## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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**ABSTRACT**

The study examined the extent to which management practices used by school principals influence students' academic performance in national examinations in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were four fold, namely: (i) to examine the extent to which planning techniques of available human and physical resources influence students' academic performance;(ii) determine effect of strategies applied to fast track effective teaching on students' academic performance; (iii) to establish the relationship between student support services and students' academic performance (iv) to establish the effect of monitoring of teaching and learning processes on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in the study locale. The study adopted a descriptive correlation research design. Combinations of stratified and simple random sampling techniques were applied to select 26 principals from public secondary schools in Kiambu County. In-depth data was generated using semi-structured questionnaires from principals. The findings revealed that there was an association between most of the identified management variables such effective planning of human and physical resources, organizational strategies, curriculum leadership, control measures and students academic performance in most of the top performing schools in the county. These management techniques were rarely used in low performing schools in the county. It is recommended that strategic management techniques for school principals should be intensified in all secondary schools in Kiambu County through regular retraining and overall professional development. [228 words]

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

More than ever before, in today's era of heightened competition and expectation, school managers are in the hot seat to initiate innovative management practices that are geared towards the improvement of teaching and learning as is measured through enhanced students' academic performance in national examinations(Oluchemi,2012; Orodho,2014). They are expected to improve their management practices by becoming educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community and public relations experts, budget analysts and facility managers ((Heltriegell, Jackson, Slocum ,& Theuns, 2009:9 ). They are also expected to broker the often conflicting interests of parents, teachers, county officials, and need to be sensitive to the widening range of student's needs, especially those related to their academic excellence(Orodho, 2014). While the job description sounds overwhelming, at least it signals that school managers need to be innovative in their management practices in order to deliver the expected high students academic performance, which, undoubtedly, is the major acid test to most school managers (Ayeni, 2010; Orodho, 2014; ). It is against this background that this study finds justification since all stakeholders seem to be concerned about the positive role

secondary school principals should play in terms of their management strategies to enhance students' academic achievements in national examinations in Kenya.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Management can be perceived as the process of designing and maintaining any setting in which people work in groups for the purpose of accomplishing predetermined goals (Adeyemo, 2012; Oluchemi, 2012). The idea of any setting equally indicates that management is applicable to all establishments which do not exonerate educational setting. The Oxford dictionary (6th edition) defines management as the act of running controlling or skill of dealing with people or situations in any way. Adeyemo (2012) concur with the earlier version of Hellriegel.*et.al*.(2009) in defining management as a method where a group of people at the highest level of organization plan, organize, communicate, control and direct the actions and activities of people who work for the organization towards the achievement of organizational objectives. Some authorities contend that education and management are incompatible; management is seen as a process that happens in industry but not in education (Adeyemo, 2012; Welling sky, 2001).The management role of school managers is not the same as that of accountants or a bank manager, yet a management role is certainly an institution that has specific objectives and a school

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is not an exception (Hellriegel *et.al.* , 2009). In fact, in order to achieve its aims, a school has to achieve objectives, and to achieve these objectives, the various people with responsibilities in the school especially in the classroom have to plan, organize and lead (Orodho, 2014; Wellingsky,2001).

There is little doubt, therefore, that the critical and pivotal role of effective school management practices perceived to possess four components of planning, organization, leading and control of a school system on students' academic performance cannot be over-emphasized. Hellriegel etal (2009:10) contend that planning involves defining organizational goals and proposing ways of reaching them. A Manager plans for three reasons: (1) to establish an overall direction for the organizations future, such as increased teacher productivity in terms of enhanced students' academic performance, (2), to identify and commit the organizations resources to achieving its goals, and (3), to decide which tasks must be done to reach those goals. The second component, organizational function takes the tasks identified during planning and assigns them to individuals and groups within the organization so that objectives set at planning are achieved. Organizing, then, involves turning plans into action. The organizing function also provides an organizational structure that enables the organization to function effectively as a coherent whole and to achieve quality objectives (Hellriegel *et.al.* 2009).

After management have made plans, created a structure, and put the right personnel in place, the need for appropriate leadership becomes critical. Leadership involves communicating with and motivating others to perform the tasks necessary to achieve the organizations goals within the context of a supporting organizational culture. Finally, the control dimension becomes equally important in the management practice. Controlling is the process by which a person, group, or organization consciously monitors performance and takes corrective action. Just as a thermostat sends signals to a heating system that the room temperature is too high or too low, so a management control system sends signals to school managers that things are not working out as planned and that corrective action is needed.

According to Adeyemo (2012) and Oluchemi (2012), one of the most important roles of school managers is the supervision of curriculum implementation. Principals play a pivotal role in curriculum planning and adoption, classroom management, arrangement of instructional programs and out of school activities in any educational system. According to Adeyemo (2012) and Odhiambo (2010) , it is the responsibility of the principals to ensure that the curriculum is managed effectively through appropriate delegation to other teachers. Thus, a principal is not only responsible for articulating the school curriculum and objectives, but also delegating and coordinating curriculum implementation as well as monitoring the implementation and evaluation of the curriculum.

The performance of curriculum implementation roles requires that principals be well versed with skills, expertise, and knowledge of not only management techniques but specifically of the curriculum (Adeyemo, 2012; Odhiambo, 2010). Oluchemi (2012) contends that when principles lack knowledge of the curriculum, it results in teachers failing to plan and implement certain aspects of the curriculum .Lack of curriculum knowledge and not being clear about terminology in the curriculum by principals, lead to poor lesson planning and teachers lack confidence when they deliver their lessons because curriculum leaders lack the requisite management skills and practices. (Adeyemo, 2012; Odhiambo, 2010).Therefore, it becomes important that school managers are not only knowledgeable in the field of curriculum management but also able to exercise the management practices for effective students' academic performance.

The debate on the extent principals make a difference in school outcomes and students academic has been on for a long time (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahistron, 2004). Practitioners and parents have long noted the seemingly obvious effects principals have on the learning climate, educational programs, and workplace norms of schools (Leithwood *et.al.* 2004). Though farther removed from school set-tings, the educational policy communities as well as researchers are also generally inclined to believe that principal leadership is critical to the success of educational pro-grams. Moreover, this faith in principal leadership crosses the borders of nations and cultures (Oluchemi, 2012; Adeyemo, 2012; Odhiambo, 2010). At the same time, the nature of the principal's effect on schooling continues to be the subject of controversy (Oluchemi, 2012). This debate has been fueled by at least two factors. First, the question that often guides such discussions-Do principals make a difference?- is subject to varying interpretations depending on the outcomes of interest. Second, when examined closely, the research evidence regarding the principal's role in school effectiveness is more ambiguous and conflicting than might be assumed from casual reading of the professional literature in educational leadership (e.g., Leithwood *et.al.*2004; Oluchemi, 2012).

During the 1980s, a preoccupation among policy makers with issues of educational productivity recast the issue of principal effects largely in terms of the effects of administrative leadership on student learning. For better or for worse, in the short run this led policy makers and re-searchers to search for evidence concerning the effects of principals on one particular school outcome: student achievement on standardized tests. The paucity of well-designed studies of principal effects, however, forced researchers and policy makers to draw conclusions from studies that were never designed to address this issue (Leith-wood *et al.*, 2004; Adeyemo, 2012; Odhiambo, 2010; Orodho, 2014) The task of unraveling the effects of administrative practice on student learning has been complicated by the concurrent effects that school contexts exert on principals. In their review of the literature on organizational leadership and successful schooling, Oluchemi (2012) argued against a unitary construct of principal leadership. "Like an earlier leader-ship study ... no single style of management seems appropriate for all schools ... principals must find the style and structures most suited to their own local situation. a careful examination of quantitative studies of effective schools ... suggest that certain principal behaviors have different effects in different organizational settings. Such findings confirm the contingency approach to organizational effectiveness found in current leadership theories" (p. 79). Yet, such a contingency approach to the study of school leadership and its effects has been conspicuously absent in both the dialogue and empirical research in this field (Adeyemo, 2012; Oluchemi, 2012).

Implicit models of leadership that guide educational policy makers generally overstate the influence of school administrators on organizational processes and outcomes while underestimating the effects of environmental and organizational constraints on their leadership behavior (Leithwood *et al*., 2004). An implicit model of "the educational leader as the in-dependent variable" in school improvement characterizes both the research and professional literature on school leadership (Adeyemo, 2012). This assumption is illustrated in the often-stated conclusion that the principal is the "cause" of effective schools, despite the paucity of research studies designed for causal inference (Oluchemi, 2012).

## The concept of Management and Quality Academic Performance

The term management can be used to refer to the tasks or activities involved in managing an organization: planning, organizing, leading and controlling ( Ayeni,2010 ; Heltriegell, *et.al*.2009:9).Oduwaiye, Sofluwe and Kayode (2012) contend that management is the process of integration of all activities, functions and processes within an organization in order to achieve continuous improvement in cost, quality, function and delivery of goods and services for customer satisfaction. It refers to the application of quality principles to overall process and all the management functions in order to ensure total customer satisfaction. Total quality management implies the application of quality principles right from identification of customer needs to post purchase services. Quality management models , based on the teaching of quality gurus, generally involves a number of principles or essential elements , such as teamwork, top management leadership, customer focus , continuous improvement tool, training e.t.c (Adeyemo,2012; Oduwaiye,*et.al*.2012;  Odhiambo, 2012).

According to Oluchemi (2012) and Oduwaiye, *et.al*.(2012) concur that the quality management is a method of ensuring that all activities necessary  to design, develop, implement  a product or service are effective and efficient with respect to the system and its performance. Quality Management (QM) also called total quality management evolved from many different management practices and improvement processes. QM is not specific to managing people, but rather is related to improving the quality of goods and services that are produced in order to satisfy customer satisfaction (Oduwaiye, *et.al*.2012). In this context, QM permeates the entire organization as it is being implemented. Total quality management has its roots to quality movements that have made Japan such a strong force in the world economy. The Japanese philosophy of quality initially emphasized the component of total quality management and only late shifted concern to customer satisfaction (Adeyemo, 2012).

Adeyemo (2012:367) contends that management should be perceived as the process of designing and maintaining any setting in which people work in groups for the purpose of accomplishing predetermined goals. The idea of any setting should also be seen equally as indicating that management is applicable to all establishments which do not exonerate educational setting. The Oxford dictionary (6th edition) defines management as the act running or controlling or skill of dealing with people or situations in any way. Hellriengelat.al.(2009) defines management as a method where

a group of people at the highest level of an organization plan, organize, communicate, coordinate, control and direct the actions and activities of people who work for the organization towards the achievement of organizational objectives. In a school situation, the school has a set of objectives to be achieved, and to achieve these objectives, the various people with responsibilities in the school especially in a classroom have to plan, organize and lead.

The quality of education has been reflected not only in the subjects taught and achievement levels reached, but also in the learning environment. The type of learning resources used during the teaching as well the management of students behavior all contribute to enhanced students' academic performance ( Hellriengel.*et.al*.2009).Most educators and researchers have agreed that that total learning environment should be comfortable, pleasant, and psychologically uplifting, among its occupants , and should support the academic process(Adeyemo,2012; Ayeni,2010).

## Classroom Management practices that enhance Students academic Performance

Classroom management is the term used to describe the planning processes that ensure that classroom lessons run smoothly and teachers achieve the lesson objectives (Hellriengel.*et.al*.2009). A study by Adeyemo(2012) revealed various ways of improving management practices for  head teachers in  human resource management, financial management and teaching and  planning teaching and learning resources  that facilitate enhanced students' academic performance .

One of the most important skills possessed by effective teachers is that of class management and effective use of teaching learning resources. These skills are considered by Orodho (2014) and Oluchemi (2012) as being at the heart of planning effective teaching and learning that result into enhanced students' academic performance. When teachers use appropriate teaching/ learning resources effectively, they encourage behavior that is more positive and uplifting in one classroom; the behavior will carry on into other classrooms, taking the safe environment further than one classroom. Students' achievement, as well as emotional and social outcomes can all be positively affected by a well-planned learning environment (Adeyemo, 2012; Oluchemi, 2012).

Hellriengel.e.al (2009) contends that school managers, especially teachers, have the opportunity to plan and create learning environments that is kind and respectful through the use of appropriate resources in order to meet the nurturing needs of learners. Students will be better able to reciprocate genuine loving; caring behavior and more focused learning if the demonstration of affection and hard work is modeled for them and geared towards enhanced academic outcomes. The literature reviewed thus far indicate that management practices, especially as they relate to classroom as an ecological system in which students build their understanding, attitudes and feeling and facilitate their mental abilities to aspire to higher levels of academic excellence is now very much at the forefront  in education literature(Ayeni,2010; Adeyemo, 2012;  Oduwaiye *et al*, 2012).Thus, the preview adopted throughout this work goes beyond the notion of an authoritarian handling down of rules in the name of school management. It conceptualizes the classroom as a workplace

inhabited by teachers and a large number of learners pursuing the task of education.

The Government of Kenya is committed to the provision of quality and relevant education and training to her citizens in accordance with the laws and international conventions and in line with Kenya's visions and missions. The vision of education in Kenya is to have a globally competitive quality education, training and research for Kenya's sustainable development. In the recent past during the current millennium, her education system has undergone accelerated reforms in order to address the overall goals of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth Creation as well as geared towards meeting the international development commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals. In fact, the ongoing Free Primary Education (FPE) initiated in January 2003, development of the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research, adoption of the Sector Wide Approach ( SWAP) to planning and financing of education and training, development and implementation of the Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP5 on investment programme that allows different stakeholders to support the sector in the medium term of 2005/2006-2009/10, the Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE), as well as the loans and bursaries provided through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) bear testimony to this noble fact( Republic of Kenya, 2005a,2005b, 2010a,2010b, 2012a,2012b, 2013).

### Statement of the Problem

Despite the apparent phenomenal growth of education and its management over the years, all is not well as was recently acknowledged by the Task Force on Education which categorically stated that the education system was not globally competitive and economically viable. Yet, Kenya required an education system that is equitable and of high quality which is also responsive to the national goals and aspirations of all Kenyan citizens. It was against this background that the Task Force embarked on a vigorous exercise in an attempt to make it innovative, equitable and of high quality. In carrying out the mandate, the task Force reviewed the education system to align it to the newly promulgated constitutional dispensation of 2010 and Vision 2030, and proposed strategies to address policy, content, equity, and quality and governance issues in education. The key challenges raised by the Task Force that are relevant to this paper were equity and quality concerns as related to attainment of innovative curriculum (Odhiambo, 2010).

In most Kenyan secondary schools, and especially in Kiambu county, the most common problem is that which relates to skewed students' academic achievement with some few schools posting excellent performance and yet a majority performing dismally. Despite the fact that Kiambu county is well endowed economically, has high literacy rate, admits among them top cream of KCPE candidates, it has well established schools and boasts of six out of the eighteen oldest national schools in the country, the 2012 KCSE national exam analysis revealed Kiambu county lagged at position 37 out of 47 counties in the country. The analysis indicates that the county posted the lowest overall performance index out of all

the other counties in the entire Central region of Kenya. The analyzed results for central Kenya(Ministry of Education, 2013:91) indicates that while the best performing counties in this region were Nyandarua (performance index of 31.852168) followed by Kirinyaga county (performance index of 31.193239) the worst performing county was Kiambu (performance index of 28.117322).

The recorded poor performance of students in national examinations in Kiambu County, hence underscores the need to empirically establish the cause of this worrying disparity in students' academic performance. Since school management is a keystone for students learning and enhanced performance as has been cited by virtually all researchers and reviewers who looked at the relationship between educational practices and students performance in other African countries, perhaps this problem could be minimized by focusing on management practices and students' academic performance( UNESCO, 2012; World Bank,2010,2012).

It is argued in this proposed study that while the roles of school managers that include planning what has to be done, organizing how the plans should be achieved, leading or guiding by providing instructions on how these plans should be accomplished and controlling these activities are well documented, what is not documented is how these management practices could be harnessed to translate into enhanced students' academic performance. A range of critics, including the education stakeholders, raise a litany of concerns about the quality and effectiveness of school managers' competencies and leadership preparation provided at university and elsewhere( UNESCO,2012). The accusations have ranged from this type of preparation as well as a weak and outdated knowledgebase of most school managers. The World Bank (2010) and the Kenyan Task Force on aligning education to the new constitutional dispensation have suggested that the curriculum offered to principals fails to provide grounding in effective teaching and learning of basic innovative management techniques, and that the mentorship and internship often lack depth or opportunities to test leadership skills in real situations. Therefore, this proposed study proposes that this problem could probably be resolved by looking into better ways of implementing effective management practices which aid in the improvement of students' academic performance in national examinations in the study locale (Adeyemo, 2012; Odhiambo, 2010; World Bank, 2012).

### The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this proposed study was to analyze the extent to which selected school management practices influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were four fold, namely

(i) To examine the extent to which planning techniques of available human and physical resources influence students' academic performance.
(ii) Determine effective organizational mechanisms to fast track teaching and students' academic performance.
(iii) To establish the relationship between student support services and students' academic performance.

(iv) To establish the effect of monitoring of teaching and learning processes on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in the study locale.

### The Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework, according to Orodho (2009:120) is a diagrammatic representation of the interrelationships between independent, intervening and dependent variables. The conceptual framework adopted to guide this proposed study is displayed in Figure1.
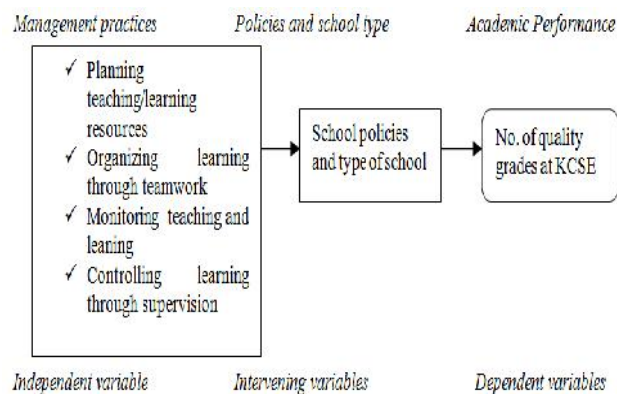


Source: Modified from Orodho *Elements of education and social science research methods* (2009:120*)*

**Figure1** the conceptual framework relating the management practices and academic performance

The conceptual framework suggested in Figure 1 indicates that there are three composite variables in the proposed study. The first variable, the independent variable constitutes the main management practices put in place at school level that influence the dependent variable which is the quality of students' academic performance in national examinations. The measures of the independent variable are: the planning of teaching learning resources, organization of teaching through teamwork, monitoring of teaching and learning, and control mechanisms put in place to enhance learning.

The independent and dependent variable is mediated by the intervening variable which is comprises of school policies and type of school (whether national, county or district school). The measure of the dependent variable is the quality of grades of categorized as high, average and low mean scores achieved by sampled schools.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive correlation research design. Both stratified and simple sampling techniques were used select 26 principals across 26 public secondary school categorized into top, average and low performing schools in Kiambu County classified using the 2013 KCSE 2013 results . The main research instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire for principals. A strict data collection itinerary was drawn and strictly followed to avoid disruption of the normal school program. Qualitative data from open-ended responses in the questionnaires were analyzed thematically while the quantitative data from closed ended questions of the questionnaires were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to generate appropriate statistics used in the study ( Brook,2013).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Planning Human and Physical resources and students academic Performance

The first objective was to correlate the extent to which school managers plan to utilize the available human resources and enhanced students' academic performance. School managers were requested to indicate the extent to which they consider the following management practices related to planning resources that enhance students' academic performance in their respective schools. The managers were expected to tick on four point scale the extent they agreed or disagreed by the assertion that these management strategies were used. The results are displayed in Table 1.

From the data contained in Table 1, it is evident that a majority of the principals in the low performing secondary schools disagreed with the fact that management practices involving effective planning of human and physical resources were a determinant of enhanced students' academic performance. To the contrary, a majority of principals in the top performing schools as well as those from the average performing schools strongly agreed that effective school management involving effective planning of human and physical resources was a critical requirement for enhanced students' performance.

The interpretation of this finding is that while a majority of respondents from top performing and average performing schools perceived effective planning of human and physical resources as a prerequisite to enhanced students academic performance, their counterparts in the low performing schools held the contrary view. This finding tends to confirm the fact that the averages to top performing schools effectively plan

**Table 1** Effective Planning and Students academic performance

| Performance Level | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Top Performing schools | 1 | 14.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 40.0 | 3 | 33.3 |
| Average Performing Schools | 1 | 14.3 | 3 | 60.0 | 2 | 40.0 | 5 | 55.5 |
| Low Performing Schools | 5 | 71.4 | 2 | 40.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 11.1 |
| Total | 7 | 100.0 | 5 | 100.0 | 5 | 100.0 | 9 | 100.0 |

how to use the available human and physical resources that include the teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the physical resources that include laboratories and libraries. This finding is consistent with the results of a study by Oduwaye, *et.al.*(2012) which established that the quality, adequacy and use of learning resources positively influence the appropriate choice of teaching strategies that enhance students academic achievement.

With regards to human resources, a report by the UNESCO (2012) on the development that has taken place in the field of computer based learning and distance education have not changed the fact that the instructor continues to be one of the most important elements in the process of teaching and learning. The report underscores the fact that for success to be realized in utilizing learning resources in teaching, there is the need to effectively plan and retrains teachers on production, use and care as well as maintenance of learning resources.

There is consensus that the quality of education is positively correlated to the quality of human and physical infrastructure in schools (Ayeni, 2010; Oduwaye, *et.al.* 2012) . These authorities indicate that educational achievement is determined by the teachers' knowledge of the subject and pedagogical skills. Professional training enables some teachers to impart knowledge more efficiently than teachers who have not received such training. Oduwaye, *et.al.*(2012)  points that the caliber of teachers in any school system form important educational resources on school outcomes.

All these studies support the tentative finding of this study that there is a positive correlation between the planning of human and physical resources and students academic performance with top performing schools devoting more time in effectively planning these resources. Classroom management is the term used to describe the planning processes that ensure that classroom lessons run smoothly and teachers achieve the lesson objectives. A study by  revealed various, Oduwaye, *et.al.*(2012)   ways of improving management practices for head teachers in human resource management, financial management and teaching and planning teaching and learning resources that facilitate enhanced students' academic performance.

### Effective Organizational Strategies and Students academic Performance

The second objective was to correlate the extent to which s principals utilize effective organizational strategies that are geared towards the   improvement students' academic performance. The responses of the principals are indicated in Table 2.

finding of Oluchemi (2012) who established that organizational strategies employed by school managers positively influence students academic performance.

### Support services and students academic performance

The third objective was to correlate the extent to which principals utilize effective support services that are geared towards the   improvement students' academic performance. The results depicting the extent to which principals perceive the effect of students support services on their performance across types of schools are displayed in Table 3.

From the data contained in Table 3, it is evident that over two thirds of principals from all the three categories of schools were unanimous that appropriate support services given to students enhance their academic performance. This indicates that most principals have put in place appropriate student support services, although it should have been useful to probe them further to find out the specific support services which they were referring to. This is a prime area for further study.  This implies that professional training enables principles to select an appropriate mix of support services that enhance students' academic performance as suggested by Oluchemi (2012).

### Control measures and students academic performance

The final objective was to correlate the extent to which principals utilize effective control measures as one of the management practices that are geared towards the improvement students' academic performance. Table 4 carried information regarding the extent to which the principals use control strategies that include instructional supervision   in respective schools.

**Table 2** Effective Organizational Strategies and Students academic Performance

| Performance Level | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Top Performing schools | 2 | 22.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 42.9 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Average Performing Schools | 2 | 22.2 | 4 | 66.7 | 3 | 42.9 | 2 | 66.7 |
| Low Performing Schools | 5 | 55.6 | 2 | 33.3 | 1 | 14.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 9 | 100.0 | 7 | 100.0 | 7 | 100.0 | 3 | 100.0 |

**Table 3** Support services and students academic performance

| Performance Level | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Top Performing schools | 0.0 | 00.0 | 2 | 28.6 | 1 | 16.7 | 3 | 50.0 |
| Average Performing Schools | 3 | 50.0 | 4 | 57.1 | 1 | 16.7 | 3 | 50.0 |
| Low Performing Schools | 3 | 50.0 | 1 | 14.3 | 4 | 66.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 6 | 100.0 | 7 | 100.0 | 6 | 100.0 | 6 | 100.0 |

The results in table 2 shows that over 80 percent of the principals from top to average performing schools contended that effective organizational strategies resulted into enhanced students academic performance. The converse seemed to be the case in the low performing schools in which only 14.3 percent of the principals interviewed reported the effect of organizational strategies on students' academic performance.
 The results carried in Table  2  reveal that there is an emerging pattern that while a majority of principals  from average to top performing schools in   Kiambu County perceive effective organizational strategies as important determinants of students academic performance; their counterparts from low performing schools do not associated effective organizational strategies to students academic performance. The results concur with the

From the data contained in Table 4, it is evident that a majority of the principals in average to low performing schools use more strict control measures as their management technique compared to their counterparts in top performing schools. It apparent from the results that monitoring of teaching *perse* does not singly translate to enhanced students' academic performance. This finding seems to contradict the findings by other scholars who hold the view that strict instructional supervision by principals enhances students academic performance.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first objective was to examine the extent to which school principals  planned  to utilize the available human and physical resources in order to  enhance  students' academic

**Table 4** Control measures and students academic performance

| Performance Level | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Top Performing schools | 1 | 11.1 | 1 | 25.0 | 1 | 25.5 | 3 | 33.5 |
| Average Performing Schools | 4 | 44.4 | 1 | 25.0 | 1 | 25.5 | 5 | 55.5 |
| Low Performing Schools | 4 | 44.4 | 2 | 50.0 | 2 | 50.0 | 1 | 11.1 |
| Total | 9 | 100.0 | 4 | 100.0 | 4 | 100.0 | 9 | 100.0 |

performance. The summary and interpretation of this finding is that while a majority of respondents from top performing and average performing schools perceived effective planning of human and physical resources as a prerequisite to enhanced students academic performance, their counterparts in the low performing schools held the contrary view. Yet, the available literature demonstrates that there is consensus that the quality of education is positively correlated to the quality of human and physical infrastructure in schools (Adeyemo, 2012; Odhiambo, 2012). These authorities indicate that educational achievement is determined by the manner in which school principals assist teachers to effectively organize their teaching knowledge and skills to enhance students' academic performance. It has also been demonstrated by other scholars that professional training enables some teachers to impart knowledge more efficiently than teachers who have not received such training. Specifically, Adeyemo (2012) has pointed out that the caliber of teachers coupled with the quality of principals management practices in any school system form important educational resources on school outcomes.

There is little doubt that there is a positive correlation between the planning of human and physical resources and student's academic performance with top performing schools devoting more time in effectively planning these resources. Classroom management has been used to describe the planning processes that ensure that classroom lessons run smoothly and teachers achieve the lesson objectives. In addition, the finding fits very well with the reviewed literature which suggests that improving management practices for head teachers in human resource management, financial management and teaching and planning teaching and learning resources has been found to collectively facilitate enhanced students' academic performance.

The second objective examined the extent to which principals effectively utilized organizational strategies that were geared towards the improvement students' academic performance. The results discussed reveal that there is an emerging pattern which shows that while a majority of principals drawn from average to top performing schools in Kiambu County perceive effective organizational strategies as important determinants of students academic performance, their counterparts from low performing schools do not associate effective organizational strategies to students academic performance. It is therefore, apparent that principals from the low performing schools hardly organize effective strategies that are geared towards the enhancement of students' academic performance. Yet leaders in today's institutions must recognize that internal changes must keep pace with what is happening in the external environment. In fact, massive changes in the wayinstitutions operate occur occasionally, but more often change occurs in small steps. For successful school principals, the need to be abreast with innovative organizational strategies should be perceived as a prerequisite for effective

improvement of performance and needs to be continuously put in place in order to stay ahead in the academic pursuits.

The third objective focused on effective support services that are geared towards the improvement students' academic performance. It is evident that over two thirds of principals from all the three categories of schools were unanimous that appropriate support services given to students enhance their academic performance. This indicates that most principals, especially in top performing schools have put in place appropriate student support services that seem to be associated with enhanced students' performance in their respective schools.

The final objective was to correlate the extent to which school managers utilize effective control measures as one of the management practices that are geared towards the improvement students' academic performance. It is evident that a majority of the principals in average to low performing schools use more strict control measures as their management technique compared to their counterparts in top performing schools. It apparent from the results that monitoring of teaching *perse* does not singly translate to enhanced students' academic performance.

It is strongly recommended that due to the variations in the management styles adopted by principals in top performing schools and low performing schools, there is need to have a universal standard of school management practices that have been proven to enhance students academic performance, especially in the study districts of Kiambu County. In a bid to improve the performance of the school principals and teachers, there is need for them to always have a regular professional development program that include re-training not only in management practices but in modern pedagogy.

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