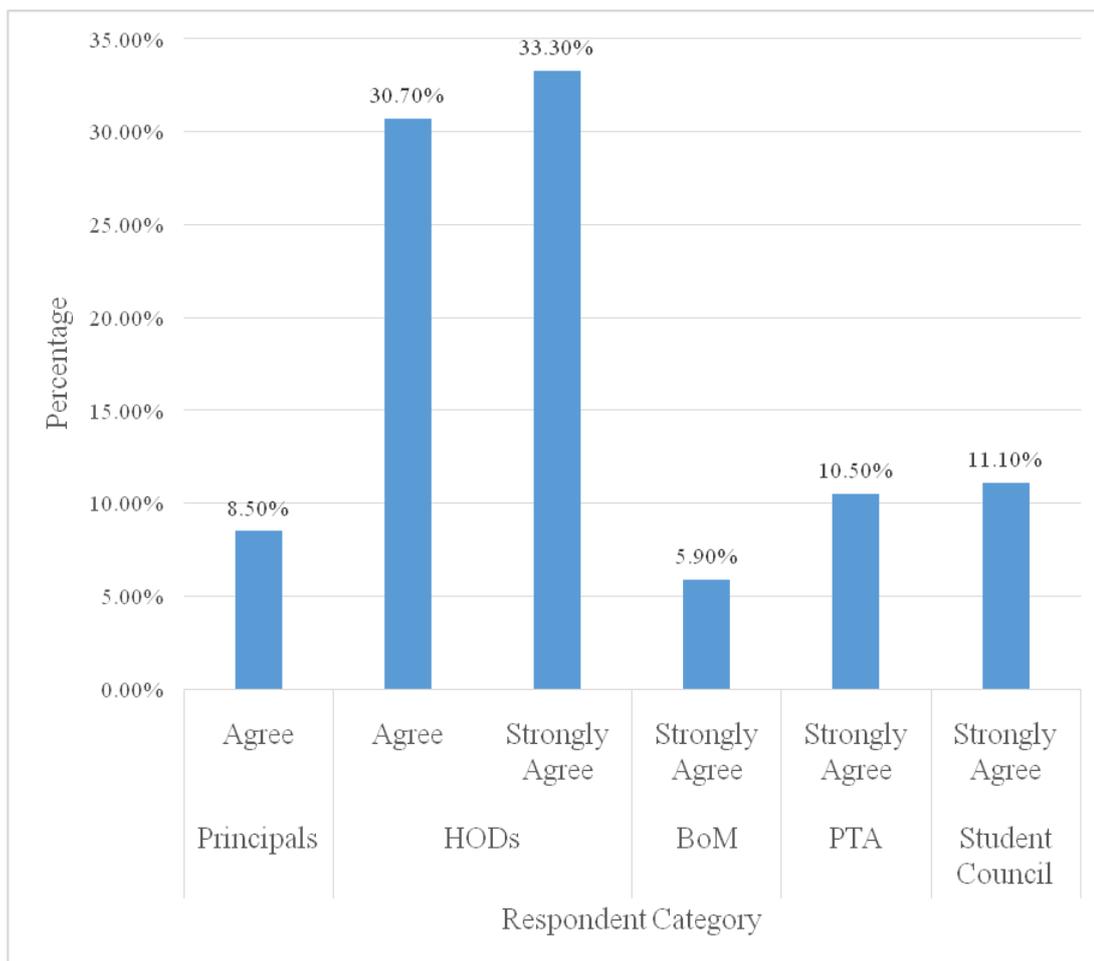


Figure 4.5: Target Setting Influence on Student Academic Performance

Figure 4.5 shows that 13 (8.5%) of the principals and 47 (30.7%) of the HODs agreed that target setting influenced students’ academic performance whereas 51 (33.3%) of the HODs strongly agreed. Further, all the BoM, PTA and student council chairpersons strongly agreed that target setting influenced students’ academic performance in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. Generally, the findings imply that there is a strong indication that the respondents highly believe target setting has influence on the academic performance of the students. This study complements those of other researchers such as Idowu et al., (2014) in Nigeria, Dotson (2016) in Kentucky who noted that in schools where principals were setting targets, the schools were typically

showing improved academic performance as opposed to those who had no academic targets. This study is also not in agreement with that of Conley (2016) in Missouri, USA who argues that there is little theoretical rationale in supporting targeting setting as leading to enhanced student academic performance as it was noted that there was no adverse influence of target setting and students' academic performance.

The findings of this study imply that the principals set minimum performance threshold for their schools. The consequence of this is that the teachers will exert more effort in their teaching in order to achieve the set targets. Similarly, targets set for each individual student based on their ability will help the students to study bearing in mind that they have targets that they have to strive to achieve individually and not collectively. Further, the fact the respondents indicated target setting was considered to improve the academic outcome of the students means that there was appraisal done to evaluate the performance.

