

**EFFECT OF PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES ON
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN MACHAKOS SUB-COUNTY, MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Research Project Submitted to the School of Education in Partial Fulfilment of
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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E55-2767-2019

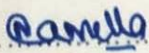
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear husband Dr. Ndambuki and our lovely children Lloyd and Lavinia, and to my father Mr. Ndunda who understood the value of education and sacrificed for me to go to school.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KNUT	Kenya National Teachers' Union
KUPPET	Kenya Post Primary Education Teachers' Union
MoE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
POYA	Principal of the Year Award
SD	Standard Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
Stata	Statistics and Data
TOYA	Teacher of the Year Award
TSC	Teachers Service Commission

ABSTRACT

The interest in school leadership is based on the belief it can significantly influence directly or indirectly, the teaching and quality of learning in schools, and as a result student achievement. This study investigated the effect of principals' administrative practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. This study was guided by these objectives: to establish the effect of human resource management practices on students' academic performance; to establish the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance; to determine the effect of students' welfare practices on students' academic performance and to examine the effect of financial management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. The study was based on the human capital theory and prudential theory. Descriptive research design was used for this study. The target population for this study were 48 principals and 400 teachers totalling to 448 respondents from which a sample of 15 principals and 120 teachers were chosen using simple random sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. Validity was established through expert judgement. The research used Cronbach alpha formula to test reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.9641 was realized indicating the consistency of research instruments. Data collected were coded and analysed with the help of Statistics and Data (Stata) analysis package. Descriptive statistics in form of mean and standard deviation were used to display the data. Inferential statistics specifically regression analysis was used to show the relationship and strength of the relationships among study variables respectively. The study found that human resource management practices and financial management practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance. In addition, curriculum implementation practices had a negative and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance. However, students' welfare practices did not have a statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. Based on the findings, the study recommends that in the aspect of human resource management practices, there is need for the principal to recognize teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education; principals ought to devise other ways of curriculum implementation practices which motivates the teachers and the students other than monitoring the classroom attendance of the teachers, regular internal assessments in the school, or even emphasizing covering the syllabus on time; and regarding financial management practices there is need for the principal to have a good administrative financial skills, ensure the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time, allow students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears, and ensure all the accounts records are well kept. The study will add to the already available few empirical pieces of literature on principals' administrative practices and public secondary school academic performance in Kenya and the world.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The chapter content includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, study hypotheses, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of study, assumptions of the study, and operational definition of terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

Education is, without a doubt, one of the most powerful tools for liberating students' minds. Education and inborn wisdom can change a person into a valued asset in a country's economic development. To obtain higher academic success, it is playing in improving the academic outcomes of learners. The interest in school leadership is based on the belief it can significantly influence whether directly or indirectly, the teaching and learning quality in schools, and as a result student achievement. Numerous educational reforms in the past years have purposed to raise the academic achievement standards among students. In Australia for instance, these reforms have placed school leadership in a position of being great interest in global education.

School leadership recognizes the principal as the primary holder of responsibilities regarding establishing school goals, supervision, and training that encourages academic performance (Betonio et al., 2020). This view seems to focus on only the role of administrators as instructional leaders. Agasisti et al. (2020) identified five main areas of administrative practices implemented by Italian school principals namely operations, monitoring, target setting, people, and leadership and based on an educational production function established that the indicators about managerial practices have

positive coefficients, but low statistical significance on students' outcomes. Operations refer to process standardization, use of best practice and decisions about school curriculum; monitoring indicates the principals' supervision of school activities and performance and the management of anomalies in school processes; target setting refers to the principal's ability of setting clear goals for the school and managing resources to reach them; people indicates whether the principle ensures the teachers' continuous professional development and can retain best teachers in the school; while leadership measures the principals' leadership skills and their ability to clearly define roles and responsibilities within the school (Agasisti et al., 2020).

Within Africa, in Nigeria Eniang-Esien (2021) revealed principal's financial management practices namely financial planning skills, budgeting skills, accounting skills and auditing skills that there is a significant influence on the quality of public secondary education. Researchers concluded that effective principals could improve student achievement by understanding the technical aspect of education and knowing how and when to adjust their administrative practices. Yet another study in Nigeria by Ossai (2021) showed there was significant relationship between Principals administrative strategies and students' academic performance. Kachingwe and Nithyanantham (2023) observed that in Malawi effective curriculum implementation is crucial in achieving high academic performance. In Tanzania Thomas and Onyango (2022) further noted that to implement the curriculum effectively, school administrators need to provide support to teachers since they are crucial to ensuring that curriculum is delivered consistently, effectively, and efficaciously to enhance learners' academic achievement and growth.

The Kenya Government has made heavy financial investments in the education sector the intention of which is enhancement of access and quality of education. Hence, it is supreme to comprehend the extent to which school management of financial resources relate to academic performance (Ngigi & Tanui, 2019). The key areas that spearhead the proper functioning of the secondary schools rely on the teaching staff skills, curriculum mastery and implementation, sound financial management skills, and student welfare (Mutiso & Itegi, 2020). Principals are directly responsible for the formulation of the school curriculum policy. They should, therefore, have a perfect understanding of the curriculum and be in a position to lead the execution process.

The inculcation of academic knowledge, skills, abilities, and proficiency among individuals is enhanced through learning and academic performance (Kapur, 2018). In secondary schools, numerous factors contribute to an essential part of improving students' academic performance. Academic performance determines the future goals and objectives of students (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). What subject they will specialize in colleges and universities, which educational institutions they will get enrolled in, what career opportunities they would take up, and so forth. Improvement and efficiency of schools are significant in the heightened competition that subjects the performance of educational standards to public scrutiny through well-known international tests and indexes. Therefore, school principals must be instructional administrators, as the key to good schools' academic performance is their role.

The commitment of the school managers towards ensuring success is also determined through internal school assessment as determined by the number of examinations that students undertake in a certain period. The number of examinations sat for instance in a particular term is an important way of evaluating the learners' performance. Internally

determining student assessment is an administrative function of the school principals. The number of internal assessments could help the students improve their academic performance. A significant volume of academic research demonstrates the role of the principals in school effectiveness (Kapur, 2018; Mutiso & Itegi, 2020). The academicians have agreeable opinion that after classroom instruction, principal leadership is the second most potent school-based factor affecting student performance, representing one-quarter of all school students' academic performance.

The school principals' leadership styles must be exclusive to ensure effectiveness and an improved learning environment (Arar & Nasra, 2020). On this basis, principals' administrative skills can lead to the academic performance improvement of the students. The school principals should forgo their self-ambitions and work as a steward for better academic results. The principals should work closely with his teaching staff, students, and parents to ensure that all stakeholders' interests are met. Historically, effective managers only needed sound administrative and political skills. But principals must now possess various leadership skills to meet 21st century demands. This is since, besides instructional and programming pressures, today's principals face budgetary constraints, student behaviour, cost planning, supervision, database management, and public relations. A principal's effectiveness in this new educational era will require intricate knowledge and skills relevant to school culture and management, besides practical academic leadership qualities.

The principal's main role is to promote academic performance which can be executed only with the required administrative strategies hence the need for principals to have sound administrative strategies that ensure a good leadership model (Wakoli & Kitaienge, 2019). With their teaching staff, school principals are responsible for school

operations' day-to-day functioning, deciding their performance direction. She adds that to achieve the desired academic performance, school principals must use best leadership practices. Since the 1980s, school management practices having been used around the world to improve academic performance.

According to Lai et al. (2014), school principals must have a mastery of the school's shared values, culture, and educational values to achieve better performance. Further, school management must work hand in hand with the Principals to ensure all the resources are available on time to create a conducive learning environment. In curriculum implementation, one of the study variables, any teacher should be in a position to prepare lesson plans, schemes of work, mark students' books and prepare the record of work covered. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that all teachers prepare the above the documents (MoE, 2018).

Teachers are among the main contributors to the education sector in any Country. They determine the course and impact of other learning materials to meet the educational sector's specified objectives (Kilonzo, 2019). In this scope, these human resources variables contribute to teachers' well-being either positively or negatively, depending on how they are applied. Such variables include employee participation, workplace burnout, job requirements, employment resources, and organizational identification, which have a retroactive impact on the secondary schools' grades as viewed by all stakeholders. Proponents, assert that sound human resources management, financial resources, curriculum implementation, and student welfare help significantly improve school performance. As educational leaders, principals face the challenge of improving teaching and learning to ensure academic success for all students. The role of the principal is rapidly changing from simply encouraging teachers' efforts to leading

teachers to produce tangible results (Betonio et al., 2020). An abundance of research supports that principals play a vital role in improving student achievement.

In Kenya's education sector, in harnessing disparity and compel other teachers to work hard, they have initiated many motivation practices. The Kenyan ministry of education (MoE), in partnership with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), unveiled rewards such as the principal of the Year Award (POYA) and Teacher of the Year Award (TOYA). These rewards aim at recognizing the teachers who have managed in their unique way to outshine their peers by producing exemplary results in their respective schools. Despite the government, through the ministry of education, providing the required resources for public secondary schools, many public schools have been recording below par academic performance compared to the private schools (Barasa et al., 2017). Experts and educational analysts linked this with the laxity of school management in running the institutions (Kagama & Irungu, 2018). Wakoli and Kitainge (2019) assessed the administrative strategies impact on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Mount Elgon Sub County. Their results revealed that continuous use of administrative strategies by principals raises the performance of their schools and there exist significant ($r=0.594$ and $p=0.004$) between the principals application of various administrative strategies on students' performance in schools. This shows that a unit increase in principal administrative strategies in a school will automatically lead to improved performance in schools.

Likewise, the best assets of any organization are human resources (Njuki, 2018). Njuki (2018) used some variables to analyze human resources in a school set up such as job demands, work resources, employee engagement, job burnout, and employee involvement, which, when considered by all relevant parties, had a positive impact on

the average grade of students. Principals are managers of financial resource in secondary schools which determines performance of any organization (Wanjala et al., 2020). Financial management is key to the success of the education sector, since education quality, operational efficiency, infrastructural development, effective implementation of educational policies and attainment of academic performance depend on prudent financial management (Mutuiiri et al., 2023).

In public schools where principal leadership skills are top-notch, the teaching staff and other subordinates will feel appreciated and strives towards making their school outshine others. In New York City, principals' selection is based on teachers with leadership talent (Clark et al., 2009). A teacher is selected not based on their long teaching experience but also demonstrated leadership skills. As Barasa et al. (2017) points out, principals must demonstrate high leadership skills to achieve quality education and improve the education system's overall performance. As these findings suggest, failed teacher leadership has potentially negative consequences, making it essential to comprehend how to promote and facilitate school principals' achievement.

In Machakos county for the past three years running from 2015-2017, the mean score performance has been below the national mean score. According to the ministry of education, there has been an on-going debate on how to avert the situation and make sure the schools attain the national mean scores. However, the Kenya National Teachers' Union (KNUT) and the Kenya Post Primary Education Teachers' Union (KUPPET) have lately complained of low morale by the teachers' employers. All unions cite inadequate salaries paid to teachers and unsafe working conditions as a contributing cause of poor results in different schools compared to their civil service peers. What compels other teachers to work hard is still a mystery in the education field.

Perhaps the core motivating factor is like that of the private business world. Therefore, the current study will look at public secondary school principals' administrative practices, such as student's welfare management, human resources management, financial resources management and curriculum implementation strategies in enhancing the academic performance of their respective schools.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Performing a school is measured by the results it records in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations and this performance comes because of the efficient role of the principal as an administrator, using varied administrative strategies (Wakoli & Kitainge, 2019). School as an organization requires proper management from the principal so the desired goals can be achieved. School administration means running the school along the desired educational policies. It considers all aspects of the school such as; human resource management, curriculum implementation, financial management, students welfare among others, and integrate them into a fruitful whole. Statistics of (KCSE) analysis in the last five years, indicate that secondary schools in Machakos County registered a mean score below that of the other schools of similar categories in other counties. The performance of KCSE examination in Machakos Sub-County is not sufficiently competitive, given that one aim of effective schools is to produce excellent grades (Mutisya et al., 2022). Reviewed studies have not exhaustively looked at how varied administrative practices principals affected on students' academic performance in schools. This study therefore sought to investigate the effect of Principals' administrative practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-County, Machakos County.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the effect of principals' administrative practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by these specific objectives:

- i) To investigate the effect of human resource management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- ii) To explore the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County Machakos County, Kenya.
- iii) To investigate the effect of students' welfare practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- iv) To examine the effect of financial management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.6 Study Hypotheses

- i. **Ho1:** Human resource management practices do not affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

- ii. **Ho2:** Curriculum implementation practices do not affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- iii. **Ho3:** Students' welfare practices do not affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- iv. **Ho4:** Financial management practices do not affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.7 Justification of the Study

The study is expected to add to the already available empirical pieces of literature on principals' administrative practices and public secondary school academic performance in Kenya and the world. The study will benefit these stakeholders. First, the Ministry of education and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya. Understanding the contributing benefits of principals' administrative practices through the current study, both parties will come into an agreement to spur educational development and thus improve schools' overall academic performance in the country.

Second, the study will benefit Machakos county educational officers by providing insights about the principals' administrative practices and formulate the policies to improve academic performance in their education system. Third, the study will also inform the Kenyan citizens, especially the Machakos county locals and residents, in appreciating the role of nonlocal principals in the area to improve schools' performance. Also, the study will act as a benchmark of other counties in adopting the same findings in enhancing academic performance in their education sector.

The study will add to the body of existing literature on the effect of principals' administrative practices on academic performance in the education sector and thus carry further studies as suggested to provide enough empirical literature in the scholarly field. Students and other researchers will also benefit from the suggestions on further studies to add to the body of existing literature in the same field of academic performance. This study will provide insight into the financial management practices influencing the performance of schools in Kenya and broaden schools' management perspectives on the importance of financial management practices in eliciting performance.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is carefully defined to ensure focused investigation while maintaining practical feasibility and methodological rigor. The geographical scope of this study is limited to public secondary schools located within Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. This geographical boundary was selected to provide a manageable study area while ensuring sufficient diversity in school characteristics and management practices to support meaningful analysis and conclusions.

The institutional scope encompasses all public secondary schools operating within the defined geographical area, including both day schools and boarding schools, mixed schools and single-gender institutions, and schools of varying sizes and resource levels. The study focuses exclusively on public secondary schools and does not include private secondary schools, primary schools, or tertiary educational institutions. This focus allows for examination of management practices within the specific context of public secondary education and the unique challenges and opportunities associated with this educational sector.

The conceptual scope of this study is limited to four specific management practice areas: human resource management practices, curriculum implementation practices, student welfare practices, and financial management practices. While acknowledging that other management dimensions may also influence academic performance, this study focuses on these four areas based on their theoretical significance and practical importance in educational management literature. The analytical scope includes descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to examine relationships between management practices and academic performance. The study employs appropriate statistical techniques to test hypotheses and draw meaningful conclusions about the effects of management practices on academic outcomes.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges several limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalization of findings. The first limitation relates to the geographical scope of the study, which is restricted to public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. This geographical limitation means that findings may not be directly generalizable to other sub-counties, counties, or regions with different socio-economic, cultural, or educational characteristics. The unique context of Machakos Sub-County may influence the relationship between management practices and academic performance in ways that differ from other geographical areas.

The second limitation concerns the focus on public secondary schools, which excludes private secondary schools, primary schools, and tertiary institutions. This institutional limitation means that findings may not apply to other types of educational institutions that may have different management structures, resource availability, regulatory frameworks, and operational contexts. The specific characteristics of public secondary

education may influence the relationship between management practices and academic performance in ways that differ from other educational sectors.

The third limitation concerns the measurement of academic performance, which relies primarily on quantitative indicators such as examination results and assessment scores. While these measures provide objective indicators of academic achievement, they may not fully capture all dimensions of educational quality, including critical thinking skills, creativity, social development, and other important learning outcomes that are more difficult to quantify. The fourth limitation relates to the potential for response bias and social desirability bias in data collection, particularly when respondents are asked to evaluate management practices in their own institutions. Respondents may provide responses that they perceive as socially acceptable or that reflect positively on their institutions, rather than providing completely accurate assessments of management practices and their effects.

The fifth limitation concerns the complexity of factors influencing academic performance, which extends beyond the management practices examined in this study. While the study attempts to control for external factors, it may not fully account for all variables that influence academic outcomes, including student background characteristics, family factors, community influences, and broader socio-economic conditions.

1.10 Delimitations of Study

The study was restricted to public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County excluding private or other types of schools. The researcher only focused on the effect of principal's administrative practices as defined by the research question on the

following; human resource management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices, and financial management practices potentially excluding other leadership styles or supervisory practices. The respondents were principals and teachers of the selected public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. The study was confined to Machakos Sub-County, which is a defined geographical area, excluding other regions or counties. The study measured student academic performance using specific indicators like KCSE scores, excluding other aspects of student life or school performance.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

These assumptions were used to guide the research: principal's administrative practices namely human resource management, curriculum implementation, students' welfare, and financial management affect academic performance. The study assumed that teachers, students, and principals responded honestly and openly to research questions and surveys.

The study also assumed that the sample size is large enough to draw meaningful conclusions about the entire population of schools in the sub-county. The study assumed principals hold significant influence over school climate, policies, and teacher practices; and that the administrative practices observed in the study were typical of how principals generally operate in the schools. In addition, the study assumed that specific administrative practices are causally related to changes in student academic performance.

Furthermore, the study assumed that the public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County are representative of similar schools elsewhere in Kenya. It also assumed that

the overall education system and policies within the sub-county remain relatively consistent during the study period.

1.12 Operational Definition of Terms

Principals' Administrative Practices:	Refers to the specific actions, policies, and strategies implemented by school principals to manage and administer the school, including leadership, resource allocation, and instructional supervision.
Curriculum Implementation:	Refers to the practical application of the secondary school curriculum, including lesson planning, teaching methods, and assessment practices within the classroom and the school environment
Human Resource Management:	Encompasses the policies and practices related to staff recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, and overall well-being
Financial Management:	Refers to the practices used by principals to handle school funds, including budget preparation, allocation, control, and stakeholder involvement
Students' Academic Performance:	Measured by the students' grades and scores in subjects taught in secondary schools, with a focus on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE).
Public Secondary Schools:	Refers to government-funded secondary schools within Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

Machakos Sub-County: A specific administrative unit within Machakos County, Kenya, where the study is conducted.

Machakos County: A geographical region in Kenya where the study is focused.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive literature review in line with the research objectives and past studies on principals' administrative practices. To identify the research's knowledge gaps, the chapter primarily presents a theoretical framework, a critical assessment of the literature, and a summary of the literature. In addition, the chapter gives a conceptual framework showing the linkage between principals' administrative practices namely human resource management, curriculum implementation, students' welfare and financial management, and academic performance.

2.2 Concept of Administrative Practices

Principals who actively observe classrooms, provide constructive feedback to teachers, and implement mentoring programs tend to see improvements in student learning. Access to learning materials, equipment, and technology is crucial for effective teaching and learning. Principals who prioritize resource allocation and procurement contribute to a more conducive environment for student success. Training and development programs for teachers, especially in areas like instructional strategies and assessment, are essential for improving teaching quality and ultimately student performance. Effective communication, student participation in decision-making, student welfare management, and the fair administration of school regulations also contribute to a positive school environment and can positively impact student academic performance. Studies have also explored how administrative practices interact with broader educational policies. For instance, welfare management strategies, when

implemented within the framework of school policies, can significantly impact student discipline and behaviour.

2.3 Concept of Academic Performance

Principals' roles in overseeing and guiding teachers' instructional practices are crucial. This includes observing classrooms, providing feedback, and fostering professional development. Effective supervision can lead to improved teaching methods, better lesson planning, and more engaging learning experiences for students. Research suggests a strong positive correlation between principals' administrative practices, especially instructional supervision, and students' academic performance. A lack of supervision or ineffective supervision can lead to inconsistent teaching practices, poor lesson delivery, and ultimately, lower student performance. Examples of effective practices include classroom visitation, checking students' records and teachers' professional documents, and engaging in peer teaching among staff. Mentoring, where experienced teachers guide and support new or less experienced teachers, is a vital aspect of instructional supervision and can contribute to improved student outcomes. The role of principals extends beyond classroom supervision to include overall school administration and leadership, which also influence the learning environment and student success.

2.4 Principals' Administrative Practices and Students' Academic Performance

2.4.1 Human Resource Management Practices and Students' Academic Performance

Human resources are the only assets in an enterprise that can control operations carried out helped by other resources, such as money. Because of this, exceptional human resource management is required for any organization to function effectively. Failure

to do so will result in chaos and will jeopardize success. “When principals create a supportive and encouraging work environment that is student-focused, promotes group experiences, and fosters effective feelings, most teachers are more dedicated to their duties” (Lai et al., 2014).

All parties involved in the school's operations must be represented in any decision-making process, and school principals must ensure this happens. To improve student success, it is essential to create a peaceful and harmonious school environment (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020). School principals have a solid human resources relationship with the schools they are responsible. The principals' complete and accurate approach within the organization results in individual policies such as decisiveness, awareness, and creative ideas.

A study from Italy by Agasisti et al. (2020) employed an educational production function to investigate the impact of managerial practices implemented by Italian school principals on students' outcomes, using micro-data provided by the National Evaluation Committee for Education (INVALSI) for 2013/14 school year. Agasisti et al. (2020) established that the indicators about managerial practices have positive coefficients, but low statistical significance. Their framework identified five main areas of management namely operations, monitoring, target setting, people, and leadership. