

**EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIRINYAGA AND NYERI COUNTIES,
KENYA**

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, KENYA

JUNE 2024

DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or award from any other University.

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DEDICATION

For their tremendous sacrifice, support, and unconditional love, I dedicate this research study to all my family, friends and all those who have selflessly stood with me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the Lord God Almighty for His grace and guidance throughout this arduous process. Carol, my wife, deserves special recognition for her unconditional love, inspiration, and monetary provision. To my outstanding and brilliant supervisors Dr. Jane Rarieya and Dr. Gladys Njoroge, profound gratitude for your continued support, and assistance throughout the journey. May God abundantly bless all those that helped me in one way or the other.

ABSTRACT

Instructional leadership is increasingly viewed as important for transforming schools into positive learning environments, enhancing the quality of instructional processes, and promoting a school culture where students can achieve their full potential. This study investigated the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties, Kenya. The specific objective of the study was to examine the effect of the school mission, curriculum management, and learning environment on student academic performance. Additionally, it examined how school organizational culture moderates the relationship between instructional leadership and students' academic performance. The pragmatic research philosophy guided the study. The target population for the study included principals, teachers, and students in forms three and four in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties. A sample of 809 participants, comprising 37 principals, 374 teachers, and 398 students, was selected using a stratified random sampling procedure and Yamane's (1967) formula. The response rate for the study included 30 principals, 331 students, and 305 teachers. Qualitative data was obtained using interviews and analyzed through thematic analysis. Quantitative data was obtained using close-ended questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that the performance of public secondary schools in the selected counties was below average and was affected by the existing instructional practices. Study results indicate that instructional practices used by school heads had a significant influence on student academic performance. Each independent variable, including school mission, curriculum management, and learning environment, was found to significantly influence academic performance ($p < 0.05$). The study also found that student academic performance could be improved by ensuring adherence to the school mission statement, effective implementation of the curriculum, and creating a positive learning environment. Also, the school's organizational culture was found to moderate the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance. The impact of the moderating variable was found to be significant, with $p < 0.05$. The findings imply that instructional practices adopted by school principals are likely to have a more significant influence on student academic performance in institutions with healthy and supportive organizational cultures. The study recommends that school principals adopt practices that would create a positive learning environment and result in an organizational culture supporting learning.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBC -	Competence-based Curriculum
IL -	Instructional Leadership
KCSE -	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.
KEMI -	Kenya Education Management Institute.
NACOSTI -	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation.
OLS -	Ordinary Least Squares
SPSS -	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
VIF -	Variance Inflation Factors

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Competence-Based Curriculum: A curriculum that emphasizes the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes that can be applied to real-life situations (Akala, 2021)

Instructional leadership: The approaches and mechanisms applied by a school leader (principals) to ensure academic performance improvement (Mora-Ruano et al. 2021)

Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE): A national-level secondary exit examination done by all secondary school students in Kenya

Principal: An individual responsible for providing leadership and oversight of public secondary schools in Kenya

School Mission: Statement that describes the purpose and the commitment of a learning institution.

Organization culture: Shared values, beliefs, practices, assumptions and attitudes that guide members of an organization on how to behave (Leithwood & Sun, 2018)

Curriculum Management: Entire process of designing, implementing and applying curriculum in an educational institution (Taylor & Richards, 2018)

Public Secondary School: Post-primary government sponsored learning institution prior to tertiary education.

- Staff professional development: Both formal and informal activities aimed at improving the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of teachers in secondary schools to improve student academic performance.
- Student: A learner in a public secondary school.
- Student academic performance: The outcome in terms of grade attained by a student in public schools in the national examination (KCSE).
- Teaching and learning climate: An environment where positive attitudes, knowledge, skills, and teacher efficacy are nurtured to facilitate student performance in public secondary schools.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction to the Study

This chapter presents the foundational components of the study. The sections covered include the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives, hypotheses, rationale, assumptions, significance, scope, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Concisely, the background offers a rational account of the genesis of the concept of the study and why the study is important. The problem statement looks into the ideal situation of instructional leadership (IL) practices and organizational culture, expounds on the present state, and outlines what needs to be done to remedy the present situation towards student performance in the area of the study. A chapter summary is also presented to restate the essential arguments on the foundational components of the study.

Background to the Study

Leadership plays a pivotal role in developing and coordinating organisational activities to achieve the objectives. Contemporary leadership concepts may differ from the traditional notion of individual charismatic authority. Historically, many leadership studies focused on an individual leader's personality traits as factors that define leaders, as opposed to their accomplishments or the followers under their control (Cherry, 2021). Although leadership has remained a topic of great interest since the inception of human life, it was not until the middle of the 19th and early 20th centuries that the concept started to be studied in earnest (Coggins, 2020).

During the trait era during the first half of the 20th century, the study of leadership primarily focused on the personality traits, qualities, and characteristics of effective leaders, as exemplified in the Great Man Theory and Trait Theory. The former indicates that people are born with attributes that naturally make them leaders, while

the latter describes the characteristics that qualify a person as a leader. Despite its complexity and multidimensional nature, the study of leadership generates tremendous interest due to its significance in administration and governance in the globalised world. Although there is no commonly accepted definition of leadership, Benmira and Agboola (2021) and Coggins (2020) agree that it is the process of inspiring, guiding and influencing people towards some common goals. In this case, the focus is providing a clear sense of direction that others could easily follow. In such ways, leaders are seen as visionaries and strategists tasked with the responsibilities and practices required to effectively administer organisations.

In educational management, leadership practices are key to the effective administration of teaching programs and the enhancement of a positive school culture and learning climate. Edith Cowan University – ECU (2019) describes Instructional Leadership (IL) as a management approach in which school leaders focus on students' educational performance by giving precedence to teaching quality. Kapur (2021) examined the role of leadership across different educational institutions and found that school leaders, including principals and directors, are tasked with making appropriate decisions that guide both students and teachers. School leaders achieve such goals by focusing on various directional practices such as teachers' professional development, curriculum management, and fostering a positive school learning environment.

Instructional leadership is also considered a model in which school heads, such as principals or head teachers, work with teachers, foster trust among the school community and offer direction on the best practices and mechanisms for effective teaching processes. According to Kapur (2021), the ability of leaders to convey their vision and goals is important in shaping the learning process. Research has also shown

that leadership practices and leaders' behaviours are linked to organisational culture, which is depicted as a system of shared values, beliefs and assumptions that influence the behaviours of people in organisations (McLaughlin, 2021). Further, Lewis-Vice (2020) describes school culture as an attitude and system of beliefs shared among the stakeholders that influence the aspects of school functions and programs.

Students' academic performance has become a topic of vast interest, particularly in the present world, where the focus is increasingly on developing a knowledge-based economy (Ballafkih & Middelkoop, 2019). This increased importance is also attributable to the fact that educational accomplishment and having a strong sense of purpose results in better performance at work and subsequent high economic development. A student's academic performance measures the level of academic content that a student can learn and attain the learning goals in a specific time frame (Carter, 2021). A student's academic performance is one of the most significant outcomes of learning experiences, mainly because it reduces school dropouts and prepares young people for employment opportunities (Moore, 2019).

While most studies have focused on exploring how instructional leadership influence student learning, Valverde-Berrocoso et al. (2022) explored the influence of integrating technology with instructional leadership on student outcomes. Findings by Valverde-Berrocoso et al. (2022) indicated that leveraging technology allows school heads to monitor curriculum activities effectively. Particularly, Valverde-Berrocoso et al. (2022) outlined that leveraging analytical tools enables schools' principles to identify, analyze and draw meaningful insights from data trends, allowing them to make informed decisions regarding the strategic goals of the schools. Leveraging technology allows principals to employ instructional leadership styles to assess and provide timely feedback on the effectiveness of curriculum programs, allowing school heads,

administrators, and teachers to collaborate more efficiently in tailoring instructional strategies for optimal student performance (Edelberg, 2020). Schmitz (2023) explored the influence of infusing technology in managing curriculum activities on student performance. The authors noted that technology facilitates communication between educational stakeholders such as school principals, teachers and parents, which fosters effective curriculum coordination and co-curricular school activities, leading to a holistic learning environment.

There is considerable literature on the value of instructional leadership practices on students' learning outcomes, with most empirical evidence pointing to the direct or indirect contribution of school-level leaders such as principals and head teachers. There is convergence among scholars and researchers in educational leadership that school leaders' practices are associated with students' learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020). Similarly, some studies have investigated the association between educational leadership practices, organisational culture, and student performance (Senol & Lesinger, 2018).

In the United States, research has shown that school principals' practices of monitoring and evaluating instructional delivery and student progress were associated with principals' self-efficacy. In contrast, the practice of curriculum management was found to be nearly significant (McBrayer et al., 2020). This implies that such leaders are likely to have greater organisational commitment, resulting in improved coordination of instructional programs, quality of teaching and subsequently, better learning outcomes. In their study on educational leadership in the US, Aagaard and Earnest (2021) found that school leaders who can gain trust among stakeholders can easily influence learning outcomes in the institution. While the study by Aagaard and Earnest (2021) was conducted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it still found

decision-making and communication to be the most important leadership aspects that could improve collective performance in institutions. Eventually, the direction and decisions taken by school leaders shape the learning process by determining specific learning methods.

A study by Senol and Lesinger (2018) shows that instructional leadership practices interrelate with school culture to foster habits, values and behaviours that promote a positive school environment and improved teaching and learning experiences. For organisational trust to be experienced in the learning environment, a positive school culture has to be fostered through the concerted efforts of school administrators, such as principals, in collaboration with the stakeholders (Senol & Lesinger, 2018). Such interaction could enhance communication among the principal, teachers, and stakeholders, inspire trust in the school, motivate and open up new opportunities among the school community, and address the needs and expectations of one another.

Research in the Caribbean region has shown an association between effective instructional practices and improved learning outcomes. According to Martin (2021), in a study focusing on the effectiveness of school heads in secondary and primary schools, instructional practices result in improved accountability and quality of instruction. The context of the study by Martin (2021) was on the extent to which principals' leadership in public secondary schools improves the general effectiveness of the institution. The study by Martin (2021) found school principal leadership to improve effectiveness in terms of the quality of instruction offered. Similarly, Scott et al. (2021) focused on the Beach School District in the Caribbean region. Their work established that instructional leadership practices aimed at bolstering a positive learning climate, such as continuous professional development, including training on additional

diverse teaching strategies, can be practical in building consistency in the quality of content delivery. This indicates that applying such instructional leadership practices can positively impact teachers' effectiveness in instructional strategies and content delivery, thus offering improved learning experiences and outcomes.

In the United Kingdom, Munna (2021) found that instructional leadership practices can be useful in establishing shared beliefs in a learning institution, which is a significant factor in promoting students' educational performance. The study by Munna (2021) was conducted in higher education, where instructional leadership practices were found to significantly influence student academic achievement. Consistent with Munna (2021), Kalkan et al. (2020) found that institutions with clear instructional leadership have effective teaching and learning processes, which may influence overall performance. The study by Kalkan et al. (2020) was conducted in secondary schools in Turkey. It was also concerned with the impact that the culture would have on leadership practices by school principals and the general link to student academic performance. The above is consistent with the current study, which examines the moderating effect of school organizational culture.

Studies carried out in India portray the importance of instructional leadership practices on students' academic achievement and the moderating effect of organisational culture on the aforementioned constructs. Thomas and Jhariel (2019), in a study involving principals and teachers in Indian schools, established that IL practices, such as supervision and monitoring of instruction in classrooms, can influence students' performance. Such regular monitoring and giving feedback increase teachers' commitment toward improved quality of teaching and learning processes. Essentially, principals' practices influence the general performance of teachers and

students while promoting compliance, trust, zeal for service, and occupational commitment among the teaching staff. Supervision and monitoring also give principals opportunities to understand teachers' abilities, skills and teaching instructional strategies, giving them insight into areas requiring greater attention for career and professional development initiatives.

Studies in various countries in Sub-Saharan Africa illustrate the impact of diverse instructional leadership practices on learning outcomes (Ajani, 2018; Bush et al., 2021). However, there is a need for more school-based research to provide grounded evidence on specific domains and their impact on student performance (Bush et al., 2021). According to Gyamerah (2021), the practical administration of IL practices aimed at supporting teaching strategies was found to positively impact students' performance in K-12 public schools in Ghana. This lends credence to Sofo and Abonyi (2018) in their work based on rural public schools in Ghana, stating that teachers' empowerment through professional development opportunities could bolster occupational commitment, resulting in enhanced quality of instruction and learning processes.

A few studies conducted in the East African region have explored the significance of educational leadership practices and the moderating factor of the institution's culture on the students' performance. For example, in Uganda, Bubale et al. (2021) argue that leadership practices that support teachers' professional development are fundamental for promoting a conducive learning environment and teachers' engagement toward improved quality of teaching and learning processes. This implies that the practices applied by school leaders, such as principals and head teachers, can impact the school climate and culture as important factors in students' learning performance (Allgood, 2021).

In Kenya, student academic performance is an important factor for the successful development of young people toward the acquisition of knowledge requisite for occupational and economic development. Consequently, the need for quality delivery of instruction cannot be overstated. Such educational success, however, is subject to diverse factors, including practical and competitive school curriculum management and effective instructional delivery (Jonyo & Jonyo, 2019). Several researchers in Kenya have explored the association between instructional leadership practices and students' academic performance. For instance, a study by Ndambuki (2020) examined the instructional practices of principals in Kenya and found that the ability of school principals to supervise and ensure the correct application of instructional practices would lead to improved performance of KCSE. Similarly, Mutuku (2018) pointed out the need for principals to promote balanced leadership practices to improve the quality of learning toward student performance. Consistent with these views, Ndambuki (2020) established that practices were undertaken by principals, including promoting teachers' career growth and enabling positive teaching and learning climate to enhance students' performance in national examinations.

According to Okilwa and Bryan (2020), the study of instructional leadership practices in Kenya has mostly focused on just a few core areas, such as setting school direction, staff development, curriculum management and institutional organisation. The authors, however, argued that focusing on the practices above in diverse contexts provided the basis that educational leadership in Kenya has not been well studied. This is despite the enormous impact that instructional leadership practices can have on students' performance (Allgood, 2021). Njinju (2018) conducted a study in Kiambu County and found that various aspects have been attributed to the challenges facing students' general and educational performance in the county. Some highlighted

problems include inadequate resources, unconcerned parents, a poor learning environment and social factors. Such limitations augment the need for effective leadership practices since it has been found that school leadership practices such as inspecting instructional processes and establishing professional development opportunities can improve the quality of learning and learning outcomes.

In Nyeri County, Njuki (2018) examined the implementation of curriculum and the impact that would have on student academic performance. Njuki (2018) found the school principals to be critical in implementing curriculum, which also influences students' performance. The study by Njuki (2018) only examined the instructional role of school principals in the context of curriculum management. As a result, other instructional roles, such as the creation of an ideal learning environment, remain unexplored. In this case, the study failed to comprehensively link poor performance to principal instructional practices. Therefore, in Nyeri County, there remains a gap regarding instructional practices and student performance.

Kangangi (2018) researched Kirinyaga County and observed that lack of sufficient school resources, teacher-student ratio, and student discipline were among the leading factors influencing students' performance. The factors were based on the institution's external environment. The study found that due to the lack of appropriate physical and human resources, the environment in some of the public secondary schools in Kirinyaga County-Kenya did not support student academic performance. The study, however, failed to link these aspects of the external environment to the instructional practices of school heads. In a related study, Irungu (2020) found that although a positive relationship was established between practices such as communication of school goals, supervision of instructional processes, promotion of teamwork, and students' performance, there was no direct link between the practice of professional

development and students' performance. These results were, therefore, contradictory and inconclusive, implying that more investigation is necessary to find the significance of instructional leadership practices on students' academic performance in Kirinyaga County.

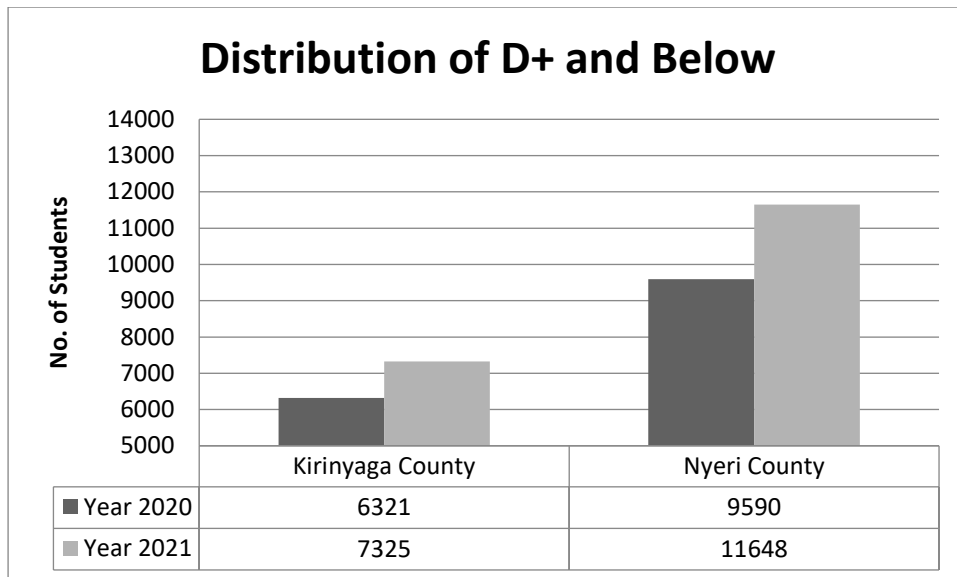
Further, research on the moderating factor of organisational culture on the relationship between instructional leadership practices and students' academic performance in both countries is lacking. It is apparent that despite the importance of school leadership in promoting a positive learning experience, instructional leadership has not been fully utilised in promoting teaching and learning processes. Therefore, The current study aims to determine the significance of instructional leadership practices and student academic performance and whether there is any moderating effect of culture among the dimensions of instructional leadership practices and the performance of students in secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties.

While the current study makes a considerable contribution to understanding how instructional leadership influences student performance, there is a conceptual gap in the literature. Notably, Irungu (2020) observed that instructional leadership approaches directly influence student performance, while Njuki (2018) noted that a school's organizational culture directly influences student academic performance. Both studies have a conceptual gap on how organizational culture moderates the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student academic performance. The current study aims to close the conceptual research gap by exploring the moderating effect of organizational culture on instructional leadership and student academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Students in both Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties have continued to register poor students' academic performance in the national final exam (KCSE). A report from the Regional Director of Education (Appendix I) indicates that an average of 54.57% of students in Kirinyaga county and Nyeri 55.49% in Nyeri county attained D+ and below in KCSE examinations, indicating poor performance. Similarly, as evident in Figure 1 below, the total number of students who scored D+ and below in both counties increased between 2020 and 2021. Learners' performance depends on, among others, the instructional practices adopted by school heads (Irungu, 2020). Irungu (ibid) found that school leaders, such as principals tasked with the day-to-day operations of learning institutions, are responsible for upholding practices that offer direction to the staff and support institutional goals toward improved quality of learning and improved learning outcomes. In this case, the poor performance of students across the two counties indicates that the instructional practices adopted are not efficient in supporting learning. As a result, there is a need to examine school leaders' instructional role and contribution to enhancing student academic performance. The performance of students described above would also be a reflection of the culture adopted in the school. The school management is responsible for ensuring a culture that supports learners in achieving their full potential (Okindo et al., 2020). The current performance of students in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties would, therefore, be an indication that the instructional leadership activities and the culture adopted may not have been efficient in promoting student academic performance.

Figure 1: *Student Performance in Nyeri and Kirinyaga Counties*



Source (Author's)

Table 1 below compares the mean scores for the two counties between 2020 and 2021. Based on the findings, the highest mean score was 4.65 and the lowest at 3.32 against a maximum of 12 points. The results illustrate that the mean index for the two counties was consistently below average. Poor performance in the two counties, as shown by below-average mean scores and many students scoring D+, presented a need to examine instructional practices adopted by school leadership in the two counties. Equally, as evident from Figure 1 and Table 2, the performance of students in Kirinyaga County was slightly higher than that of students in Nyeri County. However, results from the two counties follow a similar pattern, which provides a basis for examining instructional practices adopted in the two counties. Ideally, it is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that appropriate instructional practices are implemented to enhance learning (Okindo et al., 2020). In Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, there remains a gap in determining whether instructional leadership has impacted student performance. The current study, therefore, sought to investigate the influence of instructional leadership practices on student academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties as moderated by organisational culture.

Table 1: KCSE Mean Score Index

Year	Kirinyaga County KCSE Mean Score	Nyeri County KCSE Mean Score
2020	4.65	4.62
2021	4.44	3.32

Source: (Regional Director of Education, 2022)

Study Objectives

The study's main aim was to determine the influence of instructional leadership practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya as moderated by organisational culture.

The study sought to meet the following specific objectives:

- i. To examine the effect of the school mission on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.
- ii. To investigate the influence of curriculum management on student academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.
- iii. To establish the learning environment's effect on students' performance in national KCSE examinations in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.
- iv. To examine the moderating effect of organisational culture on the instructional leadership practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁ School mission has no statistically significant influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.

- H0₂ Curriculum management has no statistically significant influence on student's academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.
- H0₃ Positive learning environment has no statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.
- H0₄ Organizational culture does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on instructional leadership practices and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya.

The rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study was informed by the fact that despite many academic concerns that might be associated with learning difficulties, existing research (Irungu, 2020; Njuki, 2018) has not conclusively investigated the role of instructional leadership on students' performance. Previous studies have identified underperformance among students in public secondary schools in Kenya (Irungu, 2020) as a critical issue. In Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, poor performance has been linked to a range of various socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors (Njuki, 2018). Besides the socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors identified by Njuki (2018), a range of other personal and instructional factors influence student academic performance. For instance, Irungu (2020) found instructional practices in terms of teaching methods significantly influence student academic performance. Other scholars, such as Kangangi (2018), found school principals play a significant role in designing and implementing instructional practices that are likely to lead to improved quality of instruction. Previous studies on instructional practices in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties have focused on instructional practices in the context of teaching methods and

strategies, which implies that there has been limited focus on the role of school principals in instructional leadership and its influence on student academic performance (Kangangi, 218; Irungu, 2020). Leadership in this study refers to school principals. The study examines the role of school principals in instructional leadership and the impact that this has on student academic performance. The study's leadership aspect is important in steering the institution toward the right vision and direction, which affects academic performance.

Similarly, studies have linked student performance to the culture adopted within an organization (Kangangi, 218; Irungu, 2020). This study defines school culture in terms of how it moderates the relationship between instructional leadership and academic performance. It was, therefore, important to examine the moderating role of organisational culture in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties.

Significance of the Study

The current study contributes to knowledge of the instructional practices by the school principals and their impact on student academic performance in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The study will be significant to different players within the field of education. For instance, the findings generated in the study could empower the school principals to communicate the school mission and supervision of the instructional strategies within the learning centres. Similarly, the findings would provide the school principals with specific approaches for improving performance by focusing on the different ways to improve the learning environment.

The current study will also be significant to policymakers in the field of education. Specifically, study results will offer a framework to the Ministry of Education (MoE) for applying effective instructional practices through collaboration between principals, teachers and students. The recommendations made in the current

study could also provide guidelines to MoE on creating a positive learning environment and its impact on the quality of learning and students' academic performance. As a result, policymakers could use the information provided in the study to formulate tools and interventions to enhance instructional leadership in schools.

The study will further contribute to the existing literature on instructional practices in public secondary schools. Existing studies in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties have largely focused on the causes of poor student academic performance. For instance, in Nyeri County, Njuki (2018) focused on the learning environment and teaching strategies as possible causal factors for poor performance, while in Kirinyaga County, Kangangi (2018) focused on insufficient school resources. The current study contributes to the existing literature regarding the impacts of instructional practices by school principals and the moderating effect of organisational culture on student academic performance. Specifically, the study contributes to the existing literature on the moderating role of organisational culture in the instructional practices of school principals in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties. The above is crucial in informing school principals on critical elements for developing an environment supporting student performance. Thus, the study offers a roadmap for principals to steer secondary schools toward academic excellence.

The findings of this study could be relevant in this era of Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), as successful implementation of the curriculum is highly dependent on school leaders who support the learning of both students and teachers. This is because the CBC curriculum places great insistence on the association between learning and the labour market, which requires students to have the right competencies and skills (Akala, 2021). The above can be achieved through instructional leadership, where school heads seek to ensure that what is taught in classrooms aligns with society's

current needs and aspirations. Similarly, the moderating role of school culture discussed in the study would ensure that schools encourage a culture of specialisation that seeks to produce intellectually, emotionally and physically balanced students consistent with the needs of CBC.

Scope

The study took place in selected public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, which are appropriate locations given the diminutive level of empirical works focusing on the role of school-based leadership practices on students' performance. The investigation areas forming the study's variables were instructional leadership practices as an independent variable, students' performance as the dependent variable, and organisational culture as the study's moderating variable. Scholars such as Kangangi (2018) and Okindo et al. (2020) found students' performance in secondary schools to be highly dependent on leadership practices by their school heads. Equally, observation by Njuki (2018) indicated that organizational culture influences the conduct of school stakeholders, which directly determines the success or failure of a school organization. The dimensions of instructional leadership practices that the study focused on were the school principal's mission, curriculum management, promotion of school learning climate, and their influence on students' performance. Kangangi (2018) found the above factors crucial for the success of school organizations determined by the student's educational outcomes. Information for the study was obtained from school principals as instructional leaders on how their practices impact students' academic performance. The study also sought information from teachers and students about their awareness of instructional leadership and the application of its best practices in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties.

Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

- i. The responses obtained through the instruments were given honestly and represent the real experiences of the participants.
- ii. There was inclusivity of all the participants to ensure all the data acquired was objective and essential to the study.
- iii. To a certain extent, the instructional leadership practices were practised by school leaders in the area of the study.
- iv. All the participants have experienced or had exposure to the phenomenon of the study in question.
- v. The participants in the study were assumed to have no motive beyond presenting credible and authentic information that is essential to the research.

Limitations

The major limitation of the study was regarding the methodology adopted. While the adopted research method offers a comprehensive approach to examining the influence of instructional leadership on student academic performance, selecting an appropriate sample size for the mixed-method approach was challenging and posed significant implications for the credibility of the findings. Integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods required careful planning and demanded adequate expertise to facilitate research through each approach. Consequently, incorporating findings from both approaches might have affected the credibility of the findings. The next limitation was the unwillingness of participants to offer full information related to instructional practices offered in their schools. Some of the school heads were reluctant to offer information related to the research, given that it looked like an evaluation of their ability to supervise the school instruction process. Based on the above, it is

possible that the study could be subject to acquiescence and social desirability biases as participants tended to agree with most of the statements from the researcher, especially those related to student academic performance. The impact of the bias was minimised by providing the benefits of the research and informing participants that the information provided was confidential and anonymous.

Delimitations

The study delimited itself to the public day and boarding secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties. The study only focused on the application of instructional leadership practices and on three elements, namely, the school principal's mission, curriculum management, and positive learning climate. The researcher found these domains to be key for generating relevant information on measuring their possible influence on student performance. Thus, other factors that may influence student performance in secondary schools in the county were not considered. The participants in this study only included school principals, teachers and students. Further, the study was delimited to only sampling secondary school principals, teachers and students in years three and four of secondary education, whom the researcher found to be the most accessible and most important groups for providing relevant information to generalise the study results. The rationale for choosing school principals, teachers, and students in years three and four of secondary education was based on the view that the cohort has expansive knowledge and experience of the dynamics of the learning environment of secondary school. In addition, the cohort was also relevant to the study, given that the relationship between teachers, school principals and students directly influences student performance (Okindo et al., 2020).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an introduction to the study. The key components included a background to the study, problem statement, study objectives, research hypotheses, justification for the study, significance, and scope of the study. Other components include assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. In presenting the foregoing, the chapter has provided an in-depth discussion on the historical perspective of the components of the study and highlighted the existing problem informing the need for the study. The following chapter is a review of existing studies on instructional practices adopted by school heads and their influence on student academic performance. The third chapter presents the methods and approaches utilised to collect and analyse data used in the study. The results are presented in chapter four, while the final chapter includes a discussion of findings, their implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter details the review of existing studies on the link between educational leadership and students' performance in public secondary schools, as well as the moderating effect of organizational culture. The chapter commences with a review of theories applicable to the study's objective. The purpose of the theoretical review was to underline theoretical paradigms that explain instructional leadership practices. Consequently, the literature review features a critical assessment of the existing body of knowledge on instructional leadership practices and how they relate to student performance. The critical literature review aims to establish the extent to which different scholars agree or disagree on different elements under focus in the study. Points of divergence informed knowledge gaps that were critical in supporting the study's relevance. This demonstrates that gaps in the existing body of literature in the global, regional, and local contexts provided a foundation and basis for the present study.

The Concept of Student Performance

Most of the empirical literature dealing with student performance focuses on students' performance in learning areas such as Mathematics, Science, and Language,

among others (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Irungu, 2020). The performance in such a context is measured through tests, which could be nationwide examinations or tests that the teachers internally develop. Gess-Newsome et al. (2019) have moved beyond this definition to include the extent to which a student has achieved specific goals in the instructional environment. The authors observed that the concept of student performance may cover different learning domains, including school dropout and graduation rates. Studies have shown that various factors may influence student performance in an instructional environment. One of these factors is the school's mission. Alhadabi and Karpinski (2020) found that high-performing and low-performing schools differ in their mission. Findings from the study also indicate that for the school mission to have a considerable impact on student performance, it must be incorporated by the school staff, including the management, into their daily activities. The study further found that the instructional program of a school and the pedagogical approaches used can only be effective if the school mission is clearly stated and practised by all stakeholders.

Another factor that would affect student performance is curriculum management. Recent scholars such as Heto et al. (2020) have found curriculum management to be the foundation for effective learning and teaching in an academic institution. According to Heto et al. (2020), a well-managed curriculum makes it possible to manage the learning process as teachers can deliver the most appropriate and relevant content. The findings by Heto et al. (2020) are consistent with those of Gess-Newsome et al. (2019), who found that curriculum creates opportunities for students to experience a holistic and balanced school life. Gess-Newsome et al. (2019) argue that the modern-day curriculum is created to not only enhance academic performance but also ensure that students achieve the wholesome benefits of the

learning process. However, Mutekwe and Khumalo (2023) disagree that the curriculum would directly benefit learners. Based on Mutekwe and Khumalo (2023), the effectiveness of the curriculum is based on the extent to which the school leadership is able to apply its provisions. Through the direction and supervision of the school management, the curriculum needs to be tailored to the specific needs of learners. Failure to tailor the curriculum effectively would result in misalignment between the needs of students and what is taught in the classroom. Neliwat et al. (2023) agreed with Mutekwe and Khumalo (2023) by noting that the influence of school curriculum on student performance is not on how best it is managed but on how well the curriculum incorporates varieties of teaching strategies to address different learning needs of students. According to Neliwat et al. (2023), a curriculum that accommodates a variety of teaching approaches allows teachers to integrate their skills and expertise to engage learners' technical skills, which increases content mastery and consequently improves student performance. In the context of performance, findings imply that the general performance could be based on how well an institution manages and implements the curriculum.

The third factor under consideration is the school environment. In their study, Malik and Rizvi (2018) found that the learning environment determined attendance and the general commitment toward learning. Students' attitudes towards the school environment and subjects have also been seen to significantly impact students' academic performance. For instance, Malik and Rizvi (2018) state that there was a statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes and their academic achievement. Notwithstanding the aforementioned findings, the study findings research by Malik and Rizvi (2018) indicate students' personal motivation significantly impacts their academic achievement. For instance, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been

seen to have a positive statistical significance impact on academic achievement. While Malik and Rizvi (2018) focused on student motivation, other studies on the learning environment, such as Baranova et al. (2021), focused on the resources within the learning environment. According to Baranova et al. (2021), a learning environment with a significant amount of resources is likely to have better performance as there is a significant amount of materials to support learning. In both Baranova et al. (2021) and Malik and Rizvi (2018), a positive and appropriate learning environment was associated with improved performance of learners. In this case, the school environment included aspects of instructional space where students with adequate learning space and facilities were found to perform better. Besides the school environment, the mission statement is another important factor to consider. Alhadabi and Karpinski (2020) found that the impact of school mission on student performance was indirect through educational values that develop as a result of the commitment to the school mission. To this end, there is no documented evidence of a relationship between school mission and student performance for students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties, Kenya. In the current study, school mission has been used as a dimension for instructional leadership and a factor for student performance.

Previous scholars in studying student performance among students in public secondary schools in Kenya have measured their performance through the grades obtained at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE) (Irungu, 2020; Kiptum, 2018). The current study, too, has measured student performance through KCSE examinations over the last two years. Irungu (2020) examined student performance in Kirinyaga and Murang'a Counties using their performance in KCSE examinations. Irungu linked student performance to the support and commitment of teachers. On support and commitment, Ongesa (2020) agrees that teachers who are fully

committed to the learning process are likely to post better performance, given that they understand the needs of their learners. Commitment in this context would mean that teachers move beyond their roles to provide services tailored to individual learners' specific needs. Such support and commitment have been associated with improved performance of learners. Giso et al. (2023) examined the influence of classroom learning approaches on student performance in biology in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County. They utilized a sample of 118 students across all mixed public schools in the Maara sub-county. Findings from the study indicated that school learning environments and teaching approaches have a significant and positive relationship with student performance. The studies described above focused on the various physical aspects of the environment. The current study has focused on the learning environment in the context of managing instructional time and promoting professional development among teachers. Given the preceding, a gap exists regarding a direct relationship between the learning environment and student performance for public schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties.

The Concept of Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership emerged in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s under the emblem of the "effective schools" program, which intended to advance academic progress in urban government learning institutions (Manafa, 2020). This movement executed inquiry showing that the principal's leadership approach and behaviour patterns are crucial to students' performance in low-income inner-city school systems.

Multiple descriptions of instructional leadership have materialized in the last 30 years, as Okindo et al. (2020) suggest that leadership is an aspect that involves

impacting followers to cultivate an opportunity to attain a number of objectives in an institution within a specified budget and timeframe through the leader's intellectual ability and determination. Instructional leadership is the set of approaches school heads use to guarantee that the education system is incorporated efficiently and effectively.

When employed by school principals, instructional leadership has been found efficient in meeting set objectives (Gatama et al., 2023). The effectiveness of an institution's learning and teaching determines a student's performance. This is facilitated by the fact that an institution has a principal who can acquire teaching staff with the necessary attributes to impact students positively. The school tends to support teachers through instructional leadership by imparting organizational and management expertise to them to enhance effectiveness. Instructional leadership, on the other hand, helps to ensure that the institution's clear requirements are fulfilled. According to Stosich (2020), effective instructional leaders project an ambition for the institution by clearly defining the objectives and results of the instructional program. Once goals have been established, it is likely to measure the efficacy and quality of educational practices. Based on Stosich (2020), school heads achieve the above by constantly checking the implementation of curriculum and instructional programs to ensure that they are consistent with the goals and objectives of the institution. Findings by Stosich (2020) imply that principals must remain at par with instructional practices applied in schools in order to offer appropriate leadership and directions over instructional practices. Based on the above, the curriculum and the instruction program remain the most crucial components of instructional leadership.

A study by Michael et al. (2021) revealed that instructional leaders could galvanize available resources for the implementation of policies that lead to the desired

outcome through the use of instructional leadership approaches. To provide a steady and proficient environment for learning, instructional leaders function as resource providers, either by trying to coordinate with the institution's management and non-members or by trying to form community school collaborations. The finding by Michael et al. (2021) aligns with earlier observations by Baranova et al. (2021), who noted that instructional leaders are responsible for providing the physical and human resources required to support the learning process. In instances where the institution lacks adequate resources, the school head is tasked with collaborating with external stakeholders to acquire extra resources that would support learning. In this regard, students and teachers need the appropriate resources to influence student performance positively.

Instructional leadership aims to assist instructional leaders in making favourable curriculum changes, which are essential when it comes to academic performance. School heads, considered to be instructional leaders, are important players in the execution of educational reforms. According to Odoh and Obiakor (2021), principals can execute major amendments that result in the continuous improvement of student performance in a fast-changing environment. The school principal has the duty of ensuring that the curriculum is followed to the letter and that there is total compliance from all the involved stakeholders. However, as Michael et al. (2021) noted, school principals are not lone players in the curriculum implementation process and should involve other stakeholders, including departmental heads and policymakers. The above means that school heads have a duty to solicit feedback on curriculum matters and ensure that the issues are efficiently applied to improve student academic performance.

Instructional leadership is concerned with continuous staff development. As the primary facilitator of workforce development, the school head initiates an environment that enables the staff members to enhance their performance within their existing positions. The resultant impact is improved academic performance, which is the prime objective of any learning institution (Mitchell, 2021). Mitchell (2021) recommends that school heads conduct regular training on curriculum implementation to ensure they have the right knowledge of the instructional programs required in an institution. Efficient school heads recognize the value of staff empowerment, cooperation, and collaboration in guaranteeing effective learning and teaching. Empowered staff will willingly deliver their mandate, resulting in improved student performance. As part of staff development, Mitchell (2021) argued that school heads must also be fully empowered so that they have the right knowledge to supervise and lead the instruction process.

Studies (Mutuku, 2018; Papazoglou, 2021) identified four aspects that lead to successful leadership, namely clarity of targets (political), management frameworks (structural), boosting an organizational culture (symbolic), and concern for the essentials of the other individuals (human resources). The researchers utilized a quantitative methodology and focused on all 90 high schools in Machakos County, ultimately engaging 38 school heads, 190 teaching staff, and 345 students as research participants. They observed that all four variables of instructional leadership were notably related to educational outcomes, suggesting that the more of the four components the principal instilled in the facility, the higher the academic outcomes. As a result, they ascertained that instructional leadership practices should be encouraged as a criterion in all schools to achieve better performance and student learning outcomes. This evidence supports the need for instructional leadership techniques to be

executed as a provisional or definitive solution to obstacles and underperformance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties.

The Proponents of Instructional Leadership and Its Development

Some of the key proponents of instructional leadership are Philip Hallinger and Joseph Murphy, who developed a research-based definition of the principal's role as instructional manager (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985). Also, they established the three dimensions of instructional management, such as defining the school mission, supervising and evaluating instruction, and promoting a positive school climate (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985). These aspects are also evident in later works by Hallinger and Murphy in 2014 and 2017. Each dimension is subdivided into specific job functions that principals perform to enhance student learning and effectiveness. Research by Michael et al. (2021) augments this stance by suggesting various dimensions of instructional leadership, including goal establishment, strategic resourcing, planning, coordination, and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum, promotion, and participation in teacher learning and development, and the ensuring of an orderly and supportive environment. Consequently, she gathers that instructional leadership has a pronounced effect among different leadership types. Put differently, these three dimensions proposed by Hallinger and Murphy cultivated the development of the aspects of mission, curriculum, and environment advocated under instructional leadership.

According to Hallinger and Murphy (2017), defining the school mission involves framing and communicating school goals that focus on student achievement and reflecting the needs and expectations of the school community. Also, they argue that managing the instructional program involves supervising and evaluating

instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. Consequently, these functions require the principal to work closely with teachers and provide them with feedback, support, and resources. Anub, another proponent of instructional leadership, in their 2020 research, posits that instructional leadership is not a solo endeavour but a collaborative one involving many people, such as principals, assistant principals, consultants, and teachers. This means that leaders need to create a culture of inquiry and improvement, where teachers are encouraged to learn from each other and from external sources and where feedback and accountability are embedded in the process.

Moreover, Anub (2020) accentuates that it is essential for instructional leaders to know their teachers well and understand their strengths, weaknesses, and motivations for tailored and timely support for teachers to address their learning challenges, such as modelling effective practices, facilitating professional conversations, and acknowledging successes. Thus, promoting a positive school learning climate involves protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and students, and enforcing academic standards. These functions aim to create a culture of high expectations, collaboration, and recognition in the school. This stance has been adopted in this discussion to establish the alignment of instructional leadership practices with the mission, curriculum, and environment.

School Mission

A well-displayed mission statement is significant as it helps institutions accomplish their goals through procedures related to the rule of governance. According to Matsunaga (2021), a clear statement of school mission must act as a set of

discriminative stimuli to better guide students' behaviour. In a different study, Hatsuko and Wong (2020) observed that the values embedded in the school mission statements assist in directing students and learners towards a common direction, which is important in achieving the intended results. As such, the mission statements provide a framework for decision-making, given that students and instructors are most likely to follow the values and goals described under the mission statements. The relevance of the school mission statement has also been examined by Steinmayr et al. (2019), who noted that it shapes the perceptions of students on the value of education, which acts as a motivation factor towards learning. In this context, values such as excellence and hard work described under the mission statement could motivate students towards learning, which is critical in improving overall performance.

Implementing the school mission statement and its effectiveness is largely based on its communication with different stakeholders. Matsunaga (2021) observes that school principals have a role in ensuring mission statements are effectively communicated to different stakeholders. Consistent with Matsunaga (2021), Hatsuko and Wong (2020) agree that school principals must ensure that students and teachers know their mission statements and values. However, in terms of effectiveness, Hatsuko and Wong (2020) argue that school members should not only be aware of the mission statement but also be able to implement or effectively apply it in their daily activities. Barasa (2017) states that the mission statement should help the principals establish a psychological contract between the institution and the new members, for it must indicate the legitimate behaviours expected from the new members. The above can play a significant role in facilitating the socialization of new members into the institutional culture and minimizing the shift from the main objectives of the institution's mission. The school mission statement, therefore, becomes an efficient factor that would

differentiate the practices and values held by one institution from another. The success of these factors is, however, based on the ability of school principals to ensure that the mission statement has been applied efficiently.

To achieve the intended objectives, Barasa (2017) argues that school principals must be intentional about communicating and applying the school mission statements. The above entails looking for specific avenues, including general assemblies and regular meetings through which the institution could communicate the mission statement. According to Hatsuko and Wong (2020), frequent communication of the school mission statement remains an ideal way of ensuring that the different stakeholders within the institution have clearly understood the mission statement. Equally, Ndambuki (2020) observed that school principals should work on ways of improving the visibility of the mission statements by erecting signs and supportive placards around the school compound. Such strategies are meant to ensure that teachers and students within the school can interact regularly with the contents of the mission statement. While the school's mission statements differ from the institution's aims and objectives, Barasa (2017) recommends that institutions avoid general statements such as "promoting quality education" that would make it difficult for the institution to focus on specific targets.

In order to achieve the intended objectives, Steinmayr et al. (2019) insist that the school mission statements must be able to meet the changing needs of an educational institution. According to Steinmayr et al. (2019), academic institutions are not static but rather dynamic, as they are largely affected by changes within the external business environment. However, this aspect of dynamism is negated by Ndambuki (2020), who found that the majority of mission statements tend to remain unchanged as

they contain the visions and aspirations of the founding members. While it is important to preserve the original vision and goals of institutional founders, it is equally necessary to ensure that they reflect the immediate needs and aspirations of the institutions. While reviewing the mission statements, scholars recommend that school principals involve different stakeholders in formulating the new mission statement to acquire their support and commitment (Ndambuki, 2020; Steinmayr et al., 2019). In this case, having stakeholders with a common understanding of the school mission statement results in a group of individuals working towards common goals and practices.

Given the significance of the mission statement for institutional change, Ndambuki (2020) highlights that the adherence and application of the school mission statement could be the differentiating factor between public secondary schools with different levels of academic performance. According to Ndambuki (2020), the school mission statement assists in directing stakeholders, including students, teachers and the management, towards a common goal, which is critical in enhancing overall performance. Similar observations were made by Hatsuko and Wong (2020), who noted that school mission statements increase the likelihood of players within an institution working together towards common objectives. Other scholars, such as Barasa (2017), examined the influence of school mission statements on students' performance. According to Barasa (2017), the application of the school mission statement affects the quality of administrative practices by the management, which directly influences the institution's performance. Barasa (2017) also linked the mission statement to the direction-setting aspects of the institution, where school heads are able to lead the institution towards specific goals. Besides this, there has been limited evidence as to the effects of school mission statements on academic performance for students in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya.

School Curriculum

A curriculum that effectively meets the needs of learners is likely to be associated with improved performance. Amon and Bustami (2021) define curriculum management as the entire process of planning, developing and implementing learning programs. The management aspect, in this case, would be related to ensuring that educational programs are applied in a way that meets the needs of learners. Scholars agree that school principals have a role in ensuring that the curriculum is effectively applied within the institution (Amon & Bustami, 2021; Høgdal et al., 2021). In this case, the ability of school principals to put up effective measures, such as monitoring students' accomplishments, target setting, and offering incentives, have been shown to positively impact students' test and evaluation grades, particularly among some of the lowest performers in school. These results suggested that academic and management practices have a positive student output. In their study in Nigeria, Ogwunte et al. (2022) looked at curriculum management in the context of instructional practices adopted by teachers within an institution. According to Ogwunte et al. (2022), instructional practices in terms of specific methods and strategies applied in the classroom could influence learner performance. Findings outline the need for school principals to apply appropriate leadership methods to influence learner performance effectively.

The structure of a curriculum is a vital component in education as it allows teachers to create a framework for how they want their students to study and achieve academic excellence. School heads need to create a suitable structure to make it easier for teachers to complete the daily tasks required. The framework is essential for maintaining students' progress and reducing the sensation of falling behind (Schmitt et al., 2019). Given they are children, school administrators and instructors need to

provide assistance to school-age children instead of burdening them with the sole duty of their education. As the curriculum is one of the most crucial parts of education, school principals should consider what students are being taught and ensure the content they receive is applicable outside a school environment (Taylor & Richards, 2018). According to Syomwene (2018), school heads need to ensure that the curriculum process is clear to allow teachers to create a well-organised structure for their classes and organise what and when they want their students to learn to maximise chances for better student performance. School principals achieve the above by ensuring a positive environment and adequate resources to support learning. Nevertheless, the curriculum structural framework's reliability is questioned when principals adopt a few roles while disregarding others, such as being able to monitor teachers' class participation and prepping lesson notes versus providing instructional materials, teaching materials and feedback (Schleiff et al., 2021). As a result, curriculum management necessitates some level of collaboration with all interested parties. Undoubtedly, inadequacies in schools are initiated by scarce management skills training for school heads, as demonstrated by inconsistent tracking of learning and examinations, along with poor coordination and counselling sessions. These incidents potentially lead to poor student performance.

Teaching practices are essential for effective learning. Schleiff et al. (2021) observed that teachers are the most critical agents in the execution of the school curriculum. The above is based on the fact that the effective implementation of the school curriculum is based on specific instructional practices applied by instructors in classrooms. The findings by Schleiff et al. (2021) are consistent with earlier observations by Taylor and Richards (2018), who noted that teachers have the best understanding of issues related to curriculum management due to their frequent interactions with students. Therefore, when implementing a curriculum, school

principals must ensure that teachers use the suggestions and plans made by curriculum experts.

All resources, especially workforce resources, must be utilised because all employees in a school environment can help improve students' performance (Tingle et al., 2019). According to Lopez and Rugano (2018), time and school environment are crucial for ensuring an effective curriculum. The above implies that school heads should ensure that the school setup and environment are conducive and adequately stimulating for effective teaching and learning. Such setup includes having enough space, furniture, and adequate teaching and learning resources. In their research, Taylor and Richards (2018) noted that timetabling and daily schedules are crucial, and school principals should ensure that all students are aware of their daily routines. Taylor and Richards (2018) further noted that timetables must underscore primary areas of learning, such as literacy and numeracy, for students in all grades. Numeracy and literacy skills are the foundation on which students develop an understanding of every subject.

Students are likely to perform poorly if school principals and teachers fail to plan effectively for curriculum implementation. When planning, school principals and teachers need to ensure that students' individual needs are catered for. According to Syomwene (2018), flexibility is a vital aspect of a school curriculum as it ensures that teachers meet the individual needs of different students. Furthermore, different students have different learning styles; thus, what works for one may be inapplicable for another. The lesson plans must thus accommodate or meet the various learning needs to enhance students' performance. Tingle et al. (2019) noted that there are long-term plans such as schemes of work, theme-based plans done at the beginning of a theme and evaluated at the end, and weekly plans that should guide teachers with daily teachings. Such plans should have concise and clear learning objectives to promote effective learning.

Evaluation is a tool used to assess students' performance. School principals ensure there are formative and summative assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. As part of curriculum management, the assessments are important in checking learners' progress and ensuring appropriate measures are taken to improve performance. According to Ogwunte et al. (2022), school principals should ensure that the assessments are applied appropriately to meet learners' needs. Syomwene (2018) reported that assignments and homework are a means of implementing the curriculum. The main impact of homework is that it improves school-home partnership and parental engagement in students' learning. Additionally, communication on students' progress is a strategy that school principals use to boost students' performance as parents can understand their children's weaknesses and strengths and offer necessary support outside the classroom.

A school curriculum can only be effective with the efforts of all stakeholders. However, Lehl et al. (2020) noted that the success of a school curriculum lies strongly with school principals and teachers. The two stakeholders are the first direct curriculum users since a school's effectiveness depends on the teaching quality. Schmitt et al. (2019) emphasise that instructors play crucial roles in developing and delivering the curriculum. Teachers must develop daily lesson plans and adapt them to accommodate their pupils' specific demands and circumstances. Teachers study the curriculum and identify the necessary resources to impart learning. According to Taylor and Richards (2018), the curriculum is created to benefit students; hence, the students are directly involved in the failure or success of implementing a school curriculum. In this case, the involvement of students in implementing the school curriculum plays an important role in creating buy-in among the students.

The school principal mainly coordinates the school curriculum. According to Lopez and Rugano (2018), school principals ensure the successful application of the school's goals, mission, vision, and philosophy. The above involves ensuring students' successful transition from one level to another and training specialists and teachers to ensure the curriculum meets the school's mission and vision. The effectiveness of a school's curriculum depends upon parents' involvement (Schmitt et al., 2019). Schmitt et al. (2019) note that engaging parents in curriculum implementation helps secure their assistance in monitoring and bolstering the learning process. The school heads, therefore, ensure that a Parents Teachers Association acts as a voice for students' learning experiences. School principals also liaise with the community as the community is the primary source of material and human resources required to implement a school curriculum successfully.

School Culture

A school's culture refers to the persistent pattern of undocumented values, norms, assumptions, practices and beliefs that shape how individuals in a given school behave (Bulowa et al., 2023). Bulowa et al. (2023) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between school culture and academic performance in public secondary schools in Trans Nzoia County in Kenya. The study found a significant relationship between school culture and academic performance in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The study also recommended that school managers create a positive culture by employing sound strategic objectives, creating a supportive learning environment, having a vision and mission, and motivating students to boost academic performance. Ngumuta et al. (2022) also conducted a study in Machakos County to determine the relationship between school culture and academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The study found that school culture, which

entails artefacts, symbols, and values, significantly affects students' academic performance. The results further indicate that having optimistic assumptions of student academic performance, norms shared by educators and good incidences among educators boost student academic performance.

Additionally, supportive leadership and emphasis on a shared ideology among learners boosted academic performance. Ngumuta et al. (2022) concluded that a positive school culture motivates students to work harder, boosting their academic expectations and esteem. The study recommended the involvement of students in school activities and ensuring that teachers and learners collaborate to ensure a friendly learning environment for learners. The study also emphasized the role of school principals in ensuring that teachers and students work together to achieve better academic performance. The studies by Ngumuta et al. (2022) and Bulowa et al. (2023) agree that a positive culture impacts students' academic performance. Positive cultures such as a strong mission, vision, and good leadership are essential for better academic performance as they motivate and push students to work harder.

Kering and Kessio (2023) also conducted a study to determine the role of school culture on the academic performance of secondary students in public schools in the Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education (KCSE) in Nandi Central Sub-county, Nandi County. The study found a significant relationship between school culture and performance in KCSE. Some important aspects of school cultures associated with better academic performance are the school policies, rules and regulations, mission, vision and motto. Giving assessment exams to students regularly also contributed to better KCSE results for students in public schools in the Nandi central sub-county. Kering and Kessio (2023) also added that a high concern for students and teachers, positive academic expectations and distribution of learning resources and opportunities help to

ensure physical and emotional safety for learners and teachers, which is essential for good academic performance. Oyoo et al. (2020) also investigated the relationship between school culture and academic performance of secondary schools in Awendo Sub-County, Migori County in Kenya. The study employed the management theory and found that students and teachers with higher mean ratings for strongly agreeing to statements on school norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, rituals, and ceremonies had higher KCSE mean scores. Oyoo et al. (2020) recommend that the government provide adequate learning and teaching resources for students and teachers in public schools. They also add that the active involvement of parents and the community in education would also help boost students' academic performance. A positive attitude towards teaching and learning among teachers and students would also boost academic performance in KCSE. Kering and Kessio (2023) and Oyoo et al. (2020) agree that school culture significantly affects academic performance. A strong school mission, vision, norms, values, and beliefs positively affect the KCSE results of secondary schools.

Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

Scholars have provided different definitions of the learning environment. Malik and Rizvi (2018) define it as the physical and social contexts in which students learn. According to Baranova et al. (2021), the environment encompasses all physical resources and objects that aid students in learning. Other scholars, such as Bal-Taştan et al. (2018), expanded the scope of analysis to include not just the traditional concept of human resources but also the interpersonal dynamics between students and staff inside educational environments. Bal-Taştan et al. (2018) noted that a good learning environment fosters robust relationships among many stakeholders, leading to

substantial effects on learning outcomes. Equally, Baranova et al. (2021) argue that the classroom learning environment is a major contributor to students' performance since it directly defines students' well-being, offering a safe haven in which to grow or an educational establishment that they detest attending. According to Zainuddin et al. (2018), when school administrators empower teachers and redistribute responsibilities to encourage participatory leadership, they initiate a chain reaction that leads to the creation of a favourable learning environment. The favourable connection between the principal and the employees helps to foster a similar situation between faculty and students, likely to result in a favourable atmosphere for academic performance. According to Baranova et al. (2021), school stakeholders (management, school staff, and students) generally recognise the significance of providing an atmosphere in which all of them can prosper. The obligation for cultivating this climate, nevertheless, primarily falls on school heads, who are expected to encourage dialogue between every set of stakeholders to reduce confrontations and strengthen collaboration.

As a school principal, building positive relationships between students and parents is crucial to promoting an effective learning environment. Zainuddin et al. (2018) assert that establishing strong connections is an ongoing endeavour that requires unwavering dedication from school administrators. Building positive relationships means school heads should understand their students' personalities, including their weaknesses, strengths, likes, and dislikes. School heads who understand their students from the early phase of an academic year can easily support them individually and as a group to achieve better performance. Similarly, the positive relationship means that school principals are able to supply all the materials and resources that are likely to improve the general performance of the student. Taylor and Richards (2018) and Lehl

et al. (2020) explored strategies that school heads can use to build rapport with parents. The authors observed that school heads should take time to communicate with parents through physical meetings, messages, and apps on the behaviour of their children in schools. Such a strategy helps parents understand how their children learn, their learning weaknesses and strengths, and the areas the children need help with to improve their performance.

Malik and Rizvi (2018) observe that while the creation of a conducive learning environment is not solely the responsibility of one individual, school heads play a critical role in providing guidance and the general direction that the institution should take. As a result, Lehl et al. (2020) argue that school heads must create an environment that is socially favourable to teaching and learning. According to Daily et al. (2019), school principals must establish an effective and well-comprehended whole-school strategy for behaviour to ensure solutions exist to eradicate poor behaviour. School heads must address any behaviour that detracts students and teachers from social and academic success. Additionally, school principals must address any behaviour that weakens the self-esteem of students and employees to nurture a conducive learning environment for good performance. Lehl et al. (2020) shared some strategies that school principals can use to optimise behaviour to promote a positive social learning environment. School heads should hire committees and highly visible employees with ambitious goals.

Additionally, school heads should communicate clear and specific expectations that are clearly understood by students, their parents/guardians, and employees. The school principals should also clearly outline the school culture and maintain high levels of support. Such strategies promote a positive learning environment and enhance student performance.

The perspective is also significant since some school heads operate public schools while others, for instance, operate private or mission schools managed by the Catholic Church. Due to resource constraints, public school administrators tend to use managers' leadership strategies to facilitate an enabling atmosphere, whilst mission school administrators tend to use visionary leadership, which would be more attuned to their religious mission. The issue is that irrespective of accessibility; principals have tools and strategies at their discretion to create favourable learning environments. Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) explored the correlation between the organisational environment in elementary and secondary schools and the quality of work produced by school staff. They revealed that the principal's proactive attitude towards fostering a positive school environment was even more crucial than teachers' behaviour and attitude since the principal exerted more power and authority among interested parties. Toropova et al. (2021) define the school environment as a structured setting where students and staff feel valued and are motivated to pursue the school's goals without any disruptions. From this standpoint, the school environment pertains to the culture and conditions in which pupils are expected to function.

A school curriculum should be designed in a manner that makes students emotionally prepared to learn. Daily et al. (2019) explored the role of an emotional learning environment. Zainuddin et al. (2018) found that creating an appropriate emotional atmosphere enables students to recognise the need to study in order to achieve a certain academic level. A learning environment that considers the emotions of students also enables students to develop an independent love for learning. School principals should thus motivate students to become independent and resilient so that they can easily manage challenges in the school that may hinder good performance. Taylor and Richards (2018) state that motivating students to become high achievers can

be challenging, especially because people's motivation experience is usually unconscious. Unmotivated students are usually disengaged, which can cause challenging behaviour and poor academic performance. Daily et al. (2019) also linked the emotional learning environment to the ability to create a sense of belonging among the students. In this case, school principals can create a sense of belonging through open and honest conversations and by including students through their representatives in the decision-making process. The findings imply that in a positive learning environment, students and teachers are likely to be more involved in learning, which has an impact on their attendance and commitment to learning.

Baranova et al. (2021) suggest that school principals could significantly improve the school environment by engaging different stakeholders and incorporating their suggestions and ideas during the decision-making process. According to Daily et al. (2019), the incorporation of different stakeholders is meant to ensure that the external stakeholders and the school community work together in a mutualistic symbiosis, with students benefitting from the collaborations. Based on observations by Taylor and Richards (2018), the stakeholders could include scholastic communities seeking to assist the institution in different aspects of learning. Similarly, involving professionals and policymakers is important in ensuring that teachers and support staff are comfortable with the terms of work. In this case, an environment that provides comfortable terms of work is likely to have better student academic performance, given that teachers are supported with all the necessary resources required to effectively discharge their duties. When stakeholders feel that the school encourages the achievement of student academic success, they are likely to be more supportive of the operations and activities within the institution.

Research on the aspects that influence effective school environments that lead to high- and low-performing learning facilities revealed that the better-performing institutions had improved surroundings, social culture, and classroom atmosphere (Baranova et al., 2021). This assumes that there are unquantifiable aspects that affect an institution's environment. Malik and Rizvi (2018) examined the impact of the school learning environment with a focus on classroom interactions. They found that student engagement was higher in environments that would be considered to be positive.

Baranova et al. (2021) define good learning environments as those that prioritise the establishment of a student-centred atmosphere. Such an environment places the needs and interests of students first while involving them in the decision-making process at the same time. The classroom environment and interactions, in this case, also involve specific ways in which tutors conduct activities such as group work, pair work, and individual presentations. According to Baranova et al. (2021), the school administrator is responsible for creating a favourable atmosphere to successfully carry out these tasks. An optimal classroom setting would effectively facilitate the process of acquiring knowledge.

Instructional Leadership and Student Performance

The role of instructional leadership and its impact on learning outcomes have attracted empirical investigations among scholars (Gatama et al., 2023; Mutisya et al., 2022; Juma et al., 2023). Khan et al. (2020) found this type of leadership to be a major determinant of the quality of education and the performance of students in public secondary schools. Mutisya et al. (2022) found that school principals have largely focused on administrative tasks and foregone aspects of pedagogical tasks. The existing empirical evidence on the topic has been framed through a contrasting framework of

findings. For example, Gatama et al. (2023) found that instructional leadership has a direct influence on student performance. However, Juma et al. (2023) indicated that the relationship between instructional leadership and student performance would only occur through mediation. At the same time, the above findings indicate that there is a relationship between instructional leadership and student performance; there is a lack of a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Mora-Ruano et al. (2021) conducted a study on instructional leadership and its impact on student performance in Germany. The study made use of structural equation modelling and included principals, teachers and students from secondary and vocational schools in the country. The study used students' scores in the fields of Mathematics and Reading to measure students' performance. Study results indicate that the instructional leadership offered by the school principals did not directly influence students' performance, as the relations between instructional leadership and student scores returned a standard coefficient of -0.117. The study results, however, found instructional leadership to have an indirect effect on student performance through teacher collaboration (standard co-efficient = 0.273). The results of this study seem to cast doubt on the direct relationship between instructional leadership and students' performance. The current study sought to examine this relationship through mixed methods research that also involves an in-depth evaluation of the perceptions of school principals on the impacts of instructional leadership to definitely establish the existence or lack of a relationship between the two facets.

Da'as (2022) examined the relationship between school principals' cognitive levels, leadership approaches, and student performance in Israel. The study included a sample of 341 principals and 3,209 teachers drawn from 32 secondary schools in Israel. Findings indicated that instructional leadership style influences student performance.

School principals who employed instructional leadership displayed good social behaviour in managing their school curriculum, leading to better student performance. Further, Da'as (2022) observed that school principals had limited time for active teaching. The findings align with Kiptum (2018), who found that school heads in public secondary schools in Baringo County spend more than 60% of their time on administrative duties. In their study, Da'as (2022) indicated that although school principals employing instructional leadership are competent in monitoring teachers' performance, they fail to examine pedagogical activities in the school. Consistent with Da'as (2022), Mora-Ruano et al. (2021) observed that although instructional principals are effective in assessing technical aspects of the school, such as planning, they are less competent in instructional tasks. The above indicates no direct link between student performance and instructional leadership approach. The empirical study by Da'as (2022) on the influence of instructional leadership and student performance could be applied to the current status of instructional leadership in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties, especially with respect to functions such as supervising teachers, monitoring student performance and promoting a positive learning environment by the principals. This study, therefore, sought to examine whether instructional roles have a direct impact on student performance.

Rodrigues and Ávila de Lima (2021) explored the influence of instructional leadership on student academic achievement in Portuguese using a mixed-method approach. Rodrigues and Ávila de Lima examined whether school principals' characteristics had an influence on how well they enacted instructional leadership and the impact on student achievement. Findings indicated that school principals' experience in managing administrative roles has a significant impact on how they enact instructional leadership. The study indicated that school principals' experience and

quality of values are associated with effectiveness in enacting instructional leadership and, consequently, better student performance. Findings outlined by Rodrigues and Ávila de Lima (2021) imply that highly experienced principals would have better instructional leadership capabilities that would improve student outcomes. Mosley (2020) applied a mixed-method approach to explore how instructional leadership influence student performance. The study indicated a weak relationship between instructional leadership and student performance. The argument by Mosley (2020) suggests that the influence of principal instructional leadership on student performance would be best understood through the capability of the school head to effectively oversee key performance indicators of teachers and administrative members. The above implies that the effectiveness of school principal instructional leadership on student achievement is determined by how well the school head creates a conducive learning environment, as modelled in this study.

Similarly, in Makueni County, Kenya, Ndambuki (2020) sought to examine the influence of instructional practices by school principals on student academic performance. The study focused on a sample of principals and teachers to determine the influence of their instructional practices on the performance of students in KCSE examinations. Ndambuki (2020) established the influence of instructional leadership practices by school principals, which revolved around setting goals that determine student performance, supervising staff members, promoting their professional development, and creating a positive learning environment. The above observations are consistent with Riani and Ain (2022), who noted that school principals play a noble role in setting school goals that determine a school's strategic direction. However, Riani and Ain (2022) explained that although school principals have a key role in formulating clear goals to steer their schools in a successful direction, school heads must consider

the interests and concerns of teachers and students while setting the goals. Riani and Ain emphasised that considering the interests of teachers and students while setting instructional goals and targets is associated with optimal cooperation, where teachers, students and school heads work in harmony towards the realisation of the set goals.

Besides goal setting, Ndambuki (2020) observes that the effect of instructional leadership practices on student academic performance could be linked to the supervision of teachers and ensuring that their instructional practices reflect the required standards of learning. The findings by Ndambuki (2020) are consistent with Kartini et al. (2020), who found that school principals' supervision actions are positively correlated with student academic performance in public secondary schools. Ndambuki (2020) and Kartini et al. (2020) observed that school principals could enhance instructional practices by supervising instructional materials used by teachers, including lesson notes and schemes of work. The implication of the above is that school heads are able to identify possible areas with challenges that may require their professional guidance. The assistance offered at this point is critical in improving the standard of learning.

According to Francisco and Celon (2020), instructional practices adopted by school principals can also contribute to improved student academic performance by enabling staff members to develop their knowledge, skills and capabilities. There is a consensus between Francisco and Celon (2020) and Ndambuki (2020) that the effectiveness of instructional practices by the school heads could be based on how well the members of the teaching staff are able to implement the approaches enacted by the principals. The ability of teachers to effectively apply the instructional practices from the principal could be based on their knowledge and skills in different subject areas. Towards this end, school principals could organise in-house training sessions where

staff members are trained on different ways in which they could effectively improve and perform their work roles. Badrun et al. (2022) highlighted that the effectiveness of school heads in enacting instructional leadership is also determined by how well the school principal acts as a role model in the effort to motivate the teaching and non-teaching staff towards specific activities that would promote their career growth to inspire better performance. In this case, school principals who are more advanced in their careers are more likely to inspire staff members towards professional growth.

The influence of instructional practices on student academic performance could also be based on the ability of school principals to provide a conducive environment that would support teachers seeking professional development (Francisco & Celon, 2020). The above could also involve creating an environment where teachers are supported to enrol in courses and training aimed at improving their competencies while continuing with their duties within the institutions. Eventually, teachers who are able to take more training and instruction-related courses will be able to offer better quality instruction, which would be helpful in improving the general performance of students. Creating the environment above ensures that students are provided with the necessary support and resources as they seek to deepen their knowledge in various areas of instruction.

Kiptum (2018) also sought to examine the association between instructional leadership and student performance. The study used a sample of secondary school teachers drawn from all the public schools in Baringo County, Kenya. The responses made by teachers were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Student performance was measured through an evaluation of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results over the last five years. The study used Spearman Correlation to establish the relationship between instructional leadership and student performance. The results

return a low positive correlation between the two variables with $r = 0.165$. Despite the low correlation, the study concluded that effective instructional leadership from school principals would improve the performance of the students in national examinations. However, it is not clear how the concept of instructional leadership was measured in this study. Kiptum (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between instructional leadership and student performance in Baringo County; however, there remains a gap with regard to the relationship between the two variables in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties.

Irungu (2020) examined the impact of educational leadership by school principals on the performance of secondary school students in Kirinyaga and Murang'a counties. The study used a sample of 205 principals and 367 teachers. The study found that the school heads had specific instructional roles, such as supervising teachers and promoting collaborative working, that had a direct impact on student performance. The current study has moved beyond the findings made by Irungu (2020) to assess the impact of the principal instructional leadership with a focus on the role of the school head in communicating the mission, supervising and managing curriculum programs, as well as promoting a positive learning environment. Unlike previous studies on the topic, the current study has analysed student views on the instructional roles of school heads and their impact on performance. The study sought to fill the existing knowledge gap in the moderating effect of organisational culture among the public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties.

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Instructional Leadership Practices and Student Performance

Previous studies have shown that organisational culture has an impact on student performance in a school institution setting (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Liu et al.,

2021). Authors, however, have focused on the role of school culture in the creation of an enabling environment for student success (Liu et al., 2021). Organisational culture in this context has been defined as a unique living style that differentiates one learning institution from another (Leithwood & Sun, 2018). A strong school culture is developed through the actions of the school leadership and management, who come together to create shared values and beliefs. Culture is usually created over time as the school leadership, teachers, and students work together through various issues. Leithwood and Sun (2018) believe that the way in which school principals deal with crises and accomplishments creates a culture that is practised in the institution. The strategies taken by school leadership at such points shape the way the entire institution thinks and acts and eventually become the culture.

According to Leithwood and Sun (2018), the impact of organisational culture on school performance could be explained in the context of factors that are required to create an effective learning environment. Such an environment would be best achieved through the intervening role of the school head (Leithwood & Sun, 2018). Liu et al. (2021) agree with Leithwood and Sun (2018) that school principals have a role in creating an orderly and work-centred school culture that would support learning. The scholars believe that such an environment is made possible by creating a culture of work and observing institutional ethos. Such ethos includes recognition for academic challenges and performances where students and teachers are rewarded for exemplary performance and granted specialised support to mitigate the challenges.

Some scholars, such as Grissom et al. (2021), examined the approaches used by school heads to create positive school cultures that support learning. According to Grissom et al. (2021), the culture can be created through clear and consistent communication by school principals on the specific norms and values of the institution.

Grissom et al. (2021) agree with Leithwood and Sun (2018) that consistent communication of such values means that they are easily applicable to students and teachers. Similarly, Liu et al. (2021) argue that to create sustainable school cultures, school heads must be positive role models for teachers and students within the institution. Based on Liu et al. (2021), school heads with high levels of professionalism easily create positive cultures, which have an impact on student academic achievement. Harris and Jones (2018) noted that the school's organisational culture could also be created through creative collaboration with different stakeholders. According to Harris and Jones (2018), the stakeholders provide crucial insights into what specific changes and resources are required to improve student academic performance.

Khan (2022) argues that while school principals have a significant role in improving learning within an institution, their activities and behaviours may not have a direct impact on the learning process. According to Khan (2022), the actions of the school principals must be mediated by other factors such as the school culture and climate. The findings by Khan (2022) are consistent with observations by scholars such as Karadag (2020), who found that behaviours by school principals may not have a direct effect on student outcomes. Both Karadag (2020) and Khan (2022) link the effects of the principal school leadership to the moderating effects of other organisational and cultural factors within the institutions. Equally, instructional practices by school principals have a weak impact on student outcomes (Jain et al., 2021). Paseka and Schwab (2020) also made similar observations by indicating that the impact of school heads on student outcomes is indirect and dependent on the effect that the principal has on teacher practices. For instance, school principals who, through their leadership approach, are able to create a learning and hardworking culture could indirectly influence the performance of students. The findings are an indication that the

school culture could moderate the relationship between instructional leadership practices by the school heads and the student's academic outcomes.

Empirical research was conducted by Jamali et al. (2022) to examine the moderating impact of school organisational culture from the context of a relationship that occurs as a result of positive school culture. The findings by Jamali et al. (2022) are an indication of the significance of school organisational culture in fostering positive relationships between school management, students, teachers and parents. The above has been seen to be an important contributor to the success and academic achievements of students. According to Liu et al. (2021), it would be difficult for the actions and leadership behaviours of school principals to have a direct positive influence on student outcomes in institutions where there are poor relationships between students and teachers. Similarly, instructional activities by school heads could have a limited impact on student performance in institutions where there are disconnects between the teachers and the management. The observations by Jamali et al. (2022) and Liu et al. (2021) imply that for the actions of school principals to have a direct influence on learning, they must be supported by a culture that allows collaborative working between different stakeholders within the institution. Creating a culture that supports positive relationships assists in developing trust among the stakeholders, which creates stronger collaborations among the members.

Liu et al. (2021) agree with Bellibas et al. (2020) that the instructional leadership of the school principal could affect student performance indirectly through direct effects of moderating factors such as organisational culture. Liu et al. (2021) believe that instructional leadership is paramount in creating a school where teachers collaborate to improve learning outcomes. Some scholars, such as Karadag (2020), conducted meta-analysis studies to explore the impacts of instructional practices by school heads on

student academic performance. The conclusion made from the analysed articles is that the school culture could moderate the link between school leadership and student outcomes. The intermediary effect of the school culture is also evident in more recent studies, including Khan (2022) and Paseka and Schwab (2020). The findings imply that an appropriate institution must support the leadership practices of school heads. However, school heads also have a role in ensuring that they create a positive culture and schooling environment that supports learning.

Cansoy et al. (2020) argue that instructional leadership offered by school principals not only improves the performance of the teachers but could also affect the outcomes of the students directly. For instance, school principals who focus on doing the right things for the students rather than merely managing them are likely to witness higher performance levels (Cansoy et al., 2020). For the preceding to be achieved, there must be a culture which creates perceptions of trust among the students who feel supported to work harder. Cansoy et al. (2020) argued that school culture is a reflection of the existing school management and that a positive school culture improves student performance.

The concept of organisational culture and its impact on student outcomes could also be explained in the context of creating collaborations (Bellibaş et al., 2020). According to Bellibaş et al. (2020), schools where the organisational culture supports teacher collaboration are likely to have better performance. Collaboration in this context could be explained in terms of sharing instructional materials, working jointly towards the implementation of the school curriculum, discussing specific cases affecting the students and developing standard ways of assessment. Findings by Hargreaves (2021) indicate that every collaboration activity in the learning institution lies within the role of school principals in the administration of the school curriculum

and the creation of a supportive school environment. In this context, it means that it would be the role of the principal as the school head to create a supportive culture that would allow teachers to collaborate easily and work towards improving student performance. Under a supportive school culture created by the instructional leadership of the school principal, teachers would have open discussions about areas of difficulty and work together towards solving issues affecting the students (Anderson, 2017; Bellibas et al., 2020). Such factors would be described as strong predictors of student performance.

Findings from empirical studies described above show that instructional leadership can increase student performance by creating a supportive school environment. An appropriate culture must support such an environment. In such ways, culture becomes a moderating factor between instructional leadership and student performance. This study, therefore, sought to investigate whether the culture of an organisation can moderate each of the above variables. According to Liu et al. (2020), organisational culture involves the widespread occurrence of morals, ideologies, and traditions that impact how the staff feels, perceives and continues to act while executing their mandates. According to Hassan et al. (2022), organisational culture executes four basic roles: it presents members with a sense of authenticity, enhances dedication, serves to reinforce the values of the organisation, and serves as a method of shaping behaviour. Organisational culture can advance an institution's performance, increase job satisfaction of the workforce, and provide a sense of assurance about conflict resolution.

Hou et al. (2019) caution that the organisational culture adopted in schools must have a long-term developmental impact on an institution in order to be considered

sustainable. According to Hou et al. (2019), it is possible that some norms can only be practised over a short period, after which the school community stops or moves forward to other cultures. Equally, the applicability of such cultures and their long-term impact on the organisation are dependent on the approaches used by the school heads and how well the principals are able to implement instructional practices. Therefore, the ability of the school heads to implement appropriate instructional practices is based on how well they understand the schooling environment and their ability to change the specific elements that could influence the performance of students.

Based on findings by McBrayer (2020), instructional leadership is best supported by transformational principals who can motivate and empower teachers to assume more responsibilities for improving school performance. Liu et al. (2021) found that when teachers have more voice and are supported to achieve institutional goals, they are more likely to collaborate for better student outcomes. Based on findings by both Liu et al. (2021) and McBrayer (2020), school heads can only succeed in their role of instructional leadership if they are able to find appropriate variables that would contribute to the performance of students. For instance, while the school principal could be willing to let students and teachers work according to their abilities, the real impact of such principals is dependent on the culture adopted in the institutions and whether it would be supportive of such practices. However, the moderating effect of school organisational culture, as indicated above, does not undermine the role of school principals since they must act as change agents for the efficient implementation of cultural factors that would eventually influence student outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical models and frameworks offer a systematic approach to describing and explaining the subject under study in the context of existing literature. The

theoretical framework in this section is purposively constructed to assist in identifying the elements of instructional leadership that emanate from each of the selected theories. The framework provided a structure that assisted the researcher in defining key concepts and defining relevant theories associated with the study (Northouse, 2021). In this regard, this research assumes various leadership theories. Leadership is an indispensable constituent of organisational feat, suggesting that various constructs were applied to underscore the philosophy and epistemology of instructional leadership using analytical and methodological approaches that are suitable within the realm of knowledge construction (Arina et al., 2023). For the researcher to test the research hypothesis, this study espouses the participative, behavioural and transformational leadership theories. The study uses leadership theories to define the motives why particular individuals become leaders and which features are necessary for defining leadership qualities. Furthermore, leadership theories outline people's characteristics and attempt to explain the code of conduct or traits that individuals should espouse with a view to advance influence on their cohorts and, by extension, enhance their leadership aptitudes, as outlined below.

Participative Leadership Theory

Northouse (2021) put forward the Participative Leadership Model, often identified as the democratic leadership principle, which states that leaders should engage junior personnel directly in policy-making and management inside their organisations. Participatory leadership entails the engagement of every member in decision-making. Based on the theory, every group is made equal while reaching a consensus. As stated by Cansoy et al. (2020), participation entails every situation in which staff are given full explanations of the decisions that are to be made by the management. Participative Leadership Theory, according to Sagie et al. (2002), is

considered the best leadership practice in the present corporate atmosphere in South Africa since it generates high-level outcomes among employees. Li et al. (2018) found that implementing a participatory leadership style enables staff members to express their perspectives, leading to increased employee commitment. According to Li et al. (2018), participative leaders promote involvement and interactions within the company and then seek and apply the most effective solutions to address challenges.

The Participative Leadership Model is appropriate in school management because the fundamental functions of a school principal encompass outlining the core purpose of the school, which consists of conveying the institution's vision and objectives and interpreting the school's goals. The advantage of this model entails allowing staff members to own resolutions and collaborate regardless of potential disagreements among members. As a result, there is an improvement in student performance and the quality of instruction at the institution. The findings of the research conducted by Mehdipour and MohebiKia (2019) suggest that implementing the theory can enhance schools and enhance student achievement by fostering collaboration among administrators, instructors, and students. The evidence above, therefore, makes the theory applicable to the study. In their study, Arina et al. (2023) investigated the implementation of the participatory leadership style within a school environment. Arina et al. (2023) found that leadership techniques empower school administrators to engage stakeholders and staff members of different hierarchical positions in the decision-making process.

However, Cansoy et al. (2020) argued that participatory leadership should not be partial for maximum productivity. Full participation only exists when every member of an institution or decision-making body is given equal rights to analyse the outcome of deliberations associated with different decisions. In a different research, Banjarnahor

et al. (2018) noted that leadership in institutions should be an interactive process. Lack of proper interaction and proper channels of communication may lead to confusion among key stakeholders in an organisation. On the contrary, Saleem et al. (2020) highlight that the management style should inform staff on what to do without seeking their opinions. According to Arina et al. (2023), principals of schools that use the participatory leadership method are more likely to put staff recommendations into practice when it comes to ways to enhance the school and classroom environment, which benefits the students' performance.

The management must seek crucial information from staff and other key stakeholders in an institution. Based on research conducted by Saleem et al. (2020), learning institutions tend to work more effectively with formally centralised networks. Equally, within the school setup, participative leadership allows problem-solving to happen with speed and flexibility that may not be achieved by a pattern of communication that involves a leader who gives an impression of power without listening to the opinions and views of others. According to Cansoy et al. (2020), an effective communication pattern must be designed with reference to the goals that are considered to be most important to an institution. Cansoy et al. (2020) assert that institutions must have some kind of interaction and socialisation as they play a crucial role in promoting effective communication. Cansoy et al. (2020) further state that the characteristics of principals and their relationship with the public have a great impact on school management. According to Banjarnahor et al. (2018), positive interpersonal relations enhance participative leadership in institutions as the management is able to create an environment in which every staff acts to protect their interests. Equally, interpersonally competent school principals enable the staff to challenge their views and question every institution's norms and policies. The above is crucial as it enhances

the discovery of challenges and commitment to solving them, thus maximising institutional effectiveness.

Behavioral Leadership Theory

Burnes (2021) notes that Behavioral leadership theory emerged in the 1930s and 1940s as a response to the limitations of trait theories of leadership. Researchers such as Kurt Lewin, Rensis Likert, and Douglas McGregor began to study the specific behaviours and actions of leaders rather than their innate characteristics while considering the effects of different leadership styles on group performance and satisfaction. According to Cansoy et al. (2020), managerial attributes may be transferred, enabling unsuccessful leaders to become gradually effective. Leaders can be better adapted to learn leadership qualities through interacting with several staff. As a result, leadership attributes can be acquired through learnable activities. This suggests that a leader's behaviour is the strongest indicator of success and quality. The theory positions an individual's deeds as central to leadership rather than their inherent traits. According to Burnes (2021), Kurt Lewin is one of the proponents of the Behavioral Leadership Theory via his work concerning the effects of different leadership styles on group behaviour and performance, specifically, by comparing the three types of leadership: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, Lewin and his colleagues found that democratic leadership, which involved participative decision-making and mutual respect, resulted in higher productivity, satisfaction, and morale than autocratic or laissez-faire leadership (Burnes, 2021). This means that the behaviours of educational leadership, such as active participation and mutual respect, are instrumental in the performance of students in public secondary schools and the prevailing organisational culture. Northouse (2021) reinforces these claims by highlighting the significance of leaders always striving to showcase appropriate and satisfactory behaviours since they

are prerequisites for the success of the organisation. However, the behavioural leadership theory is implicated in suffering from various weaknesses. According to Uslu (2019), this theoretical approach often overlooks the influence of situational factors on leadership by assuming that the same leader's behaviours are effective in all contexts and circumstances, regardless of the nature of the task, the characteristics of the followers, or the environmental conditions. Additionally, the ambiguity in defining behaviours of effective leadership due to subjectivity and context-dependence is highlighted to limit the applicability of this theory (Uslu, 2019). Nonetheless, despite these glaring limitations, Kishore (2021) argues that the behavioural leadership theory provides a practical framework for understanding and improving leadership. Chiefly, it identifies specific behaviours that leaders can adopt or modify to enhance their effectiveness and influence, thus suggesting that leadership can be learned and developed through training and feedback. Therefore, the integration of the behavioural leadership theory in this research cultivates a detailed exploration of the link between educational leadership and the performance of students in public secondary schools, as well as the moderating effect of organisational culture.

According to Conger (2015), organisational leaders should have certain characteristic features that include being task-oriented and people-oriented, which are prerequisites for the success of the organisation. The behavioural leadership model has been extensively used throughout administrative management since it explicitly states the set of leadership qualities that a leader must possess if the institution is to fulfil its foreseen objectives (Lussier & Achua, 2015). This suggests that leaders are not essentially born as leaders; rather, people can attain or learn leadership abilities from interactions with their supporters. Additionally, the theory underlines the need for leaders to influence learning and teaching since their actions and behaviours are vital

to enabling organisations to advance their performance (Northouse, 2021). In this regard, leaders in public secondary schools ought to exemplify good leadership traits such as open communication, empathy, flexibility, conflict resolution, and time management in the execution of duties to be emulated by their staff.

One of the possible factors that explain behavioural leadership style is the leader's self-perception. A study by Yalçınkaya et al. (2021) found that school principals with perceptions of their leadership style that were related to the perceptions of their followers were most successful. Under the behavioural leadership style, the leaders who underestimate their leadership behaviours are perceived less favourably by their staff compared to those who overestimate their leadership behaviours.

In the case of school leadership, Wirawan et al. (2019) suggest that successful leaders who are achievement-oriented must give opportunities to staff to achieve, thus contributing to quality education for the whole school community. Wirawan et al. (2019) further highlight different actions that are imperative to enabling learning institutions to achieve maximum productivity. An example is empowering the team towards a collective vision and promotion of inquiry and dialogue. According to Çelik and Konan (2021), principal leadership is one of the factors that have been considered to be a driving force towards school organisations to achieve their goals. Behavioural leadership requires the school leader to encourage the optimal performance of staff and other stakeholders through a variety of mentoring processes, coaching and supervision. Çelik and Konan (2021) state that leadership activities must enhance the improvement of the quality of school services to students. Therefore, the application of behavioural leadership strategies is one of the significant keys to the success of school principals in the encouragement and improvement of performance in teachers' and students' learning and achievements.

Yalçınkaya et al.'s (2021) study suggests that Behavioural Leadership Theory proposes principal leadership behaviours such as open communication, integrity, accountability and conflict resolution in different situations. Similarly, Çelik and Konan (2021) suggest that school leaders must be accountable and exhibit integrity in the preparation of program activities and guidelines. Equally, the staff must be involved in policy implementation and evaluation of programs regularly. While instilling trust in teachers as credible leaders, behavioural leadership requires principals to implement long-life learning, innovate and advocate for ways to improve student's educational experience to teachers and education personnel and become responsive to criticism. Equally, they must try to recognise the characteristics of each teacher so that they analyse the actions needed to serve and meet their needs.

The Behavioural Leadership Theory is relevant to this study because it accentuates that leadership abilities and/or behaviours can be learnt. These behaviours can be classified as task behaviours and relationship behaviours, whereby the equilibrium of those behaviours is key to strong leadership (Northouse, 2021). In the school context, applying the Behavioural Leadership Theory would involve the school principals setting a pace regarding the different approaches to work within the institutions. For instance, students and teachers could learn the attributes of collaboration from the school principals, which could be replicated in their respective activities. Collaboration between students and teachers would improve the overall learning experience, which would also improve the performance of the individual students (Hanushek, 2016). The collaboration aspect learnt from the school principal could also be applied to the students where they work and learn from each other. Therefore, based on the theory, students and teachers could adopt a different set of behaviours from the school leadership, which could improve their productivity.

Transformational leadership Theory

The transformational leadership style has been one of the most effective methods of managing learning institutions over the past few years (Francisco, 2019). The theory was established by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 to describe the prominence of transformational leaders in organisations. He contrasted it with transactional leadership, which is based on exchanges and rewards by linking transformational leadership to moral values and social change. Burns further stated that job satisfaction among staff could be improved by changing the way administration is done. According to Kwan (2019), transformational leadership theory is a model of leadership that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve a shared vision and goals. Transformational leaders exhibit four dimensions of behaviour: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Additionally, Kwan (2019) argues that transformational leadership theory is not passé but rather complementary to instructional leadership, which accentuates the improvement of teaching and learning processes. She suggests that transformational leadership can enhance instructional leadership by creating a supportive and collaborative school culture, fostering teacher commitment and empowerment, and facilitating organisational learning and innovation. This seems to propose that a transformational method can adjust organisational influences since the participation of all members of the organisation makes them feel part of the team, thus boosting their self-esteem and subsequent fulfilment in their roles and responsibilities. The theory has broadly been viewed as the most utilised style, as the principals who apply it try to change and inspire the school community. As stated by Francisco (2019), the theory advocates the significance of motivating and inspiring individuals towards a common vision, along with insisting on the importance of relationships. Principals are

expected to have an interest in converting their staff into leaders. Lee and Kuo (2019) propose that transformational leadership should be grounded in the concept of inspiration and motivation of people towards a shared vision that leads to achieving goals at a higher standard. Lee and Kuo (2019) further argue that the leadership theory should allow the institution's stakeholders to work together to achieve a common goal. However, Garcia (2023) argues that this theory suffers from various weaknesses, such as negative effects on the creativity and autonomy of the followers due to increased dependence on the leader or the group. Also, it suffers from reduced applicability, especially in those that require quick decisions, clear guidance, or cases characterised by conflicting cultural values between the leadership and the followers. Therefore, the school heads should intentionally design collaborative structures within the learning institution, which should be culturally sensitive and inclusive of all students to support teaching and learning. An extensive study was conducted by Adarkwah and Zeyuan (2020) where over 100 leaders from several basic schools in the Eastern region of Ghana were involved, and their findings led to the creation of a leadership structure that identifies different exemplary management practices that are transformational such as inspiring a shared vision, modelling the way activities are done in school and challenging the process for effective teaching and learning. The above exemplary leadership practices must endure for the longest time possible despite the leadership context.

Lee and Kuo (2019) highlight that the leadership model should be identified by a set of unique qualities that should be clearly articulated and applied to different educational contexts. To build upon transformational leadership, Adarkwah and Zeyuan (2020) developed different principles of leadership that can enhance a framework for leaders to follow. According to Adarkwah and Zeyuan (2020),

transformation should not be anonymous with change, and therefore, it requires permission to change. Equally, transformational change should involve letting go of the myth of control and some aspects of life, such as risk, fear or loss. On the contrary, Francisco (2019) describes that transformational leadership in the institution should involve broadening the scope of worldview and should be taken as a step in the movement towards greater integrity of identity. However, leading an institution as a transformational leader can be stressful, especially in times of crisis. Principals should work to enhance the positive relationship with the staff in the building as the relationship between staff and principals is very significant to the success of the collaboration effort. Equally, transformational leadership practices should allow school administrators to inspire teachers' beliefs for maximum productivity. Research conducted by Francisco (2019) shows that the school heads who practised transformational leadership were able to provide practical assistance in the development of faculty knowledge and instructional skills, thus enabling the teachers to meet the needs of the students. Therefore, transformational leadership will require principals to learn from their failures as well as their successes and make it possible for others to do the same.

According to Zhang et al. (2021), leaders and staff are interdependent with the aim of boosting one another to greater heights by holding each other culpable for moral principles and encouragement. Through constant inspiration, both managers and all staff have to work their best for the benefit of the organisation. According to Hallinger and Walker (2014), the leadership model allows the school head to significantly boost additional instructional leadership abilities among the institution's employees, resulting in higher student performance. This theory is mainly concerned with curriculum implementation. Moreover, the concept has been shown to facilitate the formation of a

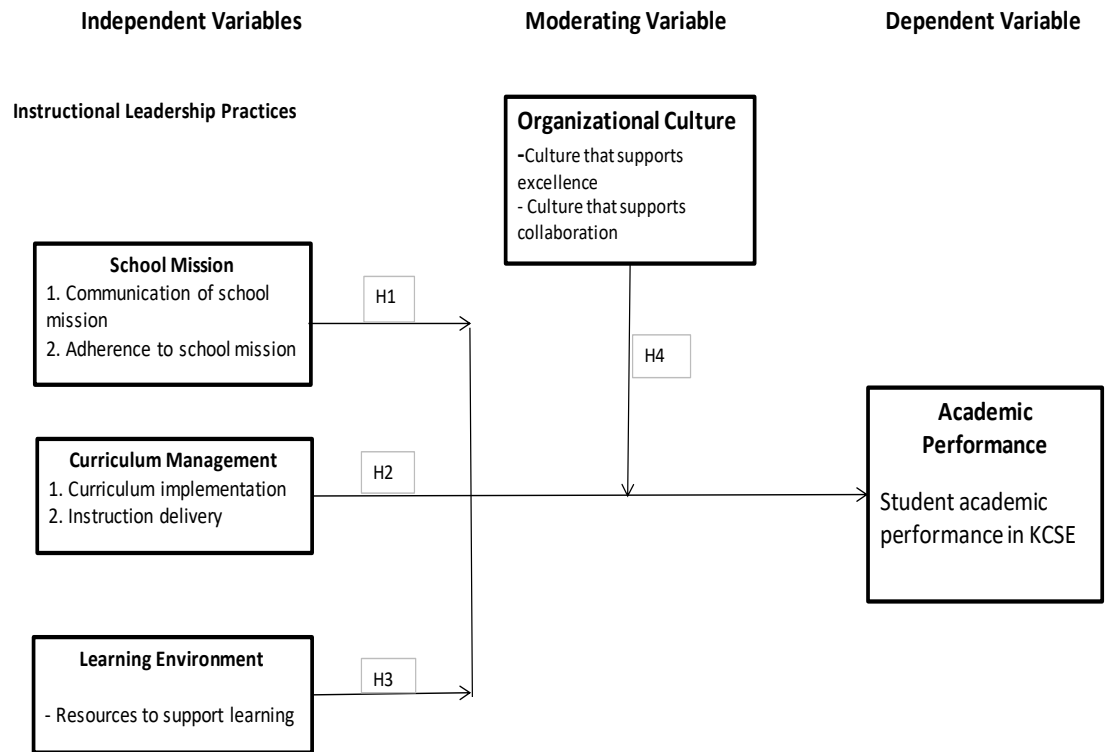
dynamic school ethos that teachers are willing to explore and aspire to match. Additionally, Matsunaga (2021) asserts that a transformational leader manages to achieve high success rates by collectively identifying the core and crucial aims of learning and teaching. As a result, the teaching staff's capacity emboldens the entire school community to become invigorated and motivated (Silvia et al., 2021).

The theory of transformational leadership, as espoused by Burns, is appropriate to this study since it underlines the significance of management groups providing calculated directions from the front. The theory depicts that transformational leadership generates positive change in organisations, whereby individual interests are assimilated to promote the interests of the team. This subsequently contributes to the overall performance of the intended goals and specified ethical standards. In the school setup, applying this theory would entail the school principals intellectually stimulating and inspiring their staff members to improve their productivity. As noted by Matsunaga (2021), transformational leaders take complete advantage of their administrative charisma to foster an organisational culture that inspires individuals to position the interests of the organisation ahead of individual interests.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 2) provided below demonstrates a hypothetical relationship between different variables introduced in the preceding sections that the researcher sought to study. Instructional leadership practices constitute the study's independent variable as indicated through the dimensions of principal school mission, curriculum management, and promoting a positive learning environment. The three dimensions represent key practices of the school heads as instructional leaders toward possible influence on students' performance. School mission, for instance, provides learners with a sense of purpose while motivating them

towards the school values and goals (Hatsuko & Wong, 2020). Motivated students are likely to have better academic performance (Hatsuko & Wong, 2020). In such ways, the school mission could be linked to performance. Curriculum management, on the other hand, is concerned with the quality of instruction offered by the institution. Effective management of the curriculum would be associated with improved academic performance, as noted by Schleiff et al. (2021). Similarly, the learning environment in terms of the resources available to support learning would also influence academic performance (Baranova et al. 2021). Ideally, institutions with improved access to infrastructural and educational resources are most likely to perform better academically. The success of these factors is, however, dependent on the leadership at the institutions. Ideally, the ability of school leaders to offer appropriate resources while implementing the school mission and curriculum would be associated with improved academic performance. As demonstrated in the framework, the study's dependent variable is student performance, which entails students' accomplishments that instructional leadership practices would facilitate. Organisational culture is the study's moderating variable, which is hypothesised to affect the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student performance, as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework above illustrates the relationship between instructional leadership and student performance with organisational culture as a moderating factor. The specific elements of organisational culture examined in the research include a culture that supports excellence and collaboration. The moderating impact of the variable forms the fourth hypothesis of the study (H₀₄). The conceptual framework defines three main dimensions of instructional leadership, which include school mission, curriculum management and a positive learning environment. Under the mission, it is the responsibility of the school principal to articulate the mission clearly and communicate it to the students and teachers clearly and understandably, as discussed in earlier sections in this chapter. The study hypothesises that having a clearly

articulated mission creates a sense of purpose, which improves student outcomes (H₀₁). Under curriculum management, it is the instructional role of the school principal to supervise the implementation of the curriculum by both students and teachers. The impact of the above could be measured through the KCSE performance of the students. The influence of curriculum management on student performance is hypothesised under H₀₂. While effective curriculum management could lead to improved student performance, the results would be better if an innovative and results-oriented organisational culture supported them. The next dimension involves creating a positive learning environment. Under this dimension, school principals have a role of protecting instructional time and creating a supportive environment that empowers both teachers and students to meet their goals. In this regard, the study also examines the influence of the learning environment on student performance (H₀₃).

Synthesis of Literature Gaps

The literature review has identified several gaps that could be filled in the current study. The gaps defined in the literature review could be divided into either conceptual, contextual, or methodological gaps. Conceptual gaps relate to the association between different concepts and variables examined in the study. For instance, a few studies have examined the relationship between instructional leadership by school principals and student academic performance (Gaziel, 2007; Kiptum, 2018). Irungu (2020) examined instructional practices for principals in secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Murang'a counties, Kenya, and found the practices to be effective predictors of learners' performance. However, there is limited evidence on the school organisational culture as a moderating factor in the relationship between instructional leadership and student academic performance. Existing studies on school organisational culture have only examined its direct influence on student academic performance

(Njuki, 2018). Conceptually, the current study was able to fill the gap by examining the moderating effect of school organisational culture on the relationship between instructional leadership and student academic performance.

The next focus is on the methodological gaps. Previous studies on the topic have used different research methodologies to meet the objective of the study. For instance, Scott et al. (2021) applied qualitative methods to examine the perceptions of teachers and noted that instructional practices by school principals influenced student performance. The focus on the perceptions of teachers made qualitative methodologies most appropriate for the research (Scott et al., 2021). In a different study, Ndambuki (2020) applied quantitative methods that involved the use of stratified sampling to reach out to a group of principals and teachers within the institution. The methods made it possible to examine the link between instructional leadership and student academic performance. Irungu (2020) applied mixed research methods and was limited to instructional practices among principals in Kirinyaga and Murang'a Counties, Kenya. To this end, there are no studies that applied mixed research methods to examine the impacts of instructional leadership practices by school principals in secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The use of mixed research methods in the current study was found to be appropriate in acquiring detailed information on the moderating effect of school organisational culture.

Contextual gaps are those related to the place where the study was conducted. Studies on instructional leadership and its impact on student academic performance in secondary schools in Kenya took place in different contexts using different methodological approaches, which implies that the findings cannot be generalised directly (Kiptum, 2018; Muema, 2021). As a result, there is limited evidence of the instructional leadership practices by the school principals in Kirinyaga and Nyeri

counties, Kenya. Specifically, studies conducted on the organisational culture across public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, have largely focused on the creation of a positive school culture and environment and its influence on performance (Kangangi, 2018). The gap in the moderating effect of student academic performance on the relationship between instructional leadership and student academic performance in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya therefore informed the current study.

Chapter Summary

The chapter commenced with a theoretical framework of various theories on instructional leadership. The chapter has further presented a review of the literature on the concepts of student performance and instructional leadership. On instructional leadership, the chapter has provided the instructional roles of the school principal and their influence on student performance. The roles include outlining and communicating the school mission, supervising and managing the implementation of the curriculum and promoting a positive learning environment. Each of the roles described above is defined as a dimension of instructional leadership. Findings from empirical literature have shown that instructional leadership has an indirect relationship with school performance. Through instructional leadership practices, school principals influence organisational culture, which impacts student performance. The conceptual framework used in the study shows the relationship between instructional leadership (independent variable) and student performance (dependent variable), with organisational culture as the moderating variable. The chapter also identifies gaps in knowledge and research in relation to instructional leadership and its impact on student performance. The next chapter presents the methods used to meet the study objectives. It outlines the philosophical stance of the study and the approach used to collect and analyse data.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The instructional practices adopted by the school principal are important determinants of the quality of education offered in the learning institution. Through the instructional practices offered, school principals can influence student academic performance in different ways, which include influencing the school mission statement, influencing the management of the school curriculum, and promoting a positive learning environment. The main objectives of the study included examining the impact of school mission, curriculum management, and learning environment on the student's academic performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties, Kenya. This chapter provides the research approach, methods, tools, and processes that the researcher used to fulfil the study objectives. The chapter further presents the research design, target population, sample size, data collection approach and instruments, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and challenges encountered by the researcher in this methodological journey. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Philosophy

A research philosophy provides a framework that guides how the research is conducted. According to Saunders et al. (2015), the framework is based on the

researcher's ideas about reality and the nature of knowledge. The philosophy adopted in this study is pragmatism (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). This theory accepts that there can be different realities which are open to empirical assessment. It further indicates that there are many ways of understanding the world and that there is no single way that could give a real interpretation of subjects. The adoption of this philosophy, therefore, allowed the researcher to use a combination of different approaches to have a better understanding of the subjects under research (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). This allowed the researcher to adopt mixed methods so as to establish an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Pragmatism research philosophy allows researchers to use deductive and inductive approaches to research. The former involves the formulation of hypotheses to test specific variables under study, while the latter begins with observations before making conclusions about the subject (Armat et al., 2018). By combining the two approaches, the study developed hypotheses on instructional approaches to leadership and examined patterns in interviews with the school principals. A combination of the approaches resulted in a broader understanding of the instructional practices used by school heads in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, and how that influences students' academic performance.

Research Design

The study made use of a concurrent mixed-method research design. This is a process of data collection and analysis which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data for the production of a comprehensive understanding of the subject being investigated (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Under this design, qualitative and quantitative data collection processes were conducted simultaneously using interviews and questionnaires, respectively. The design was found appropriate for the study given

that it allows the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under study compared to standalone qualitative or quantitative research. Given the differing views on the impact of instructional leadership on student performance, there was a need to employ both quantitative and qualitative data collection processes that would exhaustively provide evidence that would confirm or negate the subject under study.

Further, the use of both approaches of data collection allowed the researcher to avoid the shortcomings associated with the use of a single methodology (Creswell & Clark, 2011). For instance, it would have been difficult to generalise the findings drawn from a standalone qualitative study on the instructional practices used by principals in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya. Equally, by conducting quantitative research, it would have been difficult to acquire a detailed understanding of instructional practices used by principals in the selected learning institutions. The application of the mixed methods design, therefore, resulted in more comprehensive results and stronger evidence of the impact of instructional practices on student academic performance.

Target Population

According to Taherdoost (2016), a target population refers to a collection of individuals or elements that share similar specifications or characteristics. The specific participants who made up the target population in this study include students, teachers and principals across various secondary school institutions in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties. The participants were selected on the basis that they had experience with instructional practices that had an impact on their student performance. In both counties, there were a total of 376 public secondary schools categorised into four groups: 4 national schools, 39 extra-county schools, 49 county schools and 277 sub-

county secondary schools. The schools were categorised depending on their mode or approach to admission. For instance, national schools admit students from all over the country. On the other hand, extra-county schools admit students from different counties, while county and sub-county categories only include students from the respective counties and sub-counties. All of them presented candidates for the national examinations that took place in the years 2020 to 2021. Hence, the target group of principals was 376, with teachers being 5654 and students being 65 213 (County Director of Education Kirinyaga, 2022; County Director of Education Nyeri, 2022). For purposes of this study, the students of interest were seniors who were in forms three and four due to their long stay in schools and were, therefore, more likely to have more information about school management approaches compared to the juniors in forms one and two. As a result of their stay in the institution, these students had an understanding of how practices within the institution would affect learners' performance. The above-mentioned is consistent with findings by Irungu (2020), who equally found that students who had stayed longer in school were likely to have a better understanding of the organisational culture and instructional practices.

The principals constituted the key informants who provided qualitative data through one-on-one interviews based on open-ended questions that stimulated them to reveal non-numerical but influential data. Such data also provided detailed information related to the context under study. The teachers and students provided quantitative data through surveys based on closed-ended questions with multiple-choice answers that provide measurable data. The data obtained from students and teachers formed the quantitative part of the study. Information from both students and teachers was collated to answer the research objectives of the study.

Sample Size

The sample size in any study is usually a function of the degree of confidence that the researcher wants to attach to the study results, the total target population and the diversity found in the population with respect to the subjects under study (Kadam & Bhalerao, 2010).

The current study relied on the stratified random sampling method because the target displayed stratification among the schools, which define the population characteristics, that is, national, extra-county, county and sub-county high schools. The categories described above have been defined by the Ministry of Education as the official classification of public secondary schools in Kenya, making them appropriate for use in the study. The focus of the study was on public high schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties, meaning that the selection criteria excluded private secondary schools. To ensure each cluster was considered, proportional representation was applicable for each stratum. However, the researcher excluded the four national schools in the two counties due to their exemplary high performance. The rationale for exclusion is that national schools ordinarily perform better compared to other schools (Bold et al., 2018). In similar research, Mutuku (2018) found national secondary schools to have superior instructional resources compared to other schools. The fact that the four national schools did not possess characteristics like others led to their exclusion from the study. These characteristics include entry behaviour, where students from national schools have higher qualifications compared to other public secondary schools. Furthermore, the target population also displays various strata worth consideration and proportional representation in the sample, that is, principals, teachers and students.

When dealing with populations that have uniform characteristics, Creswell and Clark (2011) suggest that the application of simple random sampling is sufficient when

constructing the sample. They also submit that a good maximum sample is usually 10% of the target population as long as it is less than 1000 units or individuals. The researcher, therefore, targeted 10% of principals as the appropriate sample size. However, for the students and teachers, the researcher applied Yamane's formula (1967) due to the relative heterogeneity the students displayed and the larger population numbers for both the teachers and students.

$$\text{Yamane's formula is } n = \frac{N}{(1+N (e)^2)}$$

Where

n – Sample size

N – Finite population

e – Margin of error

Sample Size Calculation for the Students

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

$$n = 65213 \div \{1+65213(0.05)^2\}$$

$$n = 65213 \div \{1+65213(0.0025)\}$$

$$n = 65213 \div \{1+163.0325\}$$

$$n = 397.56$$

Sample Size Calculation for the Teachers

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

$$n = 5654 \div \{1+5654(0.05)^2\}$$

$$n = 5654 \div \{1 + 5654(0.0025)\}$$

$$n = 5654 \div \{1 + 14.135\}$$

$$n = 373.57$$

The population in consideration is 65 213 students and 5654 teachers, and the margin of error is 0.05 or 5%, which produces a sample of 398 students and 374 teachers (County Director of Education Kirinyaga, 2022; County Director of Education Nyeri, 2022). The distribution of the samples across the three classifications of schools is shown in Table 2 below. The selection of the samples was through stratified random sampling. There were three main strata based on the classification of the school, either in the extra-county, county or sub-county categories. Across each stratum, the number of participants was randomly selected. To obtain the random sample, a list of the schools that form the target population across the two counties was obtained. The list of schools was obtained from the county department of education in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties. The list of schools in each stratum was entered into Excel. The researcher made use of the RAND function in Microsoft Excel to generate a random sample.

Table 2 :Groups, Population, and Sample Size Data

Category	Population	Sample size	Strata	Proportion
Students	65,213	397.56 ~	Sub-county	303

		398	County	53
			Extra County	42
Teachers	5654	373.57 ~ 374	Sub-county	284
			County	51
			Extra County	39
Principals	369	37 (10%)	Sub-county	28
			County	5
			Extra County	4
Total	71,236	809		

Source: (County Director of Education Kirinyaga, 2022; County Director of Education Nyeri, 2022)

Based on the data provided in Table 1, the total sample size of students and teachers involved in the study was 809. Out of this group, 772 participants were provided with questionnaires for collection and analysis of quantitative data, while interviews were administered to 37 participants, that is, school principals. The high sample size indicated above leads to more accurate values due to a better representation of the population. Scholars have different opinions in regard to appropriate sample sizes in qualitative research. Boddy (2016) recommends a sample of at least ten participants, with Vasileiou et al. (2018) suggesting a sample of between 20 and 30 participants. According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), the sample size could also depend on the homogeneous nature of the population. For instance, in the current case, the population includes all the principals of sub-county, county and extra-county schools in Kirinyaga

and Nyeri counties. In such cases, a larger sample size of 37 was deemed to be acceptable.

The sample consists of randomly selected principals, teachers and students. The large sample of 809 participants selected from 369 schools was deemed to be representative of the whole population (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Similarly, Boddy (2016) observes that a study would be considered to be generalisable depending on the sampling method used. The study used random methods of sampling to acquire the participants. Based on the sample size and the sampling technique applied the findings are considered to be generalisable in the two counties. Similarly, the inclusion of a dataset from two different counties also provided the basis for generalisation. The aspect of generalizability could also be seen in the fact that the sample included extra-county and county schools which admit students from all across the country. As a result, the findings of the research were applicable to the wider context of public secondary schools in Nyeri and Kirinyaga counties in Kenya.

Validity

Sumadi and Ismanto (2021) describe validity investigation in a data collection instrument as the process of assessing the extent to which it is accurate in addressing its objectives. The validity, therefore, involves assessing accuracy to determine the truthfulness of the data that underwent analysis (Sampson et al., 2018). The validity of the study was achieved by ensuring that the same set of questions was used for all the interviewees. Carmines and Zeller (1979) find the approach to be appropriate in ensuring the consistency of the informant' and interviewees' responses.

Reliability

Reliability measures the consistency of the data collection tool in terms of producing stable and consistent responses from the informant, such that if applied in a different population and sample, it does not show fluctuations in the results (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Reliability tests ensure consistency across the data collection instrument, as is also evident in the minimisation of repetitions and redundancy to maintain the relevance of each variable and question (Mohamed et al., 2020). To assess the reliability of the study, the researcher utilised the split-half technique because of its convenience in approximating the validity of the entire questionnaire (Mohamed et al., 2020). This required the researcher to split the questions in the questionnaire into two equal halves and administer them to two separate groups of informants. The use of the split test technique in this study involved separating odd and even numbered questions with a resulting value of 0.74, which is an indication that the questionnaire is consistent and accurate.

The reliability of the questionnaires was achieved through a pilot test. In this case, the researcher piloted the instruments within Kirinyaga County in schools using 39 students and 16 teachers who comprised 10% of their respective samples in the main study, as recommended by Connelly (2008). Piloting the tools helped the researcher know if the informant comprehended the questions in the questionnaire and if they could provide the required answers. A Cronbach Alpha test was then carried out to establish internal consistency and identify redundancy among the questions. The questionnaire had 36 items with a total reliability of 0.725. The questionnaire would be considered to have higher reliability based on the suggestions of Tavakol and Dennick (2011).

Data Collection

Interviews

The study employed the use of interviews to collect information on instructional leadership practices from the school principals. Before beginning the interviews, the researcher produced the introductory letter, which was shown to the school principal. The introductory letter (Appendix II) was an indication that the researcher was allowed to conduct the study. Before the interviews, participants were further required to give their consent (see Appendix III) below. The participant's information sheet (Appendix IV) provided the interviewees with all the information concerning the research.

The data was collected orally using open-ended interview questions (see Appendix V). The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the school principals. The rationale for selecting face-to-face interviews is that they allowed the researcher to examine verbal and non-verbal cues from the interviewees, including their emotional state and behaviour (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). The use of face-to-face interviews also allowed direct interaction between the researcher and the participants, which also made it possible to establish a rapport with the interviewees and provided a basis for asking follow-up questions (Barrett & Twycross, 2018), depending on their state at the time of the interview. Each of the participants was required to complete one interview. The interview questions were focused on the instructional strategies used by the school principals. The interviews consisted of two main sections: personal details and main questions. The average period for conducting each interview was 45 minutes.

Questionnaires

The researcher collected quantitative data using questionnaires with the help of trained research assistants. This instrument comprised a series of close-ended questions

aimed at gathering data from the chosen informant. The researcher relied on a checklist to supervise the release and return of the questionnaires to ensure a high rate of response. The research assistants issued the self-administered questionnaires, meaning that they distributed and picked them up from the targeted schools. This method provided the informant with ample time to give responses. Structured questionnaires have the benefit of efficiency in terms of saving time and finances and providing quick analysis of collected data (Kurzahls & Kurzahls, 2021). The questionnaire (see Appendix VI) consisted of three parts. The first section outlined the demographic characteristics of the participants. The other sections contained questions on the main independent variables: organisational culture and student performance.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained through interview recordings were transcribed word for word for thematic analysis. The above process involved transcribing the audio and reading through the texts. Using leadership practices, student performance and organisational culture as the units of analysis, data were coded using the Nvivo software. The first step in the analysis involved familiarising with the data. In this step, the researcher read through the interview transcripts to get a glimpse of the context of responses and determine whether they are consistent with the main objectives of the study. The next step involved identifying possible trends and patterns in the dataset. The patterns, in this case, were in the form of most repeated words and phrases. The words and phrases identified at this point were used to formulate codes. The research questions also informed the process of code development in the study. In this context, the researcher focused on both the frequency and the occurrence of the selected codes. The process of coding was repeated by another data analyst in order to assess the

reliability of the coding. The above was also crucial in minimising errors that occur as a result of having a single researcher dealing with the formulation of codes and themes. The codes were categorised and then developed into themes. The themes were then interpreted using the research questions as a guide. The results of the analysis were finally presented narratively and in the form of themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

All questionnaires were cross-checked to ensure they were more than 90% complete before they were approved for the next step. Each questionnaire was serialised, and the data obtained was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 software for analysis. In order to facilitate quantitative analysis, the study made use of the Likert scale to quantify responses provided by the participants. The data underwent preliminary analysis starting with data cleaning, which is the identification of mistakes, anomalies, errors, contradictions and omissions, among others. Eventually, the data underwent analysis for the production of descriptive findings as expressed in frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations. The researcher then presented these findings in tables and figures. The descriptive statistics enabled the summarising of data, which facilitated the understanding of the informants' informant responses. The data then underwent inferential analysis through the application of correlation and regression analyses to identify and describe the nature of relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

Regression Analysis

The analysis was used to show the link between variables to ascertain the pivotal outcome of one variable upon another. The main dependent variable in the study was student performance. Independent variables considered in this analysis included school mission, curriculum management and learning environment. The combined effect of

these variables on student performance is shown by the formula in equation (i) below (Sarstedt et al. 2019).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon \quad (i)$$

Y = Performance of the Students

β_0 = Intercept

X_1 = School Mission

X_2 = Curriculum Management

X_3 = Learning Environment

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Regression Parameters

ε = Error term

Moderating Function

According to Holland et al. (2017), the moderating function illustrates the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Holland et al. (2017) find that moderating variables play a huge role in assessing and moderating the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. For instance, if the strength of the relationship between X and Y variables is strong, the presence of the moderator could make the relationship either weaker or stronger. In the present study, organisational culture is used as a moderator between instructional practices and student performance.

In analysing the impacts described above, organisational culture was considered to be a moderating rather than a mediating variable. Holland et al. (2017) observe that the variable has an effect on the dependent and independent variables and could determine whether the relationship would actually occur. The focus of the analysis would have been to determine whether the impact of the organisational culture is stronger than the direct influence of instructional practices on student performance. However, the focus of the current study was to determine whether the effect of instructional practices on student performance varies depending on the organisational culture of the respective schools. The above justifies the use of the moderation function in equation v below.

$$Y = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X + \alpha_2 Z + \alpha_3 (X * Z) + \varepsilon$$

 (vi)

Where;

Y = Student Performance

X = Instructional Leadership practices

Z = Organisational Culture (Moderating Factor)

α_0 = Intercept

α_1 = Instructional Leadership coefficient

α_2 = Organisational Culture coefficient

α_3 = Combined Instructional Leadership and Organisational Culture coefficient

ε = error term.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed several ethical considerations throughout the study, as discussed below:

The researcher sought permission from various authorities before deploying the questionnaires and administering interviews for the study. First, the researcher obtained authorisation from the Pan Africa Christian University Ethical Committee. The committee further provided an introductory letter that was used to get a research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), which has the responsibility of regulating and approving research studies in Kenya (Scott et al., 2021).

Secondly, the researcher sent notification letters to county and sub-county education officers informing them of the intended data collection exercise. Third, the researcher trained all research assistants on research ethics, data collection instruments and data collection procedures. Fourth, the researcher prepared and attached an informed consent form to each questionnaire for informants to sign before they could participate, indicating that they understood their rights and responsibilities in the study and gave their approval to the process. Before signing the consent forms, participants were provided with all the information related to the study. Participants were clearly informed that their engagement in the research process would be free and voluntary. Similarly, participants were also informed that engaging in the research would not result in any harm. Fifth, the researcher upheld the informant's anonymity during and after the data collection process by ensuring that the participants were only identified anonymously and using pseudonyms such as Participant 1, 2, 3... Participants were also informed against providing or publishing any personally identifiable information.

Lastly, each questionnaire was stored in secured storage after data collection to prevent any form of tampering or damage.

Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented the methodological approach that was used in the study. It has explained the research philosophy and the design that was adopted in the study. The details on the study population and the groups of individuals that were used as the sample for the study have also been provided. Further, the chapter demonstrates the type of instrumentation that was employed in the study and explained the piloting of the instruments to establish their validity and reliability. Additionally, the processes of data analyses have been explained. Each method of data analysis is comprehensively explained, as well as the procedures that were used in the presentation of the study results. The chapter has also covered logistical study issues and ethical considerations that were put in place to determine the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

The next chapter presents and discusses the study findings.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings and their interpretations. The research objectives guided the analysis of the data. The research objectives included examining the impact of instructional leadership on student academic performance with a focus on the school mission statement, curriculum development and learning environment. The chapter presents the results from both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data. The chapter begins by presenting the general demographics and characteristics of students and teachers who filled out the quantitative questionnaires. The quantitative analysis

begins by presenting the informant's profile, which includes the age and gender of the informant. Other variables, such as the classification of schools, teaching experience, and academic levels of informants, have also been described in the chapter. The rest of the sections examine the instructional practices of the school heads regarding implementing the school mission, curriculum management, and creating a learning environment. Each of these variables was examined regarding their impact on student academic performance. The chapter further contains an analysis of the opinions and perspectives of the school principals on the school mission, curriculum management, and learning environment. The last section of the study examines the moderating effect of school culture on the relationship between instructional practices and students' academic performance.

Questionnaire Response Rate

The analysis's quantitative aspect involved questionnaires sent out to students and teachers in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties in Kenya. Three hundred ninety-eight students from sub-county, county and extra-county schools were sampled in the study. Three hundred thirty-one student questionnaires were returned, which represents a response rate of 83.1%. Equally, 374 questionnaires were sent to teachers across different schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties. Three hundred five questionnaires were duly filled and returned, which represents a response rate of 81.5%. The research process also involved interviewing the school principals. A total of 37 principals were targeted for the interviewees. Only 30 out of the targeted 37 principals were interviewed in the study. This represents a success rate of 81.1%. Based on the observations above, the general response rate for the study was above 80%. The rate was considered adequate in providing credible findings on the subject under study.

Previous studies have shown that a response above 60% would be considered appropriate for research.

Informant Profile

The study established the following information about secondary school teachers and students:

Gender Distribution of Informants

Table 3: Gender of Teachers

Gender	Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage
Male	176	57.7%
Female	129	42.3%
Total	305	100%

Table 3 shows the gender distribution of the teachers. Findings show that more than half of the teachers in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties are male. The findings indicate a fair distribution of gender in the sample.

Age Distribution of Informants

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Teachers

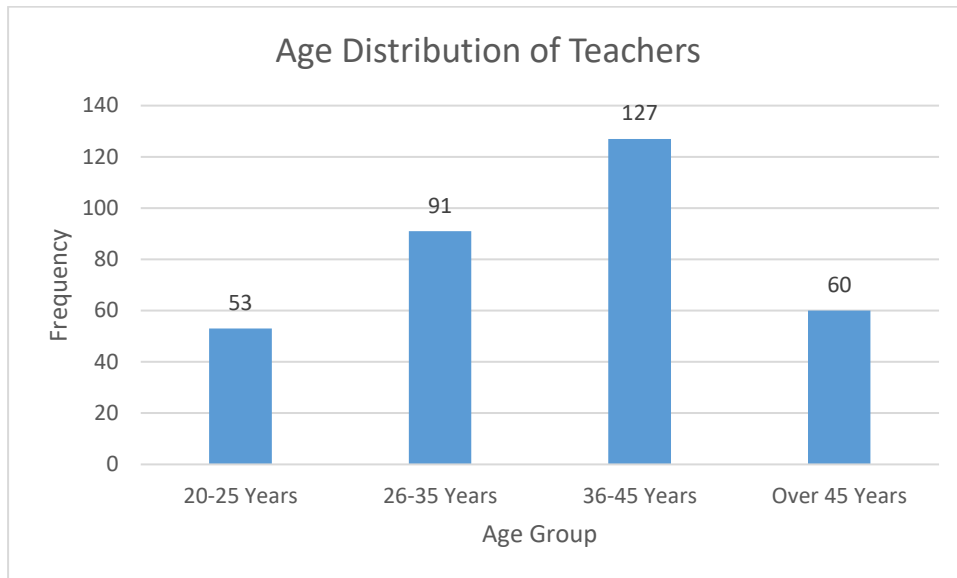


Figure 3 shows the age groups of the teachers. The results indicate that most teachers were aged between 36 and 45 (38.4%). Based on the results, only 16% of the teachers were below 25 years, with 18.1% above 60 years. The results indicate the fair distribution of the sample in terms of age. Similarly, 331 students completed the questionnaire, 54.1% of whom were in form three, while 45.9% were in form four at the time of data collection. Since the study targeted students in forms three and four, the results indicate a fair distribution of the sample informant across the two levels.

Figure 4 :Age Distribution of Students

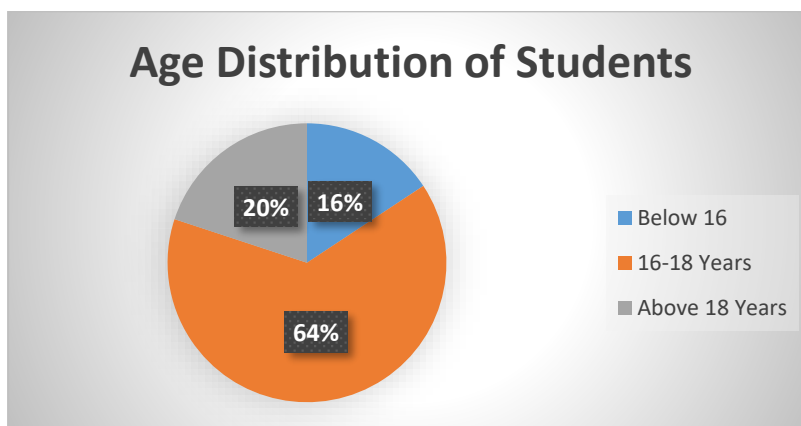


Figure 4 shows the age distribution of students. Based on the results, 64% of the student informants reported being between 16 and 18 years old. Equally, 16% of the students who participated in the study were below 16 years, while 20% were above 18 years. The findings were consistent with observations by Irungu (2020), who found most students in Form Four to be between 17 and 18 years old. The results indicate that the informants were of the right age to be in Form Three and Form Four.

Classification of Schools

Table 4: Classification of Schools

Classification of Schools	Students		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sub-County	167	50.4%	143	46.9%
County	84	25.4%	83	28.2%
Extra-County	80	25.2%	76	24.9%
Total	331	100%	305	100%

All the informants sampled in the study were drawn from sub-county, county, or extra-county schools. Table 4 shows the distribution of the informants across the three classifications of schools. Based on the findings, most teachers and students were drawn from sub-county schools. The distribution of the informants across the three classifications of schools was as projected in the sampling section in Table 2. The findings reflect a higher population of students and teachers in sub-county schools.

Academic Level of the Informants

Figure 5 :Academic Levels of Teachers

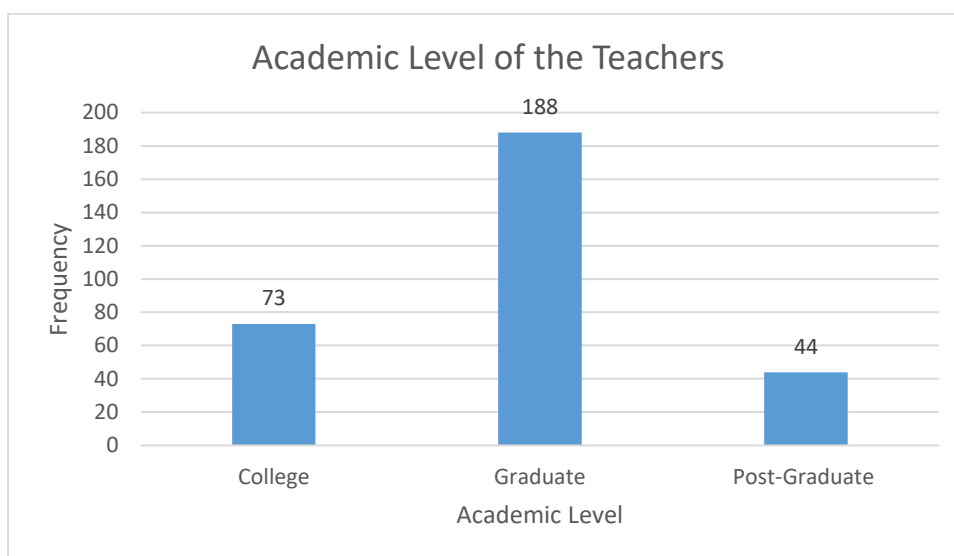


Figure 5 shows the academic levels of teachers who participated in the study. Study results indicate that a higher proportion of the teacher informants had at least a graduate-level education. The findings are similar to observations made by Irungu (2020), who found that most informants had at least an undergraduate degree.

Teaching Experience

Table 5 :Teaching Experience

Teaching Duration	Frequency	Percentage
0-3 Years	40	13.1%
4-6 Years	51	16.7%
7-11 Years	112	36.7%

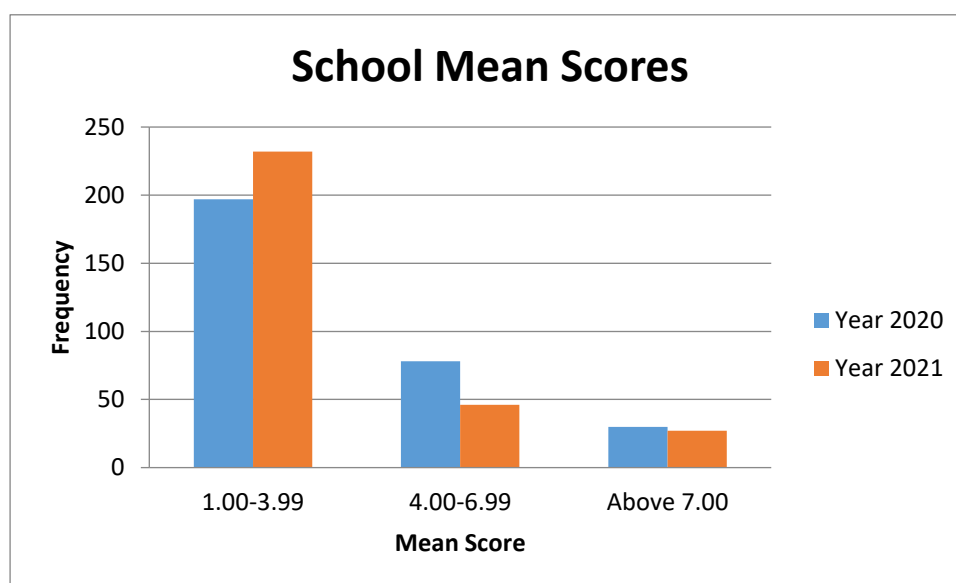
12-15 Years	73	24.0%
Over 15 Years	29	9.5%
Total	305	100%

Table 5 shows the result of teacher experience in terms of years. Results indicate that the highest number of teachers had worked between 7 and 11 years.

School Performance

Teachers were further asked to indicate the performance of their institutions through the mean scores in KCSE examinations.

Figure 6 :School Mean Score



Based on the findings in Figure 6, a higher number of teachers confirmed that their institutions had a mean of between 1.00 and 3.99 during the period under study. The findings indicate that students' performance in the selected public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties was generally below average. Findings in Figure 6 relate to the problem in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, where students continue to register low academic performance. While the

results in Figure 6 could result from having more informants drawn from sub-county schools, the findings are within the range obtained from previous data on the mean performance of the two counties, as identified in Table 1. The findings support earlier results by Kangangi (2018) and Irungu (2020), who had equally observed lower mean scores for public secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. The implications of the findings in Figure 6 are that a higher number of students in public secondary schools in the selected counties score D+ and below and, therefore, miss out on opportunities to further their education in colleges and universities.

The sections below seek to determine whether the low-performance results from instructional practices used by public secondary schools in the two counties.

School Mission

Figure 7 :Awareness of School Mission

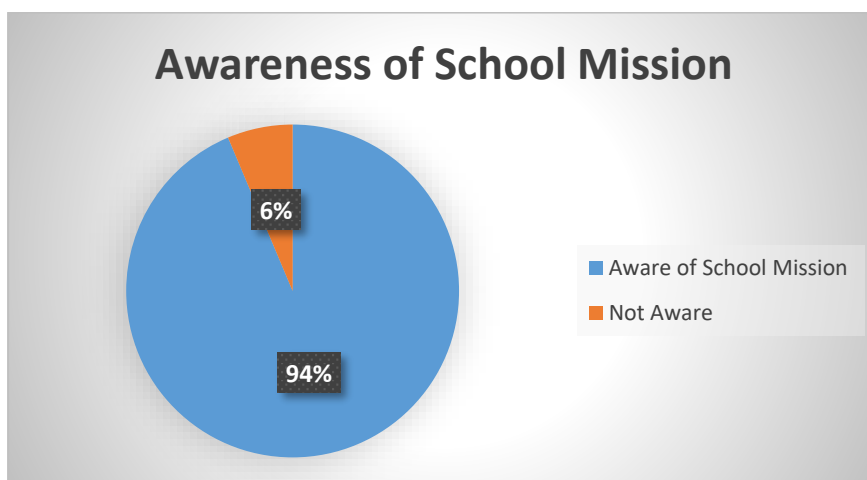


Figure 7 shows student awareness of the school's mission statement. Based on the findings, the majority of the informant was aware of their school mission. Knowledge of the school mission means that the students know the specific elements that would provide a sense of direction in the schools.

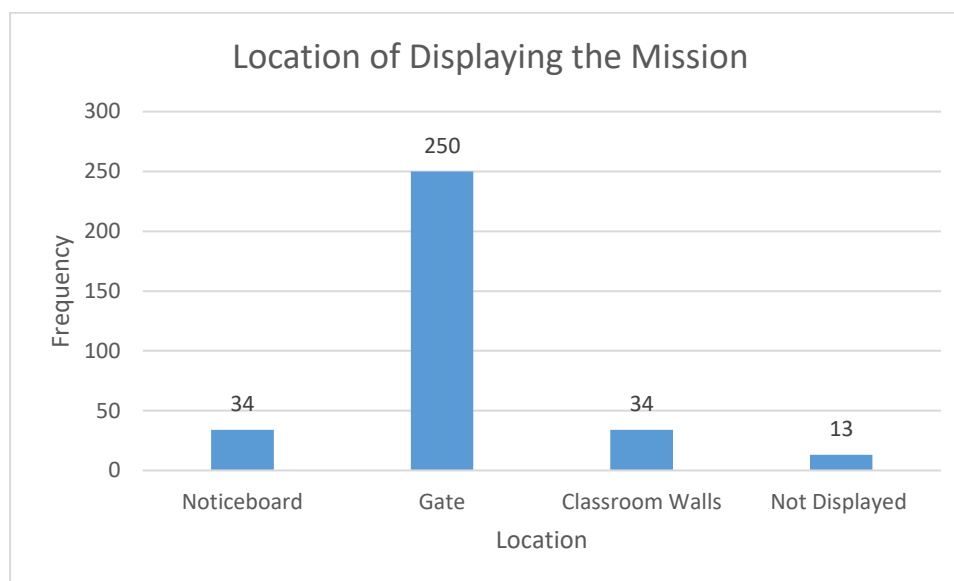
Figure 8 :Location of Displaying the Mission

Figure 8 shows where the school mission was displayed within the institution. Based on the findings, 75.5% of the informants, 75.5%, indicated that the school mission was displayed on the gate. In comparison, 3.9% indicated that the school mission was not displayed. In this case, the specific location where the mission is displayed could determine how well the informant can view the school mission. Ideally, the school mission could have a more significant impact when openly displayed on the gate, noticeboard or classroom walls.

Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices

School Mission Statement

Students and teachers involved in the study were required to rate the extent to which the principal could implement the school mission. This section includes responses from both students and teachers. Table 6 outlines the responses by teachers, while students' responses are shown in Table 7. The study used a five-point Likert scale, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 :Teacher Perspectives on School Mission

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%
Able to effectively communicate the school's mission	46	15.1 %	132	43.3 %	18	5.9%	70	22.9 %	39	12.8 %
The principal has put measures in place to ensure adherence to the school's mission	31	10.2 %	109	35.7 %	41	13.5 %	98	32.1 %	26	8.5%
The school's mission greatly influences school operations and practices	52	17.1 %	206	67.5 %	9	2.9%	27	8.9%	11	3.6%
Students and teachers understand the role of the mission	29	9.5%	127	41.6 %	34	11.2 %	85	27.9 %	30	9.8%
The principal includes staff in the	23	7.6%	87	28.5 %	25	8.2%	119	39.0 %	15	16.7 %

framing of the institution's objective										
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The findings in Table 6 show the teachers' agreement level on various statements on the principals' involvement in the school mission. Findings indicate that the majority of the informants, 43.3%, agree that principals have been able to communicate the school mission effectively. Similarly, 15.1% of the informants strongly agreed with the statement, with only 22.9% disagreeing. The findings are consistent with Barasa (2017), who observed that frequent communication of the school mission and goals enables students and teachers to internalize the content of the mission statements and apply them in their daily curricular activities. The findings imply that a higher number of principals across public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, can communicate their school mission efficiently to the students and teachers. The aspect of communication is also consistent with Steinmayr et al. (2019), who found that it assisted in reinforcing the values and goals described under the mission statement and thereby improved student academic performance. Based on the findings, the school principal may have been able to use sessions such as assemblies and other meetings to communicate the mission. In this case, regularly communicating the school mission to students and teachers could be interpreted as making them committed to the mission statement.

The study also examined the capacity of the principals to enhance adherence to the school mission. Based on the results, 10.2% of the teachers strongly agree that principals have implemented measures to ensure adherence to the school mission. Another 35.7% of the informants agree with the statement, with a total of 40.6% of the

informants having contrasting opinions. The results indicate that many principals have been able to put appropriate measures in place to support the implementation of the mission within the school. The ability to implement appropriate measures has also been evaluated by Hatsuko and Wong (2020), who examined it in the context of applying the right communication channels to pass information related to mission statements. Applying the right measures and communication channels could be analyzed using the transformational theory. Based on the theory, leaders can encourage or persuade their followers to achieve specific goals. In this case, the ability of school principals to inspire teachers and students would be considered appropriate in ensuring the effective implementation of the mission statements.

Similarly, most informants either agree (67.5%) or strongly agree (17.1%) that the school mission influences school operations. The results further indicate that only 12.5% of the informants disagreed with the statement, with 2.9% remaining neutral. Ideally, the school mission provides a sense of direction which guides operations in the school. The findings support earlier observations by Barasa (2017), who noted that school mission statements assist institutions in identifying attainable goals that can be evaluated from time to time. The school principal, therefore, has a role in ensuring that the mission statement is communicated to students and teachers so that the relevant stakeholders address any barriers or obstacles. For instance, if the values espoused in the school mission include hard work and excellence, it is possible that such values could guide the day-to-day operations within the institution. It is, therefore, possible that the school mission would greatly influence school operations.

Most of the informants in the study (41.6%) agreed that students and teachers in the selected public secondary schools understand the role of the school mission. The findings could be based on the fact that school principals could communicate the school

mission efficiently, as discussed above. In this case, the frequent communication of the mission statement through frequent meetings and memos means that students and teachers can apply its contents and apply them in their daily operations. Students and teachers' understanding of the role of the school mission could be linked to the measures taken by the school principal to ensure adherence to the mission statement. Based on the study, continued adherence to the school mission and its application to daily curricular activities could have improved the general understanding of students and teachers on the role of the school mission.

Informants in the study were further asked to indicate whether the principal involved other staff members in formulating the school mission and institutional goals and objectives. Based on the findings, 39.0% of the informants disagreed that the school head involved other teachers in formulating the school mission statement. Only 28.5% of informants agreed with the statement, which means that it is possible that most staff members were not involved in creating the mission statement. The findings are consistent with observations by Matsunaga (2021), who notes that a few administrators within the school leadership often write school missions. The failure of the school principals to include staff in formulating the institutions' mission and objectives means that there could be a disconnect between what the principals think is important and what matters to the school fraternity. The aspects of involving students and teachers in the decision-making could be linked to the participatory theory, given that different groups can work together for the common good (Cansoy et al. 2020). In this case, the real impact of the school mission statement is based on its application to the daily operations of an institution. Therefore, the failure to involve students and teachers in the formulation of the school mission could impact the school community's commitment towards the statement.

In considering the role of the school principal in formulating the mission statement and its impact on student academic performance, it is important to consider that the mission statement needs to evolve and change with the changing needs of school stakeholders. The failure of school principals as instructional leaders to alter the mission statement's content to fit the institution's present needs could have led to mission statements that do not significantly influence students' academic performance. Similarly, lack of clarity, poor strategies, and lack of follow-ups by principals lead to the failure of a school's mission. When a school's environment changes, the principal should find appropriate strategic plans to minimize the chances of a school's mission failure.

Student informants were also asked to provide their opinion on the role of school principals in ensuring adherence to the mission statements. The responses by the students are summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Student Perspectives on School Mission

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%
The school principal has been able to effectively communicate the school's mission	135	40.8 %	101	30.5 %	38	11.5 %	34	10.3 %	23	6.9 %
The mission statement guides the school's operation	98	29.6 %	114	34.4 %	67	20.3 %	36	10.9 %	16	4.8 %

The principal involves student representatives in the decision-making process	135	40.5 %	65	19.6 %	32	9.7%	61	18.4 %	11	3.6 %
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Based on the findings in Table 7, 40.8% of students strongly agree that the school principal has been able to communicate the mission effectively. Similarly, 30.5% of the students agree with the statement, with 10.3% disagreeing. The findings are consistent with the teacher perspectives above, where the majority of the teachers equally confirmed that the school heads were able to communicate the mission effectively. The findings imply that both students and teachers clearly understand the school mission, given that the school principal regularly communicates it. For students and teachers agreeing to the statement, the school heads may use channels such as meetings and assemblies to communicate the mission. It means that the school principals have integrated the elements of the mission, including the supporting values, into the day-to-day communication.

Most % of the student informants, 34.4%, agree that the mission statement guides school operations. As evident in Table 7, only 10.9% of students disagreed with the statement, with 20.3% remaining neutral. The relatively high number of undecided informants could indicate that despite the principal's frequent communication of the mission statement, some students could still be unaware of its application in daily curricular activities. The findings in the study are consistent with earlier observations by Matsunaga (2021), who noted that the success of the impact of school mission is

based on its application to daily activities. The above implies that while the leadership could communicate the school mission frequently, its real impact lies in the ability of students and teachers to apply the statement to daily learning activities. The above may have been achieved in the selected public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, given that the findings confirm that the mission statement guides current school operations.

The informant further reported that school principals involved student representatives in decision-making. The statement was supported by 60.1% of the informants, with 30.2% indicating that their school principals did not involve student representatives in the decision-making process. The school principal's involvement of students and teachers in decision-making enhances inclusivity, resulting in commitment and buy-in. For instance, if the school principal involves students in formulating the mission statement, it is possible that the students would own the decisions made and are more likely to incorporate the statement in their daily lives. Similarly, teachers involved in the decision-making process and the formulation of objectives are more likely to support the decisions made. The above creates a collaborative environment where students and teachers work towards common goals. The findings above align with observations by Ndambuki (2020) on the involvement of different stakeholders in goal setting. According to Ndambuki (2020), involving students and teachers in formulating school mission and objectives assists in convincing the stakeholders that the goal is important and can be achieved. The above provides enough motivation for stakeholders to work towards implementing the mission statement. The impact of such practices is improved student performance in public secondary schools.

Curriculum Management

The study further examined the role of school principals in curriculum management. The role of the school principal in curriculum management was examined from the perspectives of students and teachers. Table 8 summarizes teachers' opinions, while Table 9 outlines the students' perspectives.

Table 8 :Teacher Perspectives on Curriculum Management

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Able to put the efficient measure	33	10.8 %	122	40%	25	8.2%	56	18.4 %	69	22.6 %
Evaluate teaching methods	51	16.7 %	90	29.5 %	18	5.9%	82	26.9 %	64	21%
Allocates work based on abilities	64	21%	97	31.8 %	46	15.1 %	58	19%	40	13.1 %
Express gratitude	55	18%	108	35.4 %	48	15.7 %	70	23%	24	7.9%
Offers well-timed response	42	13.8 %	113	37.1 %	31	10.1 %	83	27.2 %	36	11.8 %
Manages complaints among the teachers	53	17.4 %	82	26.9 %	70	22.9 %	62	20.3 %	38	12.5 %
Review students schoolwork	57	18.7 %	110	36.1 %	27	8.9%	67	22.6 %	42	13.7 %
Integrates student evaluation	60	19.7 %	87	28.5 %	46	15%	81	26.6 %	31	10.2 %

Based on the findings in Table 8, the majority of the informants (40%) agree that the school principal has put efficient measures in place to ensure the implementation of the curriculum. Equally, only 18.4% of the informants disagreed with the findings, with 8.2% remaining neutral. The findings indicate the principals'

commitment to ensuring that different aspects of the curriculum are well implemented in schools. The findings support earlier observations by Schleiff et al. (2021), who noted that successful evaluation and management of the curriculum is critical in enhancing students' academic performance. It is, therefore, possible that in most of the public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, school principals have a good understanding of the curriculum and can put measures in place to ensure that teachers efficiently implement it.

Findings further indicate that most of the school principals provide the necessary resources to support the curriculum's application. It is, however, important to note that 29.8% of the informants disagree that school heads provide the required resources. Implementing the curriculum requires specific resources, including textbooks and technological devices. School heads present such resources. The above findings are consistent with observations by Bush and Glover (2016), who noted that school principals act as human resource managers to ensure that resources are allocated to the necessary departments based on the institution's goals. In a different research, Schleiff et al. (2021) shared that as human resource managers, school principals provide learning and teaching materials that make teaching and learning easy and interesting. Additionally, the resources help teachers to express concepts easily. For instance, having technological devices, such as projectors, would make it easier for teachers to teach different concepts.

The ability of school principals to efficiently manage complaints among teachers had the highest number of neutral responses. It means that most teachers remain unsure whether the approaches used by school principals have effectively handled conflicts that arise during curriculum implementation. The above could be linked to a lack of a collaborative approach, as Irungu (2020) found. Similarly, 32.5%

of the informant disagreed that their school heads can efficiently manage complaints related to curriculum implementation. The inability of the school principals to effectively manage complaints in the management and implementation of curriculum is an indication of poor leadership styles by the school heads (Ndambuki, 2020). Despite the aforementioned findings, it is unavoidable that there would be disputes and complaints during the process of curriculum implementation due to the differences in opinions and approaches among the persons involved. The inability of school heads to manage complaints could mean that contentious aspects of the curriculum remain unaddressed. This is likely to affect the effective implementation of the curriculum and the performance of the institution at large.

Equally, 15.7% of teachers in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties strongly agree that principals can institute organized quality assurance mechanisms in the institutions. Based on the responses, 33.1% of the informants agreed with the statement, with 16.4% remaining neutral. In this case, the ability of school principals to put in place appropriate quality assurance mechanisms provides an appropriate framework and background for implementing the curriculum. Additionally, the process of managing the curriculum is likely to be easier in situations where there are already existing quality mechanisms. The quality mechanisms would ensure that the curriculum's implementation aligns with the institution's goals.

The study also examined the ability of school principals to frequently review students' schoolwork as part of curriculum management. From the results, 54.8% of informants agree that their school principals frequently review student work, 46.3% disagree with the statement, and 8.9% remain neutral. School principals constantly reviewing schoolwork is important in assessing specific contents of instruction as well as areas that may need improvement. Based on the findings, it is important to note that

46.3% of informants noted that their school heads do not constantly review students' school work, which means that such principals may have an incomplete understanding of school work, which may affect curriculum management. Due to the high number of roles and responsibilities for school principals, they may lack adequate time to examine student work from different students. However, for school heads to manage the curriculum effectively, they must have a favourable understanding of the student and teacher's work before determining the most feasible course of action. The function of the school head in curriculum management was also examined from the perspectives of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya. The responses provided by the informant revolved around the students' opinions on the roles of principals in monitoring the performance of students and teachers. The responses are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Students' Perspectives on Curriculum Management

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
The school principal monitors the performance of students regularly	154	46.5%	73	22.1%	21	6.3%	48	14.5%	35	10.6%
The school principal monitors the work	152	45.9%	97	29.3%	28	8.5%	39	11.8%	15	4.5%

done by teachers										
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Based on the findings in Table 9, 46.5% of informants strongly agree that the school principal regularly monitors students' performance. 68.6% of the students agree on the role of school principals in checking students' performance, with 25.1% disagreeing with the statement and 10.6% remaining neutral. The results mean that the school heads can keep tabs on students' performance, which also indicates how well the institution can apply instructional practices. In this case, school heads committed to assessing their students' progress means that they can easily identify areas that may require guidance or improvement. Equally, the student's performance could indicate how well the institution has implemented and managed the curriculum. Effective implementation of the curriculum is likely to result in improved student performance. The principals, therefore, have a role in assessing the student's performance and comparing them against the set targets.

Similarly, 74.3% of the students' informants indicated that their school principals had a role of regularly monitoring the work done by teachers. Another 16.3% indicated that the school principal did not regularly monitor the work done by teachers, while 8.5% were unsure whether the principals performed this role. The findings imply that the school head takes an active role in evaluating instructional practices used by teachers to determine whether they are consistent with the required standards. Due to the role played by teachers in the implementation of the curriculum, supervising their instructional practices, which include lesson plans and lesson approaches, is critical in the effective management of the curriculum. The findings on the role of school principals in checking the work done by teachers align with observations by Bush and

Glover (2016), who noted that school administrators need to closely check the instructional methods teachers use to determine that they meet the current needs of the institutions. Where possible, the school heads guide teachers on how the instructional practices could meet the required standards.

Learning Environment

The school learning climate describes the overall standards and tone set out in the external environment of a school. In this study, informants were also asked to indicate the role of principals in promoting the school learning climate. The teachers' responses are summarized in Table 10, while those of the students are summarized in Table 11.

Table 10: Learning Environment

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%
Promotes collaborative practices	44	14.4%	107	35.1%	25	8.2%	81	26.6%	48	15.7%
Supports teachers in their careers	36	11.8%	140	45.9%	18	5.9%	71	23.3%	40	13.1%
Engages parents	41	13.4%	113	37%	27	8.9%	85	27.9%	39	12.8%
Endorses the institution to the	48	15.7%	96	31.5%	30	9.8%	80	26.3%	24	7.9%

community										
Institutes' linkage with scholastic communities	78	25.6%	103	33.8%	35	11.5%	56	18.3%	33	10.8%
Strategically allocate resources	82	26.9%	99	32.5%	18	5.9%	64	20.9%	42	13.8%
Able to secure extra resources	70	23%	101	33.1%	31	10.2%	59	19.3%	44	14.4%
Incorporate support staff for the students' benefit	62	20.3%	117	38.4%	20	6.5%	61	20%	45	14.8%

Based on the findings in Table 10, 35.1% of the informants believe that school principals promote collaborative practices among the teachers. Similarly, 14.4% of the informants agree with the statement, which indicates that school heads can create a sense of community by encouraging teachers to engage and collaborate with each other. Collaboration among the teachers can create a positive learning climate, which improves the quality of instruction and the institution's general performance.

Most informants who engaged in the study also agree that school principals in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties support teachers in their career and professional growth. Another 11.8% of informants strongly agreed with the statement, with 23.3% having a contrary opinion. The findings indicate that school principals can create an appropriate learning environment by supporting the professional growth of staff members.

In assessing the school climate, the study also examined the ability of principals to engage with parents. Findings in Table 10 indicate that 13.4% of the informants believe that school heads can effectively collaborate with parents to improve the institution's performance. Engaging parents has the effect of enhancing their active engagement in the learning process, which improves the overall learning climate.

Similarly, 31.5% of the informants agree that school principals can initiate approaches to endorse the institution to the community. Additionally, 25.6% of informants strongly agree that principals institute professional linkage with academic communities such as the local academicians. In this case, the school-community relationship impacts the creation of an inclusive learning environment climate that supports student performance. On the other hand, linkage with scholastic communities provides school institutions with the resources required to run successful school programs. The findings imply that most principals in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties invest in reaching out to stakeholders within the community to acquire support towards educational issues.

Equally, 23% of the informants strongly agree that school principals can secure extra resources to support learning. The findings relate to principals' role in clearly identifying institutions' needs and partnering with external stakeholders to ensure that these needs are efficiently met. As shown in Table 10, not all principals can engage external stakeholders and acquire appropriate resources for their institutions. For instance, findings indicate that 33.7% of the informants disagree with the ability of their principals to secure extra resources, with 37.1% indicating that principals cannot locate resources that would aid in the improvement of learning. The findings imply that the specific partnerships and collaborations achieved by public secondary schools could

depend on principals' skills and capabilities. The partnerships developed, however, affect improving the learning climate.

Another aspect examined under learning climate is the ability of school principals to strategically allocate resources based on the needs of students. Based on the findings, 26.9% of informants strongly agree that principals can allocate resources strategically, with 13.8% strongly disagreeing with the statement. The findings indicate that more school principals can ensure that resources acquired through partnerships are allocated to the most relevant areas within the institution. Similarly, 38.4% of the informants agree that principals can incorporate support staff to improve student outcomes. In such institutions, the specific needs of students could be inadequate instructors within the school. Such a factor could have a direct impact on the performance of students. The ability of school principals to solicit resources and ensure that they have been applied appropriately, therefore, plays a critical role in creating a positive learning climate and improving the institution's performance.

The nature of a school's learning climate is one of the main aspects that make some school heads more effective. Baranova et al. (2021) explained that an institution's academic, physical, social, and emotional environment is crucial in creating chances for students to engage in holistic learning. When school heads create a suitable learning climate, students can achieve great academic success and better self-esteem (Baranova et al., 2021). Similarly, an appropriate school climate enables teachers to make great efforts toward high student achievement.

The role of the school principals in creating a positive learning environment and the impact that the above has on student performance were also examined from the students' perspectives. The responses provided by students revolved around the

resources within the school environment and whether the existing school climate supports learning. The responses are summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Student Perspectives on the Learning Environment

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
The school principal provided the necessary resources required for students to perform	83	25.1%	127	38.4%	22	6.6%	68	20.5%	31	9.4%
The current school environment supports student performance	100	30.2%	126	38.1%	42	12.7%	38	11.5%	35	7.5%
The school principal makes learning orderly	82	24.8%	131	39.6%	19	5.7%	72	21.7%	27	8.2%

The findings in Table 11 illustrate the role of the school principal in providing a conducive environment that would support learning. Based on the findings, 38.4% of the student informants agree that the school principals have been able to provide the necessary resources to support learning. Another 25.1% of the informants strongly agreed with the statement, which means that most of the school principals work towards

ensuring that students have everything they need to succeed in learning. The teachers also made similar observations and noted that the school heads could solicit extra resources to support learning. However, the impact of the resources in improving the student's performance is based on how well the school principal can apply them to specific priority areas based on the needs of the students. It means that the resources identified by the school heads must be directly relevant to the institution.

Similarly, 39.6% of the informants also agreed that the school administrators could make the students' learning environment orderly and conducive. Equally, 24.8% strongly disagreed with the statement, with 5.7% remaining neutral. The findings imply that school principals can create an environment that supports students to achieve their best. The above means that the students are provided with supporting resources and an ideal environment for conducting their learning. In such institutions, the support offered by the school principals is characterized by more abstract qualities, such as having a responsible attitude towards the issues raised by students and teachers.

As a result of the above observations, most of the students' informants noted that the current school environment supports learning. According to Kweon et al. (2017), the major implication of the learning environment is that it sparks interest in learning and motivation among the students. In this case, students feel encouraged to work harder, given that there are fewer barriers or distractors in the learning process.

School Organizational Culture

The study also examined the impact of organizational culture by determining how it would mediate the relationship between instructional practices and student performance. The study began by examining the perspectives of students and teachers

on the cultures adopted within the institution. Table 12 describes teachers' opinions, while Table 13 summarizes the students' responses.

Table 12: Teacher Perspectives on Organizational Culture

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%
Offers a conducive learning atmosphere	42	13.8 %	119	39%	26	8.5%	68	22.3 %	50	16.4 %
Cultivates cooperation among the workforce	53	17.4 %	59	19.3 %	47	15.4 %	84	27.5 %	60	20.3 %
Teachers are content with the existing working culture	37	12.1 %	60	19.7 %	52	17%	89	29.2 %	67	22%
Teachers are accorded the opportunity to provide inventive concepts	53	17.4 %	67	21.9 %	39	12.8 %	90	29.5 %	56	18.4 %
Facilitates the development of leaders among the teaching staff	34	11.1 %	71	23.3 %	95	31.2 %	57	18.7 %	48	15.7 %
There is an association among teachers in diverse subject boards	53	17.4 %	51	16.7 %	24	7.9%	102	33.4 %	75	24.6 %

We are at liberty to converse about our state of mind	94	30.8 %	86	28.2 %	35	11.5 %	49	16.1 %	41	13.4 %
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Based on the findings in Table 12, 39% of informants agree that school culture offers a conducive learning environment to institutions. Similarly, 13.8% of informants strongly agree with the statement, with 8.5% remaining neutral and 22.3% disagreeing. The findings imply an appropriate or positive culture in most public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, which supports a conducive learning environment. A conducive learning environment as a result of a supportive school culture is likely to have a positive influence on the performance of students.

In contrast, 20.3% of informants strongly disagree that the school culture in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, cultivates cooperation among the workforce. Similarly, 27.5% disagreed with the statement, with only 17.4% strongly agreeing on the role of school culture in cultivating cooperation. The findings could mean that in the studied public secondary schools, a lack of supportive culture could bring teachers together towards a common goal. Such school cultures could be deemed to lean more towards self-preservation rather than collaboration among the members. Similarly, a majority of the informants, 58% compared to 34.1%, also disagreed that there was an unending association among teachers in different subjects. The findings indicate that the culture in public secondary schools in the selected counties does not allow teachers to naturally relate with each other across the department. The above could result from the lack of specific activities enabling teachers to work together across different disciplines. The above could create

a disjointed workforce with staff members pulling from different directions while seeking different objectives. The implication of the above is low teacher engagement levels, which results in poor student academic performance.

Teachers participating in the research were also asked to indicate whether they were content with the existing culture in their institutions. Based on Table 12, 31.8% of informants indicated they were content with the existing culture, with 51.2% indicating discontent. The findings could be linked to other responses by the informant. For instance, 29.5% of informants disagreed that teachers can provide innovative policy-making concepts. In this case, the limited chances for teachers to share their concepts could have resulted in their discontent with the school culture. The interpretation of these findings is that it is possible that the culture within the selected public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, does not provide a clear sense of purpose and direction that would support learning. The findings in the study support earlier observations by Cansoy et al. (2020), who noted that teachers in high schools could remain disengaged from the learning process due to their lack of involvement in decision-making by the senior management. The fact that the feedback and suggestions offered by teachers may not be efficiently implemented by the school principals affects teachers' general morale and ability to perform their duties effectively. The above could result in poor academic performance.

Additionally, in assessing the organizational culture applied in different schools, teachers were asked to indicate whether they could converse about their opinions easily. Based on the findings, 30.8% of the informants strongly agree that teachers in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, are at liberty to speak their minds. Another 28.2% agreed with the statement, with 13.4% disagreeing with the statement and 11.5% remaining neutral. The findings indicate that

the culture in these institutions does not bar teachers from expressing their opinions. However, due to the lack of collaboration among the staff members, it is possible that the opinions and concerns raised by teachers are not effectively implemented or taken up by the leadership. For instance, it is possible that when teachers raise concerns about instructional practices, the school leaders do not take sufficient action. The above could explain why most teachers were discontent with the school culture. The culture adopted in an institution would, therefore, have an impact on how the instructional practices influence the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance.

Organizational culture is a vital feature of the educational organism as it contributes to teachers' productivity and students' academic performance. Despite the benefits associated with school organizational culture, most informants indicated that the culture adopted in their schools was ineffective enough to support learning. The findings are also consistent with Liu et al. (2021), who observed that organizational culture helps school administration achieve its goals by influencing the working culture of the institution, the academic performance of students, and the general performance of the school. School heads that perform better than others thus uphold strong values and beliefs, a fundamental part of the organizational culture.

The students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties were also asked to describe the culture applied in their institutions. The findings are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13: Student Perspective on Organizational Culture

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
	

The school principal has been able to maintain a culture of excellence and high performance	85	25.7 %	98	29.6 %	73	22.1 %	52	15.7 %	23	6.9 %
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Based on the findings in Table 13, 29.6% of the students agree that their principals can maintain a culture of excellence and high performance. Another 25.7% of informants strongly agreed with the statement, implying that the organizational culture in more than half of the public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties can support learning. Similarly, most of the teachers in Table 13 indicated that the culture adopted in their schools offers a conducive environment for learning. In both cases, the findings imply that the organizational culture adopted in the selected public secondary schools has impacted the performance of the students and the institution at large. However, it is also important to note that many students and teachers were neutral or disagreed with the statements on organizational culture. For instance, among the students, 22.1% indicated that they were unsure of whether their school principals had been able to maintain a culture of excellence and high performance.

In comparison, 22.6% generally disagreed with the statement. The inability of the current school culture to maintain the standards of excellence could be linked to the discontent raised by teachers on the existing culture. As a result, the sections below examine the impact of the school culture by assessing its moderation effect.

Student Performance

The major dependent variable examined in the study was student performance. The study sought to determine whether instructional practices directly impacted student performance. Table 14 is a summary of the informant's responses to student performance.

Table 14 :Student Performance

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%
Approaches in school have aided in the development of schools' performance	38	12.5 %	54	17.7 %	40	13.1 %	82	26.9 %	91	21.8 %
The school head's backing is vital for the performance	59	19.3 %	127	41.6 %	21	6.9%	45	14.8 %	53	17.4 %
The atmosphere has an impact on	88	28.9 %	95	31.1 %	23	31.2 %	60	19.7 %	39	12.8 %

performance										
The institution should continue with practices	36	11.8 %	63	20.6 %	34	11.2 %	101	33.1 %	71	23.3 %
Performance is greatly dependent on the curriculum	99	32.5 %	86	28.2 %	38	12.4 %	57	15.7 %	25	8.2%

Based on the findings in Table 14, the majority of the informants (29.8%) strongly disagree that the approaches used in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties have aided in the development of school performance. Another 26.9% of informants disagreed with the statement, which means that the approaches used in the selected secondary schools could be considered efficient in enhancing the institution's performance. The findings above imply the need to ensure that all practices are aimed at improving the institution's performance. The findings above are consistent with the observations made by Mora-Ruano et al. (2021), who argued that all systemic and managerial approaches should be designed to meet the institution's specific objectives. In this case, the specific approaches under consideration include instructional practices and the general actions taken towards improving the learning environment in an institution. When assessing whether the approaches applied in an institution have aided in improving the performance of an institution, it would be important to consider whether actions taken by school heads in managing the learning environment have been effective in improving the firm's general performance. The

response in this section on the lack of approaches that would aid school performance could be linked to the poor culture that has affected learning in institutions.

The study also examined the relevance of school heads in enhancing students' performance. A total of 60.9% of informants agreed that the backing of the school principal is important in the student's performance. The results indicate that the performance of students and learning institutions is likely to be better in schools where principals actively participate in the learning process. The findings also show that only 32.2% of informants disagreed with the statement. Among the informant who disagreed with the findings, it is possible that the school heads in their respective institutions do not adequately avail the resources required to facilitate the learning process. Similar results were obtained by Cansoy et al. (2020), who equally assessed the role of the school principal in enhancing student performance. Cansoy et al. (2020) found that schools that received principals' support performed considerably better than the rest. The backing of the school heads could also be in the context of providing instructional directions or sourcing for additional aid from stakeholders and other external bodies. Besides the resources, school heads are also critical in providing general guidance related to instruction and general learning practices in an institution. For instance, the findings in this study have shown that the school heads are directly involved in checking the performance progress of students and the work done by teachers. In this case, school principals' involvement in the learning process is vital to enhancing student performance.

The findings on approaches used by school principals and the management at large could be used to explain the current performance of the selected public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The findings obtained in this study indicate that the performance of the selected public secondary schools was below

average. The study's findings indicate a lack of commitment towards activities that would improve learning. Based on the findings, institutions may fail to commit to properly managing instructional time and other existing resources.

Informants were also asked to indicate the school atmosphere's impact on students' performance. A total of 60% of informants indicated that they trust that the atmosphere within their schools impacted students' performance. The atmosphere, in this case, refers to the general external conditions of an institution, including infrastructure and other abstract elements, such as the general attitude in the institution. The findings imply that institutions with a positive or supportive learning atmosphere will likely have better student performance. The above findings are consistent with observations made by Irungu (2020) that a school's surroundings can negatively or positively affect students' competence and understanding. Therefore, school heads should create a suitable learning atmosphere to facilitate an effective learning process.

Similarly, 33.1% of the informant disagreed that their institutions should continue existing practices to improve performance. Another 23.3% of informants strongly disagreed with the findings, which means that the instructional approaches used in most public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, may require to be changed to achieve high performance. The responses provided by the informant could be based on relatively average performance in terms of mean score posted by the selected institutions, as evident in Table 14. Similarly, the findings could also result from responses in Table 14, where most informants disagreed that the approaches used have been essential in aiding the development of the school's performance. Suppose the approaches used by the institution have not been effective in improving student performance. In that case, it means that for institutions to post better

performance, they must work towards discontinuing the current practices and adopting new approaches that would be considered more student-centric.

The results imply that for the selected public secondary schools to improve their performance beyond the current average, they need to adopt approaches and practices that would be more supportive of the learning process. The practices described above relate to instructional approaches adopted by school heads. The findings are consistent with the informant's disapproval of the principals' approaches to improving student performance. From this perspective, instructional practices adopted in learning institutions through the school heads significantly impact students' performance. Similar findings were obtained by Mora-Ruano et al. (2021), who stated that the nature of instructional practices affects students' and teachers' participation. The instructional approaches can thus demotivate or engage students and teachers.

Informants were also asked to indicate whether students' performance in their institutions depended on curriculum administration. The results in Table 14 indicate that 32.5% of informants strongly agreed with the statement, with only 8.2% strongly disagreeing. In general, 60.7% of informants agreed on the role of curriculum administration on students' performance, compared to 26.7% who had divergent opinions. The findings align with observations by Irungu (2020), who noted that the implementation and administration of curriculum provide students with a clear sense of direction on how to achieve instructional objectives. In this case, the specific ways the curriculum is administered determine the instructional practices used in the schools. Equally, the administration of curriculum specifically determines what the students are taught and the instructional methods teachers use. Therefore, effective curriculum implementation means that students are provided with the right content, which is crucial in enhancing their overall performance.

Regression Analysis of Instructional Leadership and Student Performance

Regression analysis was used to examine the effect of instructional practices on student performance. The analysis was used to answer the research questions and assess the set hypotheses. The researcher began by examining the correctness of the model. Table 15 shows the model summary of the regression analysis. Based on the findings in Table 15, the model could explain 70.4% of the variability in the variables. The model could, therefore, be considered to be fairly strong.

Table 15: Summary of Regression Model

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.839 ^a	.704	.694	.6817
a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Climate, School Mission, Curriculum Management				

Table 16 shows the model analysis. This step was to determine the significance of the entire model applied in the study. The model would be considered significant for $p = 0.000$ based on the results. The findings imply that the instructional practices used in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, significantly impact students' academic performance. The model was, therefore, appropriate for application in the research.

Table 16 :Model Analysis

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.448	3	13.816	52.767	.000 ^b

	Residual	37.703	301	.762		
	Total	79.151	304			

a. Dependent Variable: Student Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Climate, School Mission, Curriculum Management

The model in Table 16 shows the combined effects of the three independent variables, indicating that the overall effect of the model is statistically significant. As a result, regression analysis was further carried out to test the significance of the individual regressor. The results are shown in Table 17. The findings indicate that the impact of each of the three variables was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Table 17: Regression Analysis

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.584	.126		4.643	.000
	School Mission	.267	.104	.185	2.591	.014
	Curriculum Management	.369	.138	.277	2.901	.007
	Learning Climate	.447	.113	.496	3.956	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Performance

The findings in Table 17 indicate that the role of the school principal in providing instructional practices about the school mission, curriculum management, and learning climate has a significant effect on students' performance. The regression analysis results are summarized in Equation (vi) below.

$$Y = 0.584 + 0.267X_1 + 0.369X_2 + 0.447X_3$$

(vi)

The results in equation (vi) above indicate the relationship between student performance and each of the three regressor variables. The slope of the equation is positive, which means that positive changes in school mission, curriculum management and learning climate increase students' academic performance. Specifically, the model indicates that all independent variables positively affected student performance. There would be a 1.444 unit increase in student academic performance for every one-unit increase/ improvement in school mission when all other two variables are held constant. Similarly, there would be a 1.327 unit increase in student academic performance for every one-unit increase/ improvement in curriculum management, holding the other two variables constant. Also, there would be a 1.295 unit increase in student performance for every one-unit increase/ improvement in the learning environment, holding the other two variables constant.

School Mission and Student Performance

The study's first objective sought to determine the impact of a school mission on the performance of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. Table 18 shows the results of the regression analysis.

Table 18 :Impact of School Mission Statement

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.868	.126		6.860	.000
	School Mission	.576	.057	.645	10.186	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Performance

The regression analysis results in Table 18 above could be summarized using equation vii below.

$$Y = 0.868 + 0.576X_1 \text{ _____ (vii)}$$

The regression equation above returns a slope of 0.576. The above illustrates the change in student academic performance for every unit change in adherence to the school mission. The results are an indication that a unit change (1) in the variable school mission statement (X_1) would result in ($Y=0.868+0.576(1) = 1.444$) change in student academic performance. The findings in Table 18 return a significant p-value ($p<0.05$) at a 95% significant level. Based on the results, the study rejects the hypothesis that the school mission has no statistically significant effect on student academic performance. The observation made from these findings is that the mission adopted by school principals significantly influences students' performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. Study results are consistent with observations from other scholars, including Ndambuki (2020), who conducted a study in public secondary schools in Kenya and found that the school mission statement provided a guiding framework towards Specific values and attributes that would enhance learning. In this case, school mission statements are often designed around specific values such as perseverance and hard work. Adherence to such mission statements means that school principals can create cultures of hard work and competitiveness, which directly impact student performance.

The school mission statement in the study was examined from the context of school principals. Specifically, the study examined how the school principal can implement or apply the mission statements. For instance, the study informant indicated that their school principals were able to communicate the mission efficiently and ensure adherence. Communication of school mission statements by principals is also mentioned by Steinmayr et al. (2019), who found it appropriate to ensure that activities within the institution are consistent with the set values and principles. The ability of

school principals to motivate or inspire students and learners towards the school community would be best discussed in the context of the transformational leadership theory. Garcia (2023) finds the leadership model appropriate in creating a shared sense of purpose that would direct learners towards common goals. Applying the transformational theory of leadership in the study would mean that the school principal can motivate students and teachers to adhere to the values described in the mission statement. However, for school mission statements to have the intended impact on student achievement, school principals need to have a clear appraisal system that ensures that the elements of the school mission have been applied as intended by the school founders and vision bearers (Ndambuki, 2020). As a result of measures used to ensure adherence to the mission statements, the study found that the mission statements greatly influence school operations and practices.

The significant influence of school mission on student performance identified in this study could be linked to increased buy-in and commitment by teachers and students. The current study found that over 90% of interviewed students knew the school's mission. The above could also result from the fact that the school mission is broadly displayed within the institutions identified by the school principals above. The mission statement acts as a coordinating mechanism for school principals to provide a clear sense of direction to members within the institution. The findings on the impact of the school mission on the performance of students are consistent with earlier findings by Igwe and Chidi (2017), who noted that school principals use all the available meetings to communicate the school mission and ensure that teachers and students can apply the mission in their operations.

The capability of school heads to communicate the school mission efficiently is also crucial in acquiring stakeholders who would support and facilitate development.

The study found that a well-formulated mission statement makes an institution unique and distinctive. The statement also identifies the specific needs of the organization that need to be filled. The ability of school heads to communicate the mission statement to such stakeholders means that they can acquire appropriate support that would improve the institution's general performance, as observed by Ndambuki (2020). The success of school missions and their impact on student performance is achieved when teachers and staff incorporate the elements of the mission statement into the daily operations of an institution. For instance, if one of the main elements of the school mission is the commitment to excellence, incorporating these principles could mean that teachers and staff within the organization execute their tasks excellently.

Similarly, incorporating the statement into the daily curricular activities assists in streamlining the decision-making process, given that there is a single focal point for students and teachers. Equally, Igwe and Chidi (2017) noted that in institutions where the mission statement is the point of focus for stakeholders, it becomes easier for the school heads to handle divergent views that arise within the school. The ability to incorporate the mission into daily curricular activities is, however, dependent on whether the staff members are involved in framing the mission statement and other institutional objectives. Teachers and staff members directly involved in formulating the mission statement are more likely to apply it in their day-to-day activities. The impact of the above is that the statement assists in rallying the institution towards a single core purpose, which is a critical determinant of student academic performance.

Curriculum Management and Student Performance

The study's second objective was to evaluate the impact of curriculum management on the performance of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. Table 19 shows the results of the regression analysis. The

results have been used as a basis for rejecting the study's second hypothesis given $p = .000$ for $p < 0.05$. The findings conclude that curriculum management has a statistically significant effect on student academic performance.

Table 19: Impact of Curriculum Management

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.718	.129		5.564	.000
	Curriculum Management	.609	.055	.677	11.127	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Performance

The results in Table 19 above could be summarized using Equation viii below.

$$Y = 0.718 + 0.609X_2$$

(viii)

Equation (viii) above shows the relationship between student academic performance and curriculum management in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The slope of the equation is positive, meaning that a positive change in curriculum management would increase student academic achievement. In this case, considering the constant of the equation, a unit change in curriculum management (X_2) would increase student academic performance by $(Y=0.718+0.609(1)) = 1.327$. The results in this study could be interpreted to mean that the overall methods used to manage school curricula could directly impact students' performance. In this study, curriculum management describes all approaches to developing and improving the learning process. The approaches have also been assessed based on the specific measures taken by school principals to ensure the correct implementation of the curriculum. For instance, the findings indicate that the majority

of school principals can regularly evaluate teaching methods used by teachers while at the same time ensuring that the curriculum has been implemented correctly. The findings on curriculum management in this study agree with the results by Schleiff et al. (2021), who noted that the knowledge and skills acquired by students largely depend on the curriculum's management and implementation. It means that learning institutions with better management of curriculum are likely to have students with a better understanding of instructional content, which directly impacts performance.

The significant influence of curriculum management on student performance could also be linked to the ability of school principals to apply mechanisms that examine the quality of instruction offered. Similarly, under Table 14, most informants indicated that school principals can assess schoolwork frequently and offer well-timed responses to students and teachers. In this case, the ability of school principals to incorporate feedback from teachers in the instruction process is a critical determinant of successful students. While the curriculum applied in the selected public secondary schools is developed at the national level, teachers are tasked with actual implementation by creating lesson plans. The school principals, therefore, regularly inspect the practices used by teachers to ensure that they are consistent with the needs of students and the institution.

In most cases, school principals achieve the role in collaboration with other teaching staff as required under the participatory theory. Under the theory, curriculum management would require an inclusive approach for the principal and teachers (Arina et al., 2023). However, Ogwunte et al. (2022) noted that school principals still maintain more control in decision-making. As a result, part of curriculum management would entail balancing instruction time. In this case, the school principal ensures that the right amount of time is allocated to different subjects in line with their significance. As

evident in the study by Ndambuki (2020), balancing instruction time would also involve ensuring that different aspects, such as assessments and real-world applications, are allocated adequate time. Each aspect described above indicates that curriculum management would influence student performance.

Learning Climate and Student Performance

The third aim of the study is to examine the impact of learning climate and its impact on student performance. The impact of the learning climate was examined by focusing on the role of the school principal in creating a conducive learning environment. The findings in Table 20 show that the specific approaches adopted by the school principal in creating an appropriate learning climate have a significant effect on students' academic performance ($p = 0.00$).

Table 20: Impact of Learning Climate

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.654	.123		5.301	.000
	Learning Climate	.641	.052	.711	12.203	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Performance

The results in Table 20 could be summarized using equation (ix) below

$$Y = 0.654 + 0.641X_3$$

(ix)

Equation (ix) above shows the relationship between student academic performance and learning climate in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The slope of the equation is positive, as evidenced by the standardized

coefficient of 0.711, indicating a strong positive relationship between learning climate and student performance, which means that a one-unit change in the learning climate would result in an increase in student academic performance by a margin of 0.641, holding constant value at zero. In this case, considering the constant of the equation (0.654), one-unit change in the learning climate (X_3) would increase student academic performance by $(Y=0.654+0.641(1))=1.295$. The findings in Table 20 provide a basis for rejecting the third hypothesis of the study for $p<0.05$. The study hypothesized that a positive learning environment has no statistically significant effect on students' performance. The conclusion made from the findings is that a positive learning environment has a significant influence on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The findings obtained in the study are consistent with observations made by Bubale et al. (2021), who noted that positive learning environment experiences motivate students to work better, given that there are limited barriers to the learning process.

The current study focused on the concept of the learning environment from the ability of school principals to acquire the resources required to support learning. Findings under the learning climate above reveal that most of the school principals can acquire extra resources to support the learning process. The school principals were also found to be able to strategically allocate resources in the most appropriate areas that would support learning based on the specific priorities of the institution. Similarly, Baranova et al. (2021) also stressed that a positive learning environment has sufficient learning facilities and instructional materials to support learning. For instance, one of the major challenges experienced in most public secondary schools is inadequate resources due to a higher student ratio. Under such environments, students with

inadequate learning materials are unlikely to post better results due to the lack of appropriate resources.

Resources could also be examined from the perspective of teachers. In this case, teachers in an environment without adequate instructional materials are unlikely to offer sufficient teaching services to the students. Under resources and learning environment, the number of staff available within an institution has also been found to determine students' performance. Regarding the above, the study found that the school principal has a responsibility to incorporate support staff to ensure that students have access to all the required support services. The above creates a positive learning environment by ensuring that classrooms have adequate teachers to meet students' learning needs. In such situations, the role of school principals would extend to seeking specific support and assistance to improve the learning environment.

Learning climate can also be evaluated from general well-being and attendance. Students in schools with positive learning environments are more likely to be motivated to attend school or class, ultimately affecting their classroom performance. The findings in this study agree with earlier observations by Taylor and Richards (2018), who noted that a positive learning environment improves the relationship between students and teachers, directly impacting student performance. School environments that foster a good relationship between students and teachers are likely to have teachers who are more involved in the student's lives, which improves their general well-being. Equally, a good student-teacher relationship means that students feel fully supported by the institution regardless of their background and ability levels. The above findings result in improved students' confidence and self-esteem, improving their general attendance and attention in class. In such ways, a positive learning environment could be linked to student academic performance.

Under the learning environment, most informants indicated that school principals in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties can promote collaboration among the teachers. The above results mean that teachers can learn from each other and work together towards improving student academic performance. Similarly, collaboration would bring together instructors with different abilities, enabling them to leverage each other's strengths to improve student performance. Besides, the study also found that school principals could create a positive learning environment by supporting teachers in their career and professional growth. In this case, creating an environment where teachers are supported to advance professionally results in committed staff able to meet the specific needs of their students. The findings also relate to the general well-being of teachers so that they are in the right state to offer instructional guidance to the students. In this case, the ability of school principals to create a positive learning environment by supporting the needs of teachers plays a critical role in improving students' performance.

Moderation Analysis of Organizational Culture on Instructional Leadership and Student Performance

The fourth objective of the study was to examine the moderating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between instructional practices and student performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. During the analysis, two models were created. The first model examined the direct impact of instructional practices on student performance. The second model involved the addition of the interaction term. In this study, the interaction is represented by INTER1. The second model sought to examine whether the addition of INTER1 could improve the prediction or effects of instructional practices on student academic performance. The summary of the model findings is shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Summary of Regression Model

Model Summary ^c									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.761 ^a	.580	.562	.55050	.562	149.291	1	303	.000
2	.784 ^b	.615	.603	.59613	.035	15.699	1	302	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Instructional Practices									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Instructional Practices, INTER1									
c. Dependent Variable: Student Performance									

An important factor to consider in the findings in Table 21 is the R-squared. In the first model, the interpretation of up to 58% of the variability in the identified variables could be explained by the model. With the addition of the interaction effect, the variability changed to 61.5%. In this case, the change in R-Squared was 3.5%. This means that the moderating factor's interaction effect increased the model's variation. The change described above would also be considered significant given that $p < .05$. The conclusion that can be made at this point is that the moderating effect of the school's organizational culture is significant. The impact of the independent and moderation variables on student academic performance is summarized in Table 22 below.

Table 22: Moderation Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.288	.212		6.078	.000
	Instructional Practices	.365	.162	.568	2.397	.002
	INTER1	.115	.029	.679	3.962	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Performance

The interaction effect (INTER1) showed moderation analysis in the study. Tabel 22 shows the interaction effect of the moderation variable on the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance. Considering the p-value of the interaction effect variable, $p < .05$, the moderation effect of the organizational culture would be considered significant. The study hypothesized that the school organizational culture has no moderation effect on the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The findings in Table 22 serve as a basis for rejecting the null hypothesis. The conclusion made at this point is that organizational culture has a moderating effect on the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance.

The findings obtained in the study are consistent with observations by Leithwood and Sun (2018), who noted that the school culture has a remarkable influence on institutional operations and practices, which further influences student performance. The moderating influence of the school organizational culture in this study is examined from the context of having a culture that creates a positive learning environment that supports instructional practices and improves the overall performance of students. The study established that a positive learning environment significantly influences student academic performance. Aspects of the learning environment identified in this study include the availability of resources and the ability of different stakeholders to collaborate effectively. Such learning environment elements would be ineffective or inapplicable in situations with a toxic or inhospitable school culture. Most of the informant in this study also identified that their school culture offers a conducive environment that supports learning. Such a culture encourages various aspects, such as mutual respect and openness towards different attitudes and opinions. A positive school

culture also creates an environment where students and teachers feel supported and appreciated regardless of their background and ability levels.

Similar results were also found by Liu et al. (2021), who noted that the role played by the school principal within the institution in the implementation and supervision of instructional practices assists in creating a specific culture that informs learning within the institution. For instance, one of the roles of the school principals identified in the study involves frequently checking student and teacher work to ensure that it meets the specific curriculum needs. The findings imply that such a role would have a more significant impact if it is backed by a culture that allows collaboration between the school leadership, students, and teachers. In this case, having a culture that allows collaboration among the staff members would make it easier for the school principal to acquire teacher feedback on instructional practices. The implementation of such feedback improves the general quality of instruction and has a positive influence on student academic performance. On collaboration, the effect of a collaborative learning environment would have a more significant influence on student academic performance if there is a culture that encourages frequent interaction between teachers and students. A school culture that promotes conversation during the lessons also means that students are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions, which is critical to improving instruction and the institution's general performance.

One of the factors identified in the study that would influence instructional practices is the mission statement. The study found that for the mission statement to have a more noticeable impact, it must be applied to the day-to-day operations of teachers and students. Applying the above to the day-to-day curricular activities becomes part of the learning culture within the institution. On the other hand, such activities would be best applied if a supportive culture allows institutions to import

different aspects of the mission statement into their daily activities. Creating a culture where the school mission statement guides teaching and learning activities is critical in improving student academic performance.

However, it is important to note that most of the informants indicated they were discontented with the existing school organizational culture, as shown in Table 22. The findings imply that the existing school organizational culture in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties does not necessarily result in improved learning conditions. The results could be because the existing culture does not support career and professional development, and teachers are not provided with adequate opportunities to contribute to policymaking. While the findings have indicated that school principals in the selected public secondary schools have made efforts to improve instructional practices, it is possible that the poor academic performance experienced could have resulted from cultures adopted in the schools. Based on the interviews conducted in the study, a few principals indicated that the culture within their institutions revolved around aspects such as excellence and innovation. It is, therefore, possible that such cultures impacted the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance in public secondary schools in the two counties.

The results obtained in the study show that the instructional practices adopted by school heads impact student academic performance. It is, however, important to note that for the practices to have a sustainable impact, they must be supported by an appropriate culture. The culture ensures that the instructional practices become part of the norm and are regularly applied and practised by people within the institution. The above also means that the guidance and directions offered by the school principal on instructional practices are integrated into the day-to-day running of the institution. The assertions made from the study are that public secondary schools with positive culture

can meet their instructional and curriculum goals, which results in improved student performance. On the other hand, schools with unsupportive or negative cultures are unlikely to meet instructional goals, given the limited collaboration between the school leadership and the staff members.

Results of Qualitative Interviews

This section presents the results of interviews conducted with school principals. The interview method was applied to the school administrators, given that they oversee the curriculum implementation and instructional practices. Interview recordings were obtained and transcribed into text to facilitate thematic analysis. The study had projected a sample of 37 *informants*. However, only 30 principals were available for interviews, which represents a response rate of 81.1%. The high response rate for the target sample could mean that the findings obtained could still be considered to be representative of the study context. The major themes obtained from the thematic analysis include leadership styles, school mission, curriculum implementation, learning environment, and the school culture.

Leadership Styles

Interview findings indicate that school principals use different leadership styles to manage curricular activities in their specific institutions. The most common leadership approach mentioned by the informant was the democratic leadership style. 18 out of the 30 school administrators interviewed in this study confirmed to be using this leadership style. The style involves engaging students, teachers, and others within the school community in the management process. Under this approach, students and teachers voice their opinions and feelings related to various aspects of learning to the management. The findings in this study are consistent with observations by Northouse (2021), who noted that the specific leadership methods adopted by school principals

determine their approach to handling issues that occur during curriculum implementation. Regarding the application of the leadership style, Informant 8 observed that;

“I regularly seek the input of other members, especially those in the teaching staff, before formulating major plans about the school. Equally, I invite participation from all the stakeholders as part of the decision-making process. Under my leadership, every person is encouraged to participate, and this has led to increased feelings of involvement, recognition, and satisfaction” (Informant 8).

By engaging and working together, teachers and students can own and commit to the resolutions by the top management. Previous scholars such as Li et al. (2018) noted that professional collaboration has been considered a critical factor to success in any institution. Based on observations by Northouse (2021), such collaboration is expected to lead to better decision-making, have larger support, and be more likely to be implemented. Similarly, school principals who apply the leadership style can keep the staff members working as a team, which is a critical determinant of students' performance in the institution. The informant further indicated that the style is achieved through consultation and collaboration.

“There is a culture of consultation in the school. Through consultation, I easily discuss important information, share concerns and ask for help. I have noted that consultation leads to better understanding of other people's situation leading to a more sustainable solution to every challenge. I involve the council, teachers and parent representatives. In as much as I hold the final decision-making authority, I have learnt that involving stakeholders makes it easier to implement the required decisions. This extends to smaller issues such as not assigning duties to teachers without asking them” (Informant 3).

The findings above imply that school principals who apply democratic leadership methods can motivate students and teachers toward the attainment of

common goals. The findings in the study align with observations by Gyasi (2015), who noted that the leadership style creates a supportive working environment with the highest level of team productivity, which results in better student academic achievements. Previous studies have also found the method to be effective in creating cultures of teamwork and cohesion, given that students and teachers are more likely to be committed to implementing decisions that they participated in formulating (Northouse, 2021). Equally, Gyasi (2015) has noted that the democratic leadership style has enabled principals to realize effective performance in their schools. Gyasi (2015) further argues that different secondary institutions have been lacking the required performance requirements not only because of poor facilities but also as a result of poor leadership. The findings also imply that with a democratic leadership style, school principals can offer guidance to stakeholders and participate in groups, thus allowing input from other group members.

Some informant also indicated that they base their management judgments on transformational leadership styles. The transformational leadership style is based on supporting and inspiring students and teachers to achieve their best. An example of a supporting leadership style is described by Informant 5 below.

“My approach is about encouraging teachers to be self-motivated so that they are able to execute their duties efficiently. When staff members have the autonomy to work with limited restrictions, they are able to work beyond the expectations. I mainly influence the institution outcomes by outlining high performance outcomes. In most occasions, I have been developing the staff through individual support where I build productive relationships and provide instructional support” (Informant 5).

Five informants indicated that they use different leadership styles to facilitate instruction. An example is the mix of democratic and authoritarian methods of

leadership. As outlined by Informant 9 below, a combination of the two leadership methods means that the school heads can involve students in decision-making on some aspects while taking full control of other issues, such as discipline. A combination of the leadership approaches would be effective when the school principal needs to provide clear guidance and directions on various aspects of the institution. However, the approach could face challenges, especially determining when and how to switch from democratic to authoritarian leadership.

“I apply a number of leadership styles in management. For instance, we just had democratic elections among the students. I involve teachers and students leaders in matters that relate to the students directly. However, in areas such as discipline or issues that I feel the school cannot compromise on, I apply authoritarian leadership. The leadership style has also been critical when certain decisions are required to be made urgently and efficiently and when students are required to perform tasks in a specific way with fewer mistakes” (Informant 2).

Another informant confirmed to be using a combination of transformational and delegation methods. The two approaches involve providing students and teachers with space to undertake their tasks with minimum disruption. The leadership approach promotes collaboration and engagement, and students and teachers become more involved in the learning and running of the institution. The combination of such leadership approaches establishes strong relationships between the school management, students, and teachers, resulting in school heads developing a better understanding of the approaches teachers use, as evidenced by Informant 10 below.

“My leadership style is a bit hands-off but I still have a good understanding of activities around the school. I also undertake a lot of delegation where I allow the deputy or the senior teacher to coordinate curricular activities including setting of internal examinations.” (Informant 10)

These results resonate with Zhang et al. (2021), who argue that combining different leadership styles enables school principals to realize the transformation of their institutions and the administrative activities required for institutional success. Zhang et al. (2021) further describe that by combining leadership styles, principals can reform and innovate, thus exhibiting more transformational characteristics and structuring a change-based leadership that is reliable and respected. Equally, the ability to connect different leadership styles could mean that the school heads can apply different approaches under different situations. Therefore, different leadership styles are appropriate for successful school development and improved student performance.

School Mission Statement

Principals interviewed in this study were also required to indicate whether they knew the school's mission and whether the mission statement was easily accessible. Informant 6 observed that;

“Our mission is displayed in several areas around the school beginning with the gate. It is boldly displayed to inform stakeholders and the community what the school stands for. Every person getting through the school is able to clearly identify what the institution is all about” (Informant 6).

The statement by informant six above indicates the role of the school mission in directing an institution in the right direction. The location of the school's mission statement and its accessibility within the institution provide the top leadership with an opportunity to rally the school community towards a common goal. Similarly, the strategic location of the school mission means that it could be continually repeated and communicated to students and teachers. A well-displayed shared mission plays a significant role in establishing consistency in curriculum and teaching. Such consistency in curriculum and teaching has supported students' success as the staff can

reinforce the same expectations and effective practices. The findings imply that in situations where the school mission is easily accessible to the students and teachers, it is a constant reminder of the specific values and attributes the institution stands for.

Similarly, the mission statement provides a clear framework of the decisions to be followed by an organization. The observations at this point are consistent with Carpenter and Gong (2016), who noted that teachers often consider the motivations behind their work. According to Carpenter and Gong (2016), teachers and students are likely to perform better if they can connect to larger causes. The school mission statements allow the teaching staff to work towards greater goals.

Under the school mission, informants were also asked to indicate the individuals involved in formulating the school mission. The responses for the majority of informants revolved around stakeholders and the institution's founders. For instance, Informant 3 observed that:

“I met the school mission already established, but I believe all stakeholders, including the sponsors, were involved” (Informant 3).

Similar observations were made by *Informant 11*, who noted that,

“I would say a large number of people were involved in the formulation of the mission. I would think of the initial board members, probably there were representatives from the education ministry and the community” (Informant 11).

Findings from Informants 3 and 11 above indicate that the school missions for most of the public secondary schools identified in the study could have remained unrevised since the institution's inception. The two informants' responses imply that the school principals may not have been present when the mission statements were being formulated. As a result, it would be difficult to determine whether the formulation of the school mission was an inclusive process involving all the stakeholders. The

observations above are consistent with the observation made by Barasa (2017), who found that the mission statements vary depending on the values of founding members and the institutional setting of the school. While the school founders would be considered to be the vision bearers of the institution, the mission statement needs to evolve with the changing needs of stakeholders. In this sense, teachers should know the institution's core principles and philosophical ideals. Through it, the principals can guide and inform the decisions of the stakeholders inside the institution. School principals, therefore, have a role in engaging teachers, students, and other stakeholders in assessing whether the values and goals outlined in the mission statement are still relevant to the institution.

The findings in this section imply that public secondary schools can design mission statements depending on their objectives and priority areas. While the school's mission statements are unique and vary depending on the stakeholders' interests, there is a general focus on academic performance and the institution's improvement. The major aim of every learning institution is to improve student academic performance, which is reflected in the mission statement through the various values that the institution stands for. The findings imply that institutions that can effectively implement the school mission statements could achieve the aspects of high performance and excellence described above. School mission statements should, therefore, be constantly reviewed to ensure that this specific objective is met.

Values Reflected in the Mission Statement

The school principals were also asked to indicate the specific values used to guide the institutions. This is because the school mission also consists of specific values that the students, parents, and teachers are expected to embrace depending on the objectives of the institution's founders and vision bearers. The values identified by

school principals revolved around aspects such as excellence, character, dedication, responsibility, and creativity. Based on the interviewees' responses, the values do not differ significantly from one institution to the next, as most schools have a common goal of producing well-rounded students. The most common values identified by the informant were character and excellence. On excellence, the informant argued the need to promote high performance in almost every aspect of learning. Similar observations were also made about the character as institutions strive to influence the lives of the students beyond the classroom, as explained by Informant 14 below:

“Our core values revolve around the character. The school aims at bringing up students of good character who would be of great help to the society. We believe that the character of students is a great determinant of all other elements of growth. The institutional values mainly represent the outward manifestation of students' character. The core values have also helped the students in character development by giving them a clear vision of what is expected from them” (Informant 14).

The values described above assist in creating a specific learning atmosphere consistent with the institution's philosophy and goals. One way to ensure that all stakeholders embrace the values is by ensuring that they are incorporated within the mission statement. Values should also guide how the institution plans to reach the ultimate goal or vision. Results from the interviews also indicate that the specific values adopted by schools could depend on the founders' faith and beliefs. For instance, as identified by Informant 21 below, schools sponsored or founded by religious bodies are likely to have religion-inspired values.

“We are a Catholic school. Our school values are Christian-based. I am talking about values such as compassion and honesty. These are the specific values that we would want to see in the students as they go through the school. By having Cristian based values, students have been able to think from others perspective and assist others. I

believe that the values might also help the students to their purpose in life and good things they must do for others in the society. By having moral values, students are becoming more selfless and end up putting the needs of others before themselves” (Informant 21).

Regardless of the beliefs and interests of school founders, the values incorporated in the mission statements direct the students towards specific competencies crucial in promoting social, emotional, and intellectual competencies. The values adopted by an institution also indicate the specific factors that guide the institution's decision-making process.

Each of the school principals interviewed in this study cited motivation as one of the ways of acquiring buy-in and commitment from students towards the school mission. The motivation identified by the school principals involves offering awards to the best-performing students under different categories, as discussed by Informant 10 below.

“Commitment to the school mission may be in the form of excelling in academics and other aspects of learning such as sports and maintaining discipline. The school offers awards in each of these areas to ensure that every performing student is well included. Awarding students simply implies that their hard work is appreciated. Awards have been viewed as a powerful mindset that that has encouraged the students to feel better about their good performance and have also promoted feelings of pride which goes hand in hand with excitement” (Informant 10).

Informant 10 noted that their institution used professional speakers and alumni to motivate the students towards implementing the school mission. The strategy aims to demonstrate the benefits and relevance of the school mission through the people who have gone through the same school system. In this case, the real-life success stories of alumni play a critical role in motivating students to perform better. Matsunaga (2021) observes that when students see the progress of other former students who went through

the institution, it strongly encourages adherence to institutional values and provides a sense of direction, as discussed by Informant 4 below.

“Professional talks have been very effective in providing a sense of direction and ensuring that students are motivated towards a specific direction. The impact is even more significant in situations where the institution involves alumni and previous students in the talks. I have realized that professional speakers have been bringing different perspective in the institution for they are able to turn the ideas on their heads and present them in different ways which has helped the students to see things differently. Alumni have also been encouraging the students on how they were able to turn perceived challenges into opportunities and also replace complexity with simpler approaches in the same institution” (Informant 4).

The findings above illustrate that the school mission statement is crucial in providing direction and guidance for school activities. The values reflected by the school mission direct students and the school community towards specific attributes that guide normal operations and interactions within the institution. In this case, adherence to values and elements that make up the school mission creates a culture that supports learning activities in the institution.

Impact of the Mission Statement on School Culture, Curriculum and Student Performance

The study also sought to determine how the mission statement affected different aspects of the institution. On school culture, Informant 8 indicated that;

“The school mission informs the school culture in many ways. I would think of informing the day to day activities which the culture is all about” (Informant 8).

The observations by Informant 8 above indicate the link between the institution's mission statement and the culture. In order to achieve the objectives and values outlined in the school mission statement, members of a learning institution

engage in specific processes and daily routines, which become the institution's culture. Since the school mission statement lays out the general parameters for achieving specific objectives, committing to the school mission becomes an important part of the school culture. The findings imply that the process of implementing the mission statement could end up creating a new culture for the institution. Besides the school culture, the mission statement has also impacted curriculum management. As identified by Informant 17 below, the mission statement provides clarity and direction in which the instructional practices ought to follow:

“The mission statement is interlinked with every other aspect of the institution. The teaching process follows the school mission and values which take us back to the aspect of curriculum management. Most importantly, the statement has been providing guidance for making policies and procedures that are proactive in the institution. In our institution, the mission statement has been affirmed through assessment procedures” (Informant 17).

The impact of school mission on curriculum management could also be viewed from the context of motivating staff members towards adopting instructional practices that support learning. Motivation has been viewed as an important predictor of learning and achievement that enables students to produce higher quality effort and learn more deeply, thus giving the best results (Barasa, 2017). As seen in the study, the mission statements allow teachers to focus on specific thematic areas, such as excellence, impacting the overall teaching quality. The findings above resonate with observations by Barasa (2017), who noted that schools that apply mission statements in their day-to-day operations have fewer social and behavioural problems as most people within the school community observe the values and principles that make up the school mission. Similarly, Matsunaga (2021) has noted that institutions that apply mission statements can create a vivid picture of their values and objectives. By outlining what the

institution is trying to achieve, the entire community can work together in a common direction towards goal accomplishment. For instance, if the school mission promotes discipline and commitment to excellence, adherence to the mission statement and its application to daily schooling activities means that there would be fewer cases of indiscipline that would affect learning. The link between the school mission and the student academic performance could be interpreted in the context of observations by Informant 28, who argued that:

“The belief and commitment towards the school mission could mean that the school is cultured towards excellence or other attributes that improves performance” (Informant 28).

Similar findings were obtained by Matsunaga (2021), who noted that correct implementation of the school mission is a starting point that directs the instruction process towards a specific direction.

Based on the findings above, the major effect of the school mission statements is that they motivate students and teachers towards a common goal, which improves the institution's overall performance.

Curriculum Management

The school principals were also asked to explain the curriculum implementation process within their institutions. This included a discussion on the role of the school heads in the implementation process. Most of the school principals indicated that their role was to ensure that the institutions had the right materials and resources to support the curriculum implementation. Informant 19 observed that:

“My main role is to ensure that staff members have everything they require to facilitate the process of curriculum implementation. To implement curriculum efficiently, I ensure that every staff understands how to use it responsively and

intentionally. In addition, I ensure that the programs in the curriculum can easily develop a system of training and professional development thus supporting education staff in their efforts. However, in smaller schools such as ours, the principal has to do extensive resource mobilization due to the surrounding conditions that the school finds itself in” (Informant 19).

The observations above support earlier findings by Ogwunte et al. (2022), who noted that school principals have a role in mobilizing adequate resources to facilitate the curriculum implementation. Equally, school principals should ensure that the curriculum process can assist students in developing a relationship with the content taught in schools. The findings imply that if the school has inadequate resources in terms of stationery, classrooms and supporting infrastructure, it would be difficult to achieve the goals of curriculum implementation. For instance, public secondary schools have an increasing focus on practical subjects and applying what is learnt in class to real-life situations. For effective curriculum implementation, school principals must, therefore, ensure that all resources required to support practical learning are present and utilized in the best ways possible.

The resources described in this section also include human resources. In this case, school principals have the role of ensuring that there are adequate human resources to enhance the quality of teaching and instruction. While other staff members, such as secretaries, are important for running public secondary schools, teachers are the most critical to implementing the curriculum. Proper management of teachers, therefore, remains a crucial element in the implementation process. For school principals, the above would entail ensuring that there is the right number of teachers within the school to cater for all the needs of students. Observations from Informant 1 stressed the role of school principals in ensuring that members of the teaching staff are supported to perform their roles:

“I believe that the real implementation is in the classroom. I am therefore concerned with what happens between teachers and the students. I ensure that teachers are well prepared and supported to handle their tasks. Having an effective classroom management can easily create an ideal environment for learners in the classroom. I ensure that teachers can increase meaningful academic learning for facilitation of social and emotional growth” (Informant 1).

The findings above are consistent with Bush and Glover (2016), who argued that the curriculum implementation process is likely more efficient in schools where the principal is actively involved in handling the issues raised by teachers. As observed by Bush and Glover (*ibid*), issues such as absenteeism and low morale among teachers are likely to crop up, and if left unattended, they can adversely affect curriculum implementation. The role of school principals about the above involves motivating staff while at the same time promoting fairness and equality in activities such as delegation of responsibilities. For instance, teachers involved in the research had identified in Table 14 that school principals in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, can allocate work to staff members based on their abilities. Such a strategy is crucial in promoting fairness and enhancing commitment among teachers. The rationale for the above strategies is for the school principals to address issues that would act as barriers to the implementation process.

One of the areas that would also significantly affect curriculum implementation relates to conflicts between the staff members or between teachers and students. Conflict mainly arises from various factors, such as misunderstandings of students' teachers' explanations and divergent evaluation criteria. Based on the findings in Table 14, most of the school principals agreed that school principals could manage conflicts among the teachers. Due to differences in opinions and the general worldview, it is possible that conflicts would arise among the teachers. The ability of school principals

to deal with errant or uncooperative teachers is critical in ensuring that the curriculum implementation process is not disrupted. However, some principals reported challenges in dealing with wayward teachers and preferred to refer them to the ministry, as discussed by Informant 2 below:

“Some teachers are difficult to deal with at the school. Since I am just a supervisor and not the employer, I prefer seeking interventions especially from TSC before things gets out of hand. My aim is to ensure that teacher discipline does not disrupt the learning process” (Informant 2).

As noted by the above informant, the school principals use any available strategies to ensure that the curriculum is implemented and that learning occurs as expected. Such strategies could also include soliciting support from professional learning communities and establishing collaborative teams. The efforts by the school principals to manage teachers as part of human resources directly influence performance, given that motivated and empowered teachers are likely to have better instructional practices. The school heads need to have a positive relationship with the teaching staff members so that they can easily solve any issues that may arise in curriculum management.

Despite providing the required resources, the school principals indicated that they ensure that the teachers in their institutions are well-trained to handle the needs of the curriculum. One of the requisites for correctly implementing the curriculum is to ensure that directly involved teachers are provided with the right training. In this case, the right training refers to the content-specific elements of the curriculum. Based on the observations by Informant 20 below, school principals ensure that the specific elements of instruction they desire are offered to the students through effective implementation of the curriculum.

“Providing continuous training and orientation programs for new teachers is important in the correct implementation of the curriculum. The training program has played a significant role in enhancing confidence and skills in students for engaging with new teachers regularly. Through workshops and inclusive training, teachers have become more productive for they are given enough time to focus on students rather than paperwork. The training could be internal or external. I have had instances where I demonstrate to the teachers how to teach English literature which is my area of expertise” (Informant 20).

In their role in curriculum implementation, principals are also responsible for ensuring that the classrooms have teachers at all the required times. As indicated earlier above, the actual implementation of the curriculum must take place within the schools. The presence or absence of teachers in the classroom is a critical indicator of student performance, given that teachers are required to facilitate the learning process. The findings in the study are consistent with Taylor and Richards (2018), who noted that no matter how talented the teacher is, they would only significantly influence students if they are actually in class. Absenteeism among the teachers could mean that some areas of the curriculum may not be effectively covered, affecting student academic performance. It is equally important to note that the absence of teachers within the school could result from scarcity where there are no adequate teachers to deliver on the curriculum requirements. Either way, the school principals have a responsibility to manage teacher attendance and ensure adequate teachers support the implementation of the curriculum.

Managing the Implementation of the School Curriculum

The school heads were equally required to indicate specific methods they used to manage the curriculum implementation. After evaluating the role of school principals in the implementation process, it was necessary to examine the methods applied by the

school heads and how they relate to student performance. The most common response the informant gives involves checking the professional documents and other materials used in the teaching process. For instance, Informant 7 observed that;

“I check through the instructional documents such as schemes of work, lesson notes and lesson plans to ensure that they are consistent with the required standards” (Informant 7).

The findings agree with the results from Schleiff et al. (2021), who noted that school administrators are tasked with checking lesson programs developed by teachers to ensure that the right content is offered to students. Similarly, under curriculum management in Table 14, most informants agree that their school principals regularly evaluate teaching methods teachers apply. The programs and lesson materials teachers use are compared against the existing curriculum policy documents and circulars to check for compliance. Similarly, the school principals could offer learning programs and work schedules to guide teachers' instructional process. Such strategies ensure that the institution uses the same features and formats to deliver the curriculum.

However, for school principals to efficiently manage the implementation of school curriculums, they must be able to keep in touch with reality through training that would enhance the understanding of the subjects under focus. The training programs could be workshops and seminars organized on curriculum implementation. Such training aims to ensure that school principals have the right knowledge on how to apply the curriculum to the current contexts of the organization.

Another method principals use in managing the curriculum involves soliciting feedback from students and teachers on instructional methods. The method involves the school principal regularly interacting with teachers and communicating about the

instructional process. However, the association between principals and the students and teachers is based on the existing relationship between the groups. When school heads have a poor relationship with students and teachers, acquiring credible and honest feedback from the stakeholders becomes difficult. Based on observations by Informant 12 below, the close interactions promote collaboration, which makes it easier for the principal to consider the recommendations made by teachers.

“There is a very close collaboration with staff members. I get frequent updates about teacher instruction and student learning. The feedback is very important in the decision making process” (Informant 12).

Results from the interviews indicate that most school principals could interact closely with their teachers. Similar findings were obtained by Bush and Glover (2016), who noted that teacher-principal interactions provided the school heads with first-hand knowledge of tutors' instructional practices. Similarly, the principals better understand the daily challenges teachers face in the instruction process. As a result, school heads can offer the necessary support and adjust the curriculum to meet the institution's specific needs. Implementing feedback from teachers, as described above, is critical in improving the institution's overall performance. The above also implies that with the understanding of instructional practices used in schools, principals can provide appropriate guidance and learning material to support learning.

Efficient Implementation of the School Curriculum

The study also sought to determine specific approaches that school principals use while supervising students and teachers to ensure the correct curriculum implementation. One of the approaches identified by the informant involves ensuring adherence to the school timetable and other daily routines. The approach requires the students and teachers to closely observe different schedules stipulated in the

curriculum. The study also found that schools can alter timetables and daily routines depending on the overarching priorities and the specific needs of students within an institution. As discussed by Informant 22 below, school principals supervise students and teachers to check their compliance with the timetable as part of the curriculum implementation process.

“I keep a register for students and teachers to check their attendance. I periodically cross-check the timetable just to ensure that students and teachers are where they are supposed to be at any point in time” (Informant 22).

The implications of the findings above are that the school principals can keep time for all activities by students and teachers to address any factor that may seem to disrupt the implementation of the curriculum. The findings align with observations made by Schleiff et al. (2021), who noted that school administrators have a role in managing instructional time while ensuring that the available time is well-distributed across the specific priorities of the institution. Managing instruction time through timetables affects performance, given that students and teachers can focus on the most relevant areas that would directly influence performance.

School principals can also supervise the curriculum implementation by assessing the performance of both teachers and students. Based on the response by Informant 20 below, school principals constantly follow the progress and performance of teachers through the established performance appraisal methods:

“I am able to follow the progress of every teacher through the deputy and the senior teacher. The assessment process has further provided qualitative information that has helped in determining how the students can improve their performance through changes in teaching methodologies and course materials. We have specific KPIs that must be achieved by teachers” (Informant 20).

The findings imply that the school heads can offer responses and feedback, likely to improve the quality of instruction teachers offer. Assessing the curriculum implies that teachers can be systematic in delivery as the curriculum must be relevant to the needs of the students and the entire society. Therefore, principals should enhance the effective use of curriculum resources that would lead to maximum productivity in schools. Similarly, the aspect of school principals assessing the implementation of the curriculum means that they can identify specific areas that may require external assistance and resources to ensure that students are fully supported to achieve their goals.

The findings above relate to the impact that curriculum management is likely to have on students' performance. With an effective curriculum, school principals can provide the students and teachers with a measurable plan and structure to deliver quality education. Based on the findings, correct implementation of the curriculum means that the right content is offered to students, which directly impacts their performance. Regarding curriculum management, school principals must ensure that they provide the appropriate resources to support the curriculum's implementation. The study also found that the principals are responsible for checking instructional strategies used by teachers and the content taught to ensure that it is consistent with the required standards. Findings indicate that principals and institutions that ensure correct curriculum implementation are likely to post better student performance. As suggested by Informant 20 in the above quote.

Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment

The school principals confirmed using different approaches to create a positive learning environment. A positive learning environment creates a situation where

students are fully supported to succeed in different areas of their academic lives. The most common strategy mentioned by the school principals involved providing positive reinforcement. The strategy involves rewarding students who perform well or improve in different aspects of learning. Informant 6 observed that:

“The school promotes a positive learning environment by rewarding success. As the school head, I recognize that my students have different needs, targets and levels of ability. Rewarding students is an indication that students’ efforts are being rewarded. In this institution, awards have been taken as a powerful mindset that encourages the students to feel better about their performance. I therefore believe in rewarding all those who seem to make some improvement rather than only the top performers” (Informant 6).

The strategy mentioned by Informant 6 above entails providing positive reinforcement to students regardless of whether they make a small leap or significantly improve their learning. The findings are consistent with Malik and Rizvi (2018), who observed that recognizing any progress made by students is critical in creating a learning environment that supports all needs. In providing positive reinforcement, the school management could set specific goals to be achieved by individuals or the entire class. However, when applying the strategy, it is important to consider that some institutions could use reward or positive reinforcement for control. Control means the students cannot achieve something feasible without a promised reward. In this case, students need to work at their own pace and achieve success, which the institution rewards. The above creates an intrinsic motivation system where students are generally motivated to achieve their best. Malik and Rizvi (2018) also noted that providing intrinsic motivation could also be in the form of offering praise, encouragement, and compliments for students who improve their behaviours or academics. The above creates an environment that encourages effort and learning.

Based on the responses by the school principals, a positive learning environment can also be created by building collaborative relationships. The above means that students can learn from each other as the teachers work closely together to improve the performance of the students, as discussed by Informant 24 below

“We encourage group work and working together among the students. I deliberately ask teachers to select which students belong to which groups by considering their strengths, abilities and weaknesses. Ultimately, we create an environment that is supportive of the needs of all the students” (Informant 24).

Based on the response by Informant 24 above, creating collaborative work teams brings together students with different skills and levels of abilities. The above improves problem-solving skills as both students and teachers learn new ways of handling different situations in learning. Lehl et al. (2020) noted that such practices create an environment that encourages diversity and inclusivity for students from different backgrounds. Similarly, students develop critical thinking skills in solving different tasks through collaboration, which are crucial in enhancing academic performance. The school principals, therefore, can maintain a positive learning environment by ensuring efficient collaboration between students, teachers and other stakeholders within the learning institution.

School Organizational Culture

School principals involved in the study were asked to describe their school culture while indicating how it influences their school performance. Most school principals indicated that their institutions have cultures of excellence, hard work and innovation. For instance, Informant 4 stated,

“We have created a culture of excellence especially in time management. Every student in the institution is aware of the vision and the specific actions they must

take to achieve the vision. It is almost automatic. All students know where they are supposed to be at every point in time. We hope that the culture would be transmitted to other aspects of learning” (Informant 4).

The findings above illustrate the need to create a culture of excellence within an institution to improve the overall quality of instruction. Given that culture relates to the school's norms and values, it can potentially influence all other aspects of learning. The culture adopted within the school could also be based on the general ethos of the institution. One of the observations made during the interview process is that the majority of the schools still keep close ties with the religious stakeholders who, in some cases, are considered to be the official sponsors of the institutions. Cultures developed in such institutions focus more on the holistic growth of students as they also tend to develop the behaviours and character of students.

Other school heads noted that a culture of innovation guided their institutions. The culture involves going beyond the norm of teaching and learning and developing new concepts and activities that would impact improving students' performance. The findings are drawn from the response by Informant 15, who claimed to observe a culture of experimentation among the students;

“We have a culture that encourages students to keep trying new things without restrictions. It could be new ways of learning or even trying to solve things around the school and the society. Cultural responsiveness has enabled the students to relate respectfully with the students of their own culture as well as those from different culture. We have been to science congress a lot. I think there is that culture” (Informant 15).

Applying the abovementioned culture entails improving an institution's commitment to innovative practices. For the teachers, the culture involves using existing resources to offer quality instruction. The major resource identified by the

school heads was technology. The selected public secondary schools could apply technology to improve the learning process. Another informant stated:

“There is ICT integration in lesson delivery. Specifically, there is the use of projectors in delivery of some lessons. I have realized that when teachers use projectors, students become very attentive. We have not been able to apply it in a larger scale because we only have one projector. But I believe we are making steps in the right direction” (Informant 23).

The findings above are consistent with observations by Cansoy et al. (2020), who noted that a culture of innovation in schools could be created by using technology and ICT-based tools to promote learning. The technology tools promote a culture of innovation, given that instructors can present their content in new ways, which sparks attention among the students. However, the implementation of the innovative practices has been limited by the lack of adequate resources, as identified by Informant 23 in the quote above.

The study also sought to determine the school culture's impact on students' performance. Generally, the culture adopted in the school can cause a seismic change in how teachers and students act and think and could influence how they perceive academics. In this study, it appeared that positive school culture assists in changing the existing norms towards specific activities that would change the school's daily routines towards issues that would alter their perceptions and general approach towards learning. As identified by Informant 16 below, changing the institutional culture will likely improve student academic performance.

“The school has witnessed progress over the last 3-4 years since I came in. We are now able to send a few numbers of students to the universities. The institution has been considered effective for I have not only relied on standardized test scores but also on school climate surveys for evaluation of the conditions of learning. Since I

joined the institution, school climate has been influencing the students' motivation to learn and has also improved academic achievement. We had to reinvent the general culture of the school especially in matters relating to discipline" (Informant 16).

The observations by Informant 16 above suggest that school leaders must deliberately be involved in changing various aspects of the school culture that may appear as barriers to learning and the general performance of an institution. The findings are consistent with Grissom, Egalite et al. (2021), who argue that focusing on changing cultural elements is crucial in ensuring that the culture adopted in an institution does not conflict with the values and goals of the same institution. In this case, culture should be an enabling factor for an institution to achieve its intended goals. The above plays a critical role in motivating and inspiring the students to be more engaged in their work, thus enhancing maximum productivity. The culture change must, however, begin with the actions of the school heads.

The impact of school culture on student performance can also be examined from the context of motivation. The study found that institutions which can nurture a culture of motivation inspire their students to perform better in different aspects of learning (Liu et al., 2021). The findings above support earlier observations by Anderson (2017), who noted that in institutions where the desire to learn is high, students feel motivated towards academics and are likely to perform better. Findings by Informant 26 below reveal that creating a culture of rewarding performers motivates students towards specific goals, which improves academic performance in the long term. Similar findings were obtained by Bellibaş et al. (2020), who noted that creating a culture where students are naturally motivated to learn results in improved performance on standardized tests.

“Prize-giving days have become some sort of norm in this school. We have awards in different categories to capture as many students as possible. The awards are even better at the end of the year. I guarantee this is something that almost all students prepare and look forward towards” (Informant 26).

Based on the observation by Principal 26 above, building a school culture that supports student-teacher relationships would also be critical in enhancing students' performance. The culture implies that teachers understand not just students' performance but also their needs, goals and aspirations. The findings above are supported by observations by Informant 5, who noted that;

“No matter how strong the culture is in terms of the norms and values and mission, the performance of an institution cannot improve without an appropriate student-teacher relationship. We have created groups known as families within the institution where students are able to interact with their teachers at closer and personal levels” (Informant 5).

The above findings imply that for public secondary schools to build a strong culture that supports student-teacher relationships, they must maintain an open-door policy where students are free to approach their teachers on academic or personal issues. The culture is likely to make the students feel valued by their teachers regardless of their background and levels of academic performance. Similar results were also obtained by Leithwood and Sun (2018), who observed that a strong teacher-teacher relationship resulted in a highly attentive group of students who were fully engaged in class activities. In this case, students who enjoy a close relationship with teachers feel valued and motivated to meet the tutors' expectations for intrinsic and extrinsic purposes. Equally, in such cultures, students and teachers do not feel stereotyped and are open to engaging with their peers at all levels of learning. The ultimate goal of such a relationship is improved student academic performance due to high engagement

levels. Therefore, having a culture that nurtures strong student-teacher relationships will likely create a positive learning environment that supports creativity and supports students to perform at their best.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a qualitative and quantitative analysis of instructional practices adopted by principals in select public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The impact of the instructional practices adopted by school principals is explained in the context of implementing the school mission, curriculum management and creating a positive learning environment. The study found that school principals have a role in implementing school statements, which was also found to significantly influence students' academic performance. Similarly, the instructional practices adopted by school principals influenced the management of the school curriculum, which had significant implications on academic performance, given that the curriculum determined the content offered to students. However, the instructional practices' success depended on the organizational culture, given that a positive culture would be considered to have a positive influence on the learning environment, which ultimately affects academic performance.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

The chapter presents a summary of the findings and a discussion of the implications of the findings. The discussion of the findings is linked to the study objectives. The discussion has also been used as a basis for indicating whether the intended objectives of the research have been met or not. The chapter also presents the conclusion of the findings and suggestions for practice and further research.

Summary of Findings

This study sought to examine the impact of instructional leadership by school principals in public secondary schools on student educational attainment as moderated by organizational culture. The focus was to determine whether the school's organizational culture affects the existing relationship between instructional leadership practices by school principals and student academic performance. The data used in the study was collected from the students, teachers, and school principals. Students and teachers reported their perspectives on the instructional leadership practices used by their school principals. The school principals, on the other hand, provided direct and detailed information on instructional practices in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya.

The findings in the study were drawn from three clusters of schools: sub-county, county, and extra-county schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties. The new findings obtained in the study were in regard to the moderating effect of organizational culture

on the relationship between instructional practices and student educational attainment. The study found that the school culture had a moderating effect on the impact of instructional practices on the student's academic performance. While the findings are consistent with previous works by Khan (2022), the impact of organizational culture in this study was specific to the creation of a positive learning environment where students are inspired and motivated to learn. It, therefore, means that the instructional practices adopted by school principals would have an insignificant effect on academic performance if the culture adopted within is negative and does not support positive student interactions.

All the null hypotheses defined in the study were rejected, given that all factors were found to have a statistically significant influence on student academic performance. Based on the results, the school mission adopted, curriculum management, learning environment, and organizational culture had a statistically significant impact on student performance in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties-Kenya since they had a P-value less than 0.05($p < 0.05$). Similarly, the null hypothesis on the moderating effect of school organizational culture was also rejected, which means that culture enhances the strength of the relationship between schools' instructional practices and student performance. This finding suggests that instructional practices by school principals would have a more significant effect on student academic performance in schools with supportive or positive organizational cultures. The impact of each of the variables applied in the study is discussed below:

Impact of School Mission on Student Academic Performance

One of the aims of the study was to determine the effect of the school mission on the academic achievement of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and

Nyeri counties, Kenya. Findings from regression analysis indicate that the school mission has a statistically significant influence on the performance of students for $p < 0.005$. The findings lead to the rejection of the first null hypothesis, confirming that the school mission statement has a statistically significant influence on student academic performance in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The findings imply that measures taken by the school principal to support adherence to the school mission could have a positive impact on performance by rallying the stakeholders towards a common goal.

In assessing the impacts of school mission on academic performance, the study examined the role of school principals in the application of the mission statement from the perspectives of students and teachers. The majority of the students and teachers (45.9%) who participated in the study agreed that the school administrators had put sufficient measures in place to ensure adherence to the school mission. Some of the measures identified from interviews with school principals include ensuring that the school mission is strategically inscribed in areas where it would be easily accessible to the school community. As a result, the study found that in the majority of schools, the mission statement was broadly displayed either on the gate or classroom walls, which makes it easier for the students and teachers to understand the school's major objective and the guiding principles adopted.

Further, findings show that school principals were able to efficiently communicate the school mission to the different stakeholders. A majority of students and teachers (60.1%) indicated that they understood the role of the mission statement in their institutions. It was established that school heads use avenues such as assemblies, staff meetings, and memos to communicate the mission statement and ensure that different stakeholders have clearly understood it. Understanding the role of the school mission means that both students and teachers can apply the statement in their daily

curricular activities. Evidence from the study shows that the impact of the school mission is best explained from the context of its application in the daily operations of the institution. 67.5% of the participants agreed that mission statements greatly influence school operations and routines. In this case, the mission statement would only have a significant effect on the performance of students if it is incorporated into the daily routines in the school.

Despite the observations made above on the impact of school mission, the majority of teachers (55.7%) reported that the school heads do not include staff members in the framing of the institutional goals and objectives. The preceding was also confirmed by the principals, who were of the view that formulation of the school mission is majorly a role for the top leadership and founding members who bear the vision of the institution. Similarly, in the majority of schools, the mission statement was found to be unchanged since the inception of the institution. In such instances, the mission statement may not always reflect the needs and aspirations of the institution.

The failure of school principals to incorporate students and teachers in the formulation of the school mission and other institutional objectives could have an impact on reducing the commitment of the latter. The study found that students and teachers are likely to be more committed to mission statements if they are directly involved in their formulation. In this case, incorporating stakeholders in the formulation of objectives means that teachers have a better understanding of how to apply the mission statement in their daily activities. The study has linked the above to improved student academic performance, given that teachers are able to collaborate and work towards a common goal. This suggests that poor student academic performance in the study schools could be a result of the principals' failure to apply the values in the school mission to the daily operations of the institution.

Impact of Curriculum Management on Student Academic Performance

The second aim of the study was to examine the curriculum management practices applied in the selected public secondary schools while determining their impact on student academic achievement. Results of the regression analysis indicated that the impact of curriculum management on student academic performance was significant, $p < .005$. The findings lead to the rejection of the second null hypothesis, confirming that curriculum management has a statistically significant influence on student academic performance in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The findings imply that the methods used by school heads to manage the curriculum have a direct and significant impact on the performance of students. Curriculum management in this study relates to the specific instructional leadership practices adopted by the school principals to ensure the execution of the curriculum. Findings show that the role of the school principals in curriculum management revolves around offering advice and guidance to teachers while at the same time ensuring that there are adequate resources to support the curriculum implementation process.

In the study, a total of 60.7% of the teachers believed that student performance was greatly dependent on the application of the curriculum. It means that the approaches used by school principals to manage the curriculum had a direct impact on the performance of the students. The specific activities identified by the school principal and used to manage the implementation of the curriculum include evaluating instruction methods used, soliciting resources required for implementing the curriculum and offering appropriate guidance that would assist teachers in offering the right practices.

The study established that school principals examine instructional practices used by teachers while at the same time offering timely feedback and performance

responses. Specifically, the study found that school principals in the selected public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, regularly check lesson notes, schemes of work, and other materials used to offer instruction within the institution. The aim of the above is to ensure that the materials are used consistently with the curriculum policy and compliance documents. The ability of school principals to supervise the teaching methods used by instructors means that they have a favorable understanding of the instructional practices used in schools. The involvement of school principals in assessing the content of teaching methods used in the schools means that the school heads are able to keep a tab on the instructional practices within the school. This suggests that student performance is based on the ability of school principals to assess methods used by teachers and offer appropriate feedback and guidance. Therefore, the feedback and guidance provided by school principals set the tone for the implementation of the curriculum within the institution.

Further, the study found that as the persons tasked with providing instructional leadership to institutions, school principals must have a clear understanding of the specific instructional practices applied in the curriculum administration process. The school principals' understanding of specific instructional practices used in schools is achieved by regularly evaluating the instruction methods and techniques by teachers. As a result, the school principals are able to offer evidence-based feedback that seeks to improve the process of implementation of the curriculum. In this case, the performance response offered by school principals serves as the basis for specific approaches that would be adopted to improve the instruction process. Besides feedback and performance response, the study also found that the majority of school principals express their gratitude and appreciation for the work done by the teachers. Findings from the study observed that recognizing and appreciating teachers' efforts motivated

them toward performing their roles better. Findings were consistent with Cansoy et al. (2020), who observed that motivated teachers perform their roles better, which is reflected in students' performance. Equally, Saleem et al. (2020) emphasized observations by Cansoy et al. (2020) by noting that teachers who are intrinsically motivated to perform their roles have better performance results, which improve the general student academic achievements.

One of the approaches towards the management of the curriculum identified in the study involves ensuring adherence to the daily curricular routines, including the timetable. The study established that the timetables and the daily routines assist the school principals in keeping tabs on teacher and student attendance and their ability to fulfil the goals of the different programs. The link between curriculum management and student academic performance is that institutions that prioritize student needs and the right content of the curriculum are likely to have better student performance due to the commitment of teachers towards the learning activities. The study also found that the majority of participants had reported that the school principals had put up appropriate quality mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the curriculum. The quality mechanisms provide thresholds upon which the content offered would be evaluated.

The study found that the majority of secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties lacked adequate supporting infrastructure that would ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum. However, a majority of students and teachers indicated that their school heads were able to mobilize the appropriate resources required in the administration of the curriculum. The resources identified in the study include human resources, where the school heads are tasked with the role of ensuring that there are adequate numbers of teachers to efficiently meet the needs of all the

students. The study found that there is a need to ensure that existing resources are strategically allocated on the basis of needs and priority areas for learning institutions. The study also found that the actual implementation of the curriculum took place within the classroom with the assistance of the instructors. As part of curriculum management, the study found that school principals have a role in checking the welfare of the teachers, such as ensuring that duties are fairly allocated to the instructors. The study also found that despite checking the overall welfare of teachers, school heads have a responsibility to promote the professional development of staff members and ensure that teachers have the necessary skills and knowledge required to support learning. The above could be achieved by conducting regular training to equip instructors with relevant knowledge on curriculum implementation.

The study ascertained that school principals were unable to manage conflicts that arose during the implementation of the curriculum. The school principals were of the view that sometimes it becomes difficult to deal with uncooperative and dissenting members of the staff. However, conflicts and differences between the school principal and staff members could have an impact on curriculum management, which further affects student academic performance.

Impact of Learning Environment on Student Academic Performance

Findings from regression analysis indicate that learning environment had a significant influence on student academic performance ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis set for the third objective of the study was rejected. The conclusion made was that a positive learning environment improved the performance of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya.

In this study, the influence of the learning environment on student performance was examined in different contexts, including the ability of school principals to adopt practices that promote collaboration between staff members and the students. Based on the study results, only 35.1% of teachers believed that school principals were able to promote collaborative practices. The impacts of collaboration on student academic performance have been examined by previous scholars, including Hanushek (2016) and Liu et al. (2021), who found that positive collaborations between teachers and school principals were critical in improving student academic performance. As noted by Anderson (2017), school principals have a responsibility to promote collaborative working where students and teachers are motivated to do their part, which directly impacts their performance. The lack of collaboration in this context could mean that teachers become disengaged in their work and have limited contributions to learning, resulting in poor academic performance of students.

The low collaborative practices described above could be explained in the context of the leadership styles adopted by the school principals. The majority of the school principals interviewed in the study reported that they applied a democratic, participative method of leadership. Inconsistent with previous scholars such as Mburuki and Thinguri (2022), who found democratic leadership to be appropriate in public secondary schools, findings in the current study indicate that the method did not improve collaboration between the students and teachers. Based on interview responses, the application of democratic leadership is only evident in the context of students and teachers selecting their representatives but absent in important decision-making. The findings imply that students and teachers do not fully participate in the decision-making process, as school principals remain the final authority. The leadership

style described above has an impact on creating an engaging learning environment where teachers feel involved in the firm.

The study found that school principals have a role in securing and allocating resources that would improve the outward learning environment. Based on the responses by the school principals, some of the public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya have inadequate resources and materials to support learning. The results indicate that resources are critical in improving student performance by supporting specific areas of learning. Findings from both students and teachers indicate that school principals were able to solicit resources to support learning. Similarly, based on the responses by the school principals, the focus on resources would be crucial in filling the existing learning gaps, especially in lower-tiered schools, which are poorly funded and the management is unable to effectively mobilize external resources. The resources examined in the study also included human resources such as teachers and support staff. The study found that school principals have a responsibility to ensure that students have access to an adequate number of tutors who would facilitate the learning process.

Moderating Effect of School Organizational Culture

More than half of the teacher participants (51.7%) indicated that they were not content with the existing school culture. This suggests that the existing school culture did not conclusively meet the needs of the teachers. The study rejected the fourth null hypothesis that organizational culture has no moderating effect on the link between instructional practices and student academic performance ($p < 0.05$). Study results imply that the impact of instructional leadership strategies adopted by school principals is dependent on the specific culture adopted in the school. Previous studies conducted on

public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, linked the performance of students in the two counties to instructional and classroom practices as well as the presence of resources to facilitate learning (Kangangi, 2018; Njuki, 2018; Waweru et al., 2013). The findings obtained in the study offer new insights into the moderating effect of school organizational culture on the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance.

Under the moderating effect of school organizational culture, participants' responses indicate that there were low engagement levels in the schools, with only a fifth of teachers confirming that school principals engaged them in the policy-making process. The findings are an indication that the majority of public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya, lack a culture of collaboration between teachers and principals. Previous studies have shown that creating cultures of collaboration and engagement between teachers and management is critical in enhancing student academic performance (Bubale et al., 2021; Hallinger & Walker, 2017). The poor engagement levels between the school principals and the teachers, as described above, could be among the major causes of poor academic performance across the two counties. An analysis of examination results at the time of data collection showed that the general performance of the students was low, with a majority of the institutions having a mean score of below four (4). It means that most of the students in the selected public secondary schools had scored D+ and below and would be unable to pursue further studies in diploma and degree courses.

The study established that the moderating effect of the school's organizational culture creates a positive learning environment, which improves the quality of instruction offered and further influences the performance of the students. A considerable number of participants (39%) agreed with the statement that the existing

school cultures are able to offer a conducive environment for learning in the public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The environment described in the study includes a situation where students, regardless of their background and social abilities, feel appreciated and motivated to learn. Findings indicate that the culture adopted by school principals in various institutions can influence almost all spheres of learning. Having the right and positive culture could, therefore, mean that different areas of learning are positively affected.

The study shows that the school heads had attempted to create cultures of innovation and hard work within their institutions. This is because school principals were of the view that these cultures are crucial in creating conducive learning environments within the institutions. However, as indicated above, the majority of the teachers had indicated that they were not fully content with the existing culture. The findings illustrate that despite the efforts put forth by school principals, the organizational culture in the selected public secondary schools was not strong enough to have a significant influence on student academic performance. The study found that school principals must be able to identify elements that are likely to affect the learning culture and ensure that the management efficiently addresses them. In this way, the culture adopted in an institution could have a moderating influence on the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance. The teacher participants also indicated that for their schools to achieve higher levels of academic performance, schools needed to redefine organizational practices. The findings suggest that the institutions need to develop new organizational cultures that would assist in providing direction and guidance to instructional practices.

Implications

The following theoretical, methodological, and policy implications arise from the findings obtained in the study.

Theoretical Implications

The current study contributes to existing theoretical models on instructional leadership adopted in public secondary schools. Results indicate that most of the school principals in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties apply participative leadership theory. This involves providing students and teachers with opportunities to voice their opinions on matters related to the implementation of the curriculum. The current study advances the application of the participative leadership theory by emphasizing consultative decision-making that involves principals, teachers and students. Other school principals claimed to use transformational leadership theory. The method entails inspiring students and teachers towards positive change. Findings also show that some school heads use more than one leadership style. A combination of different approaches to leadership was found to be effective in addressing different situations within the schools. Leadership styles enable school principals to embrace teachers' and students' opinions regarding different aspects of learning. The above was found to bolster students' morale by airing their views and opinions regarding different aspects of learning, which motivated them to perform better. The application of the theories was found to be effective in improving the competence of the school principals and the educational attainment of students.

Methodological Implications

The current study made use of mixed methods in examining the instructional practices used by school principals and their impact on student academic performance. The two methods were conducted concurrently, which made it possible to examine the

phenomena under study from two different perspectives. Specifically, the use of qualitative thematic analysis assisted in examining relevant themes on instructional leadership strategies applied in public secondary schools from the perspective of the principal. The effects of qualitative thematic analysis were also confirmed through regression analysis, which assisted in examining the link between different elements of instructional practices and the performance of students. The study affirms that a combination of the two methods would be important in examining the extent to which instructional practices by school principals would assist in improving student academic performance.

Policy Implications

In terms of curriculum management, there is a need for clear policy guidelines in regard to the involvement of teachers. While school principals offer the necessary resources required for the implementation of the curriculum, it remains unclear on the extent to which the rest of the staff members should be involved in the development of the curriculum. Equally, the demands of the school community, as well as the increasing number of stakeholders, have increased principals' roles, which means that the school heads could experience challenges in the balance between management activities and the supervision of teaching methods. The current study affirms that for better student academic performance, school principals should have the ability to effectively communicate the school mission, manage the implementation of the curriculum and the creation of a positive learning environment. In this context, there is a need for policy formulation on the specific competencies of the school principals.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to examine the instructional practices adopted by the principals in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The study concludes that instructional practices applied by school heads, in general, have a significant influence on student academic performance for students in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The instructional practices applied by school principals were examined in the context of the school mission statement, curriculum management and learning environment. The objectives of the study were met through the application of mixed-methods research. The methodology involved collecting quantitative data from students and teachers and qualitative data from the school principals. A comparison of results from different methods improved the overall credibility of the study.

With regard to the mission statement, the study found that the application of the school mission statement has a significant influence on the performance of students in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya. The findings indicate that the school principal has a role of efficiently communicating the school mission and ensuring that students and teachers clearly understand its contents. The curriculum adopted in public secondary schools was also found to have a significant influence on the performance of students. The findings are based on the specific activities undertaken by the school principals. For instance, the majority of participants indicated that the school principals had put efficient measures to ensure the implementation of the curriculum.

Similarly, the findings also indicate that the majority of the school principals in public secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya were able to provide all the resources required for the implementation of the curriculum. Equally, the school heads supervise teachers' and students' work to determine whether they are consistent

with the existing curriculum and policy documents. The study also recommends that school principals should take lessons to have first-hand experience and understanding of instructional practices and curricula used in the institution. The study also examined the learning environment in the context of the ability of school principals to provide resources that would aid student learning. The resources examined in this study include physical and human resources. Study results indicate that the majority of the school principals could locate and secure resources that would aid in the improvement of student learning. The preceding was, however, dependent on the type of school students attended. Students from sub-county schools had access to limited resources compared to others in the county and extra-county schools.

The study also examined the moderating influence of school organizational culture on the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance. The study found that the organizational culture adopted in schools improved the impact of instructional practices on student academic performance. The findings imply that the impact of instructional practices on student academic performance is likely to be more significant in situations where there is a positive and supportive school organizational culture. The study established that school culture creates a conducive environment for learning, which makes it possible to apply the relevant instructional practices. Study results indicate that the majority of school principals have created cultures of hard work and excellence which support learning in their institutions. Such cultures make it easier for school principals to ensure adherence to curriculum implementation and various practices that support instruction. This suggests that the implementation of the instructional practices would be insignificant to student academic achievements in environments where the school culture is toxic and negative. The above is based on the fact that a majority of the teacher participants

indicated that they were not content with the existing culture within their institutions. The above could be linked to poor academic performance in such institutions. The study, therefore, concludes that there is a need to ensure that instructional practices are applied in a positive culture that would support rather than act as barriers to the learning process. The study recommends that school principals should be involved in modelling desirable behaviours and creating consistent norms and values which build into the main culture of the institution.

Recommendations

In the following section, the study presents recommendations for policy, practice and further research from this study.

Policy Recommendations

The study found that the general performance of KCSE in public schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties is gradually declining. The research recommends that the TSC take effective measures to prevent academic decline at KCSE in the two counties. TSC can achieve the above by enhancing the use of the Teachers' Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, which enhances school curriculum supervision. School principals and the TSC should appropriately supervise TPAD tool implementation to gauge its efficacy. If executed appropriately, secondary school academic performance can acquire a much-required boost from TPAD.

The study also recommends that the Ministry of Education should ensure that it takes a keen interest in how professional development in-service education of teachers is carried out. According to Amunga et al. (2020), the necessity for in-service education of teachers should be considered since it is a requirement for enhancing teachers' professional growth and the missing gaps in most secondary schools between demands

and actual academic achievement. The Ministry of Education should also formulate policies that will ensure that school principals actively participate in professional development designed mainly for teachers so that they can comprehend and support their outcomes.

Recommendations for Practice

The study recommends that the school mission be regularly revised to ensure that it fits the current needs of the students. Findings by Matsunaga (2021) indicate that in most public secondary schools, the school mission and goal statements remain unchanged in the face of a changing education environment. Follow-up interview questions with the school principals revealed that most of the mission statements have remained unchanged since the beginning of the institution. It means that if a public secondary school is half a century old, it is possible that the mission statement could be quite as old. In most cases, the mission statements were formulated by the school founders, who were the vision bearers. As a result, such statements may not always be relevant to the interests of current stakeholders.

Besides regularly revising mission statements, the study also recommends that the mission be formulated collectively with the interests of all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students and the school leadership. Therefore, leadership development by relevant institutions should ensure that practising and aspiring school principals are capacitated in the area of teamwork and the role of teamwork in enabling the above to happen. Many school principals claimed to be democratic leaders, but this was not evident in implementing the school mission. Furthermore, students and teachers are likely to be more committed to school missions if they are directly involved in their formulation.

The study further recommends that school principals should also enrol in curriculum-related training courses. In this case, the success of implementing the curriculum is based on the principals' knowledge and the ability to apply the right instruction methods. Due to the dynamic nature of the learning environment, it is recommended that school principals should not just rely on curriculum knowledge acquired during their college/university education. As observed by Taylor and Richards (2018), more training programs play a critical role in augmenting principals' knowledge. School heads could achieve the above by attending workshops and seminars organized by the Ministry of Education and other professional bodies within the sector. The curriculum knowledge can also be increased by enrolling in further curriculum or management studies. Such training would be critical in improving the professional preparedness of school principals engaged in curriculum implementation.

The study recommends that school leadership should promote teachers' professional development by ensuring that teachers attend in-service education and training. Through supervision during teaching and learning, the school principals should ensure that teachers appropriately put into practice the knowledge, skills and expertise learnt during in-service education and training to ensure that students benefit from the investments of professional development. In line with the implementation of knowledge and skills gained through teachers' professional development, this study recommends that teachers who participate in the training and whose students attain high academic achievement should be rewarded and recognized to enhance competition amongst teachers. The research also recommends that school principals should create platforms in their schools where teachers who have undergone training can educate other teachers to ensure that all teachers implement the new knowledge that all students have acquired.

The study also recommends that the school leadership encourage collaborative organizational culture among the different stakeholders of their schools. The study identifies that one of the challenges in implementing the curriculum is the absence of resources supporting learning. Most public secondary schools may lack adequate resources regarding learning materials and other supporting infrastructure. It is therefore recommended that the school principals should have the ability to collaborate with external stakeholders that would allow them to acquire appropriate resources required in the institutions. The resources available for learning have been found to be a significant factor in the implementation of curriculum and directly impact student academic performance. Collaborative practices should also allow teachers to work closely with the students in the achievement of instructional objectives. Teachers have been found to be the most critical factors in the implementation of curriculums. Their collaboration with students will be crucial in solving the issues raised by students and improving the general performance of students.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is suggested that researchers should conduct the same study with the same variables but directed towards private secondary schools in Kirinyaga and Nyeri counties-Kenya. Given that this study only focused on public secondary schools, studies on private secondary schools are [necessary for comparison. Such studies would be important in determining whether private secondary schools have the same instructional and cultural issues that affect learning. The comparison can help educational stakeholders address the impediments to effective learning.

Future studies should also examine other factors likely to moderate the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance. There

may be other factors, other than those investigated in this study, that may affect the relationship between instructional practices and student academic performance. A broader evaluation of such factors would be critical in developing a wider understanding of student academic performance in public secondary schools.

The current study only focused on the school principal's role in applying instructional practices in public secondary schools. However, other instructional leaders, such as the deputy principals and heads of departments, contribute to the development of instructional practices. Future studies should consider whether the instructional practices of these other leaders have an impact on student academic performance. It is therefore suggested that future studies should include perceptions drawn from other instructional leaders within the school setup.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Student Performance



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR BASIC EDUCATION

SUMMARY OF GRADES IN KIRINYAGA COUNTY																			
YEAR	TOTAL	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	X	Y	U	P	W	MEAN SCORE
2020	12152	15	163	300	452	682	1015	1389	1748	1724	1997	2304	298	125	2	10	16	0	4.646889401
2021	12823	18	130	286	453	651	986	1280	1645	1879	2361	2640	445	127	2	4	13	0	4.439054823

SUMMARY OF GRADES IN NYERI COUNTY																			
YEAR	TOTAL	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	X	Y	U	P	W	MEAN SCORE
2020	18380	25	220	509	838	1064	1491	2032	2331	2298	2660	3663	969	124	0	5	12	0	4.619
2021	19811	34	211	395	600	926	1406	1927	2254	2411	3062	4283	1893	410	25	2	7	2	3.32858544


DR. PETER MUNENE GICHOBII
FOR: REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
CENTRAL

FOR:
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
CENTRAL
P. O. Box 80 - 10100,
NYERI

Appendix II: Introductory Letter

Pan African Christian
University
PO BOX 56875
Nairobi

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Research Request

I am writing to inform you about a research that I am undertaking. I am a PhD student at Pan African Christian University conducting a research on instructional leadership and its impact on student performance in Kirinyaga and Nyeri Counties. The findings of this study could be used to inform the best instructional roles that school heads should take to improve student performance in National examinations in the county.

I hereby request that you assist in participating in the research by filling the questionnaire and allowing your students and staff to equally participate.

Your participation will be highly valued. The safety and confidentiality of all the information is assured.

Yours faithfully

Michael Mwangi Waraga

Appendix III: Consent to Participate in the Research**Consent to Participate in Research**

I have read and understood the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Name:

_____ (please
print)

Signature:

Date: _____

Appendix IV: Information Sheet

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIRINYAGA AND NYERI COUNTIES

Invitation

I would like to invite you to participate in a study to examine the link between instructional practices and student performance in two major counties, Kirinyaga and Nyeri. Kindly take time to go through all the instructions and the requirements of the study. If you have any questions concerning the study, do not hesitate to contact us.

Selection

You have been selected to participate in this study either as a teacher, student, or school head. Kindly note that your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may accept or decline to participate in the research process. Also, note that you can withdraw from the study at any point by informing the researcher. You will also be required to sign the consent forms as an indication of your willingness to participate in the research.

What you have to do

Once you sign the consent form, your role will be either to fill out the questionnaires (teachers and students) or participate in an interview (principals). Beyond filling out the questionnaire and participating in the interviews, there will be no other requirements from you as a participant.

Benefits

The main benefit of the research is that it will assist in the understanding of the role played by school heads in enhancing academic performance. The study will also be beneficial in the understanding of organizational culture as a moderator between instructional practices and performance. The findings will only be used for academic purposes, and there are no intended risks or harms.

Confidentiality

All the information related to the study will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any third party without the consent of the participants.

Ethical Issue

The study has been ethically approved by the PAC University ethics committee.

Contact Information

For further information, kindly contact Michael Waraga.

Appendix V: Principal Interview Schedule

1. Describe your leadership style
2. What leadership practices do you apply in the institution? How do they support student learning?
3. What is your school mission? Is it easily accessible within the institution?
4. Who was involved in the formulation of the school mission?
5. What values are reflected in your school mission?
6. How has the school mission affected the school culture, curriculum implementation and school performance?
7. What measures have you taken to ensure buy-in and commitment of your students and teachers towards the school mission?
8. Describe your role in the curriculum implementation process
9. Explain the methods that you use to manage the implementation of the school curriculum
10. How do you supervise teachers and students to ensure efficient implementation of the school curriculum?
11. What strategies do you use to maintain a positive learning environment?
12. Explain how you manage instructional time
13. Which methods have you put in place to support teachers' professional development?
14. Describe the current school culture. How does the current school culture influence student performance? Explain.

Appendix VI: Questionnaires

Questionnaire for Teachers

Please respond to the following questions by simply checking the appropriate boxes. The data supplied will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Kindly do not publish your name on any question on the survey questions.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

1. Kindly specify your age group
 20-25 years 36-45years 36-45 years old over 45 years old
2. Please specify your current academic level College Graduate
 Post Graduate
3. Please specify gender Male Female
4. Specify your teaching duration at the institution

0- 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 to 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 to 11 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 15years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Kindly indicate the type of your school
 Extra-county , County , Sub-County
6. What is your major field of study in your highest graduate degree
 Education Social and Behavioral Sciences Physical Sciences
7. Kindly indicate the mean score for your KCSE examinations over the last two years

	2020	2021
10.00 -12.00		
7.00 -9.99		
4.00 -6.99		
1.00 -3.99		

Section B: Principal Instructional Leadership Practices

This section seeks to assess instructional leadership at your institutions, you are requested to rate the role of your school principal in meeting instructional roles under the following dimensions; school mission, curriculum management and creating a positive working environment.

School Mission

Please specify your level of agreement with the statement by simply checking the relevant ones in the following table, where Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

S. No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	The Principal has been able to effectively communicate the school mission					
2.	Principal has put measures to ensure					

	adherence to the school mission					
3.	School operations and practices are greatly influenced by the mission statement					
4.	Students and Teachers understand the role of the school mission					
5.	The Principal includes the staff in framing of the institutions objectives					

Curriculum and Infrastructure Management

Please specify your level of agreement with the statement by simply checking the relevant ones in the following table, whereby Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3 , Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

The school principal;

S. No	Statement The School Principal;	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Has put efficient measures to ensure the implementation of the curriculum					
2.	Regularly evaluates teaching methods used by teachers					
3.	Provides the required resources to support implementation of the curriculum					
4.	Allocate work to staff based on abilities.					
5.	Express gratitude for teachers' exceptional performance.					
6.	Offer well-timed performance response to teachers.					

7.	Manage complaints among teachers.					
8.	Institute an organized quality assurance mechanism in the institution					
9.	Frequently review students' schoolwork.					
10.	Integrate student evaluation information to form a basis for strategy development. .					

Promoting School Learning Climate

Please specify your level of agreement with the statement by simply checking the relevant ones in the following table, where Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3 , Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

S.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
No	The school principal;					

1.	Promotes collaborative practices among the teachers					
2.	Supports teachers in their career and professional growth					
3.	Engages parents in the attempts to improve the institution.					
4.	Initiates approaches to endorse the institution to the community.					
5.	Institutes a professional linkage with scholastic communities.					
6.	Strategically allocates resources on the basis of student needs.					

7.	Exhibits the capability to secure extra resources for the institution.					
8.	Offers or locates resources to aid in improvement of teaching practices.					
9.	Incorporates support staff for the students' benefit.					

Section C: Organizational Culture

Please specify your level of agreement with the statement by simply checking the relevant ones in the following table, where Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

S. No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	The school culture offers a conducive learning atmosphere					

2.	School culture cultivates cooperation among the workforce					
3.	School culture facilitates the development of leaders among the teaching staff					
4.	Teachers are contented with the existing working culture					
5.	Teachers are accorded the opportunity to provide inventive concepts in policy making.					
6.	There is unending association among teachers in diverse subject boards					

7.	We are at liberty to converse our state of mind, concerns, and obstructions.					
----	--	--	--	--	--	--

Section D: Student Performances

Please specify your level of agreement with the statement by simply checking the relevant ones in the following table, where Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

S. No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Approaches in school have aided in development of the school's performance					
2.	The school head's backing is vital towards enhancing student performance.					
3.	I trust the set atmosphere bears					

	an impact on student performance.					
4.	To achieve high performance, the institution should continue with the practices.					
5.	Students' performance is greatly dependent on curriculum administration					

Questionnaires for Students

Please respond to the following questions by simply checking the appropriate boxes. The data supplied will be addressed with utmost confidentiality. Kindly do not publish your name on any question on the survey questions.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

1. Kindly specify your age group
 Below 16; 16-18 Years; Above 18 Years
2. Kindly indicate your current level of education
Form Three Form Four
3. Kindly indicate the type of your school

Extra-County County Sub-County

4. Are you aware of the school mission? Yes No

5. Where is the mission statement displayed in your school?

Noticeboard Gate Classroom Walls The mission statement is not displayed

Section B: Instructional Practices, Culture and Student Performance

Please specify your level of agreement with the statement by simply checking the relevant ones in the following table, where Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

S. No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
6	The school Principal has been able to effectively communicate the school mission					
7	The school operations are guided by the mission statement					
8	The principal involves student representatives in decision making process					
9	The Principal monitors the performance of the students regularly					
10	The Principal monitors the work done by the teachers					

11	The current school environment supports student performance					
12	The school Principal has been able to maintain a culture of excellence and high performance					
13	The school Principal has provided the necessary resources required for students to perform					
14	The school principal makes the learning environment orderly					

Appendix VII: County Education Report

KIRINYAGA COUNTY

Number of Public Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga County

150

Number of National Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga County

1. Kabare Girls
2. Baricho Boys High

Number of Extra County Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga County

1. Kamuiru Boys
2. Kerugoya Boys
3. Kerugoya Girls
4. Mutira Girls
5. Ngaru Girls
6. St. Marys Karumandi
7. Kiamutugu Boys
8. Kianyaga High
9. Mugumo Girls
10. Ngiriambu Girls
11. St. Bakhita Kiburia Girls
12. Karoti Girls
13. Kiaragana Girls
14. Kiburu Boys
15. St. Marys Mwea Girls

Number of County Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga County

1. Njega Boys
2. Kiine Girls
3. Mutige Sec
4. Wanguru Girls
5. St. Marks Girls High
6. Kagumo Girls
7. Kiamugumo Girls
8. Gathambi Girls
9. Kagio Boys
10. Kibirigwi Girls



11. St. Trizas Kutus Girls
12. Karia Boys
13. St. Ann Gituba Girls
14. Murinduko Boys
15. St. Agnes Girls – Kiranja
16. Mwea Boys
17. Dr. Babla Kangaru
18. Mukangu Boys
19. St. Agatha Kanyekline Girls

Number of Sub County Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga County

114

Number of Principals in Kirinyaga County

150

Number of Secondary School Teachers Kirinyaga County

2295

Number of Form Three and Four Students in the year 2022

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
3	6479	7054	13534
4	6225	6413	12630



Source: Kirinyaga County Department of Education



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

E-Mail centralpde@gmail.com

When replying please quote
CDE/NYI/GEN/23/VOL.IV/72

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
P O BOX 80-10100,
NYERI.

6th July, 2022


Mr. Michael Mwangi Waraga
P.O Box 56875- 00200
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION: MICHAEL MWANGI WARAGA (POLD/10244/0/17)

Reference is made to the request dated 4th July 2022 on the above subject matter.

I wish to inform you that you have been given authority to do research on "Instructional Leadership and Students achievement in Public Secondary School in Nyeri County"
Appended here below, find the requested data;

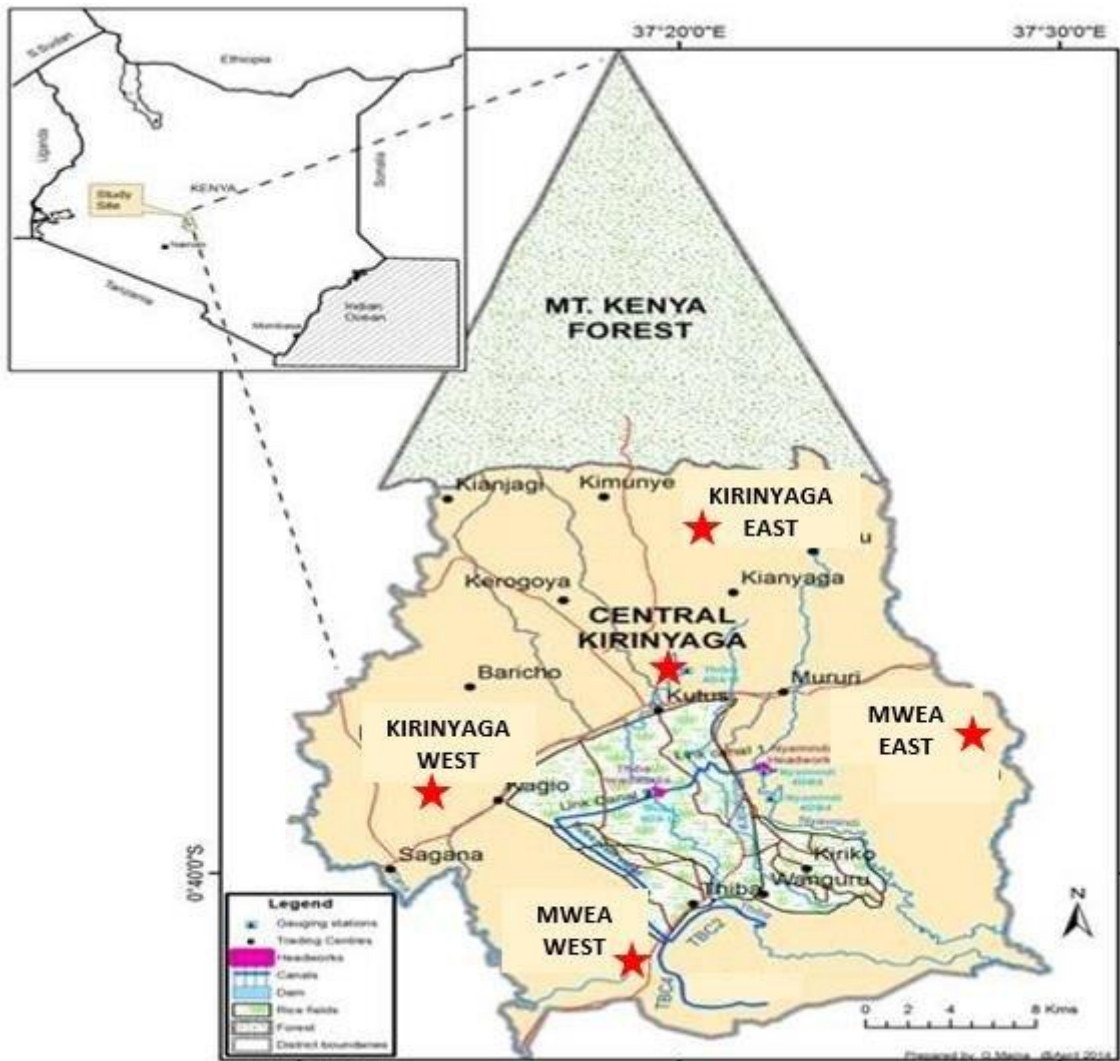
No. of Students in form 3 in 2022	19784
No. of Students in form 4 in 2022	19265
No. of National Schools	2
No of Extra County Schools	24
No of County Schools	30
No of Sub-County Schools	163


SABINA ARONI
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NYERI

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NYERI
P. O. Box 80 - 10100, NYERI
Tel: 061-2030658

Source (County Director of Education Nyeri, 2022)

Appendix VIII: Map of Kirinyaga County



Source: (Satellite, Kenya)

Appendix IX: Map of Nyeri County

Appendix X: NACOSTI License


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Ref No: 355633 **Date of Issue: 26/October/2023**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr.. Michael Mwangi Waraga of Pan Africa Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kirinyaga, Nyeri on the topic: INFLUENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIRINYAGA AND NYERI COUNTIES-KENYA AS MODERATED BY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE for the period ending : 26/October/2023.

License No: NACOSTI/P/23/01517

355633
Applicant Identification Number


Director General
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION**

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