4.6.1 Kinds of Targets Set in Secondary Schools

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether their schools had set long term or short term targets towards academic achievement. It is worth noting that short term targets helps keep an institution on the track towards achieving long term targets. The findings are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Targets Set in Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County

Respondent	Kind of Target					
	Short term		Long term		Both long & short term	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Principal	3	1.96	0	0	10	6.54
HODs	18	11.76	3	1.96	77	50.34
BoM	1	0.65	0	0	8	5.23
PTA	3	1.96	2	1.31	11	7.19
Student Council	9	5.88	0	0	8	5.23

Table 4.8 shows that 3 (1.96%) of the principals and 18 (11.76%) of HODs cited that short term targets were set in their schools in addition to 1 (0.65%) of the BoM cited the same. Further, 3 (1.96%) of the PTA and 9 (5.88%) of student council chairpersons indicated that short term targets were set in their schools. Three (1.96%) of the HODs and 2 (1.31%) of the PTA chairpersons cited that there were long term targets set by the principals in their schools. It was also found that 10 (6.54%) of the principals and 77 (50.34%) of the HODs indicated that there were both short and long term targets that were set in their schools. Eight BoM as well as student council chairpersons who each represented 5.23% of the respondents cited that there were both short and long term targets that were set by the principals. Additionally, 11 (7.19%) of the PTA chairpersons cited that the principals set both long and short term targets in their schools. According to these findings, majority of the respondents indicated that their principals set both long and short term targets for their schools. The implication is that the succeeding principals could easily adjust to the targets set by their predecessors as they will be able to find both the short and long term targets with a clear road map on how to achieve these targets.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings. In addition, the chapter presents suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary

The first objective of the study was to find out the influence of principals' leadership on students' academic performance. The study found that the principals depended on a variety of leadership styles in the management of their schools as there is no single leadership style that can be suitable to be applied in all the situations that may be encountered in the schools. However, more than three quarters of the respondents cited the widely practised styles as instructional and transformational leadership. Furthermore, the study established that at least three quarters (78.4%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to the view that the principals' leadership influence the students' academic performance.

The second objective of the study was to find out the influence of monitoring on students' academic performance. Monitoring helps to ensure that all the programmes set will have an influence on the academic performance of the students. The study established that 95.42% of the respondents were of the strong opinion that monitoring influenced students' academic performance in Kirinyaga East Sub-County. Further, it was established that regular internal assessments in the school and discussions of the overall school performance were the main practices associated with monitoring in the schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County.

The third objective of the study was to establish the influence of incentives/personnel management on student academic performance. The study established that the overwhelming majority (67.3%) of the respondents were undecided on whether teacher motivation had any influence on students' academic performance. This could be attributed to the fact that in majority of the schools, the principals were not motivating their teachers in any form. The last objective of the study was to determine the influence of target setting on the academic performance of students. The study noted that all the respondents were of the view that target setting influenced academic performance of the students given the overall mean 4.61 (SD = 0.49) that was established. Furthermore, the study revealed that more than two thirds of the principals had set both long and short term targets.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The followings are the conclusions made from the study findings. First, the study concludes that the principals adopted contingency measures in their leadership styles. The principals did not only depend on one leadership style, but a variety of styles with the widely preferred styles being instructional and transformational styles. Secondly it is concluded that the principals' leadership had influence on the academic performance of the students. Thirdly, the study concludes that monitoring has a significant influence on students' academic performance. Finally, the study also concludes that target setting highly influences the academic performance of students.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

From the foregoing discussion, the following are recommendations made by the study.

1. The Teachers Service Commission should recruit adequate teachers in the public secondary schools so as to ensure adequate staffing which would relieve the principals of some classroom duties and assume full managerial duties.
2. The political leaders should support the school principals in their management duties as opposed to interfering with them. As constituent leaders, the political leaders should have meaning engagement with school principals through structured discussions in order to have a common goal. The principals should as well create links in order to harmoniously work with the political leaders.
3. The principals should continue setting both short and long term targets in order to aid the incoming principals easily adjust to the targets set by their predecessors.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The following are suggestions for further research as arising from this study.

1. A study of the reasons and impact of political interference in the management of schools.
2. A study into the causes of low teacher motivation in secondary schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County.
3. A study on the level of influence of various leadership styles on students' academic performance.

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APPENDICE

APPENDIX I: CONSENT LETTER

Dear Respondent,

My name is Peter Njangi, a postgraduate student at Kenyatta University pursuing a degree in the School of Education. Part of the requirements for the award of the degree is undertaking a supervised research project. I am currently conducting a study titled “Influence of School Management Practices on Students’ Performance in KCSE in Kirinyaga County, Kenya”. I seek your consent in filling the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire will be used only for the intended purpose and the researcher will endeavor to guarantee your privacy and confidentiality of the data gathered. I will be available for the entire period of data collection to respond to any questions or clarification.

I look forward to your participation. Thank you.

Sincerely

Peter Njangi.

**APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS, HODs, PTA
AND BoM CHAIRPERSONS**

Section A: General Information

1. What is your position in this school? (Tick where appropriate)

Principal []

HOD []

PTA Chairperson []

BoM Chairperson []

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

PhD []

Master's Degree []

Bachelor's Degree []

Higher Diploma []

Certificate []

3. How many years have you held your current position in this school?

Less than 1 year []

Between 2-3 years []

Between 4-6 years []

More than 7 years []

Section B: School Leadership Practices of the Principals

4. Which style of leadership among the following would you consider as being exercised by the school principal?

Style	Tick (As appropriate)
Autocratic Leadership	
Instructional Leadership	
Democratic Leadership	
Transformational Leadership	
Charismatic Leadership	
Laissez-faire Leadership	
Bureaucratic Leadership	
Transactional Leadership	

5. To what extent would you agree that the principals' leadership style influences students' academic performance?

Strongly Agree []

Undecided []

Agree []

Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

6. To what extent would you agree with the following statements about the principal's leadership? Please indicate whether you strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) or strongly disagree (1).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality					
The principal involves the community and parents in school improvement process					
The principal emphasizes the professional development of their teachers					
The principal builds and maintains rapport with the school community and other stakeholders					
The principal involves various stakeholders in school decision making process					
The principal delegates leadership responsibilities to other teachers					
The principal supports the culture of trust, collaboration and support					

Section D: Influence of Personnel Management on Student Academic Performance

10. To what extent would you agree that principal personnel management/incentives influence students' academic performance?

Strongly Agree [] Undecided []
 Agree [] Disagree []
 Strongly Disagree []

11. Has your school principal ever motivated your teachers in any form?

Yes []
 Not Sure []
 No []

12. If your answer to the above question is Yes, which modes among the following does the principal in your school use to motivate your teachers?

Mode	Tick (Where appropriate)
Material incentives	
Tours	
Oral praises	
Trainings	
Award of certificates	
Other (Specify)	

Section E: Influence of Target Setting on Performance

13. To what extent would you agree that target setting influences students' academic performance?

Strongly Agree	[]	Undecided	[]
Agree	[]	Disagree	[]
Strongly Disagree	[]		

14. What types of academic targets are set in your school?

Short term targets	[]	Long term targets	[]
Both short and long term targets	[]		

APPENDIX III: STUDENT COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: School Leadership Practices of the Principals

1. Which style of leadership among the following would you consider as being exercised by the school principal?

Style	Tick (As appropriate)
Autocratic Leadership	
Instructional Leadership	
Democratic Leadership	
Transformational Leadership	
Charismatic Leadership	
Laissez-faire Leadership	
Bureaucratic Leadership	
Transactional Leadership	

2. To what extent would you agree that the principals' leadership style influences students' academic performance?

Strongly Agree []

Undecided []

Agree []

Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

3. To what extent would you agree with the following statements about the principal's leadership? Please indicate whether you strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) or strongly disagree (1).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality					
The principal involves the community and parents in school improvement process					
The principal emphasizes the professional development of their teachers					
The principal builds and maintains rapport with the school community and other stakeholders					
The principal involves various stakeholders in school decision making process					
The principal delegates leadership responsibilities to other teachers					
The principal supports the culture of trust, collaboration and support					

Section B: Influence of Monitoring on Students' Academic Performance

4. To what extent would you agree with the following statements about the principal on monitoring? Please indicate whether you strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) or strongly disagree (1).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers					
The principal monitors the teaching methodologies of the teachers in class					
The principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress					
The principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school					
The principal discusses the overall school performance					

5. To what extent would you agree that the monitoring practices of the principal influences students' academic performance?

Strongly Agree [] Undecided []

Agree []

Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

6. What are the challenges that are encountered by the principals in monitoring in your school? Specify in the space below

Section C: Influence of Personnel Management on Student Academic Performance

7. To what extent would you agree that principal personnel management/incentives influence students' academic performance?

- Strongly Agree [] Undecided []
 Agree [] Disagree []
 Strongly Disagree []

8. Has your school principal ever motivated your teachers in any form?

- Yes []
 Not Sure []
 No []

9. If your answer to the above question is Yes, which modes among the following does the principal in your school use to motivate your teachers?

Mode	Tick (Where appropriate)
Material incentives	
Tours	
Oral praises	
Trainings	
Award of certificates	
Other (Specify)	

Section D: Influence of Target Setting on Performance

10. To what extent would you agree that target setting influences students' academic performance?

Strongly Agree []

Undecided []

Agree []

Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

11. What types of academic targets are set in your school?

Short term targets []

Long term targets []

Both short and long term targets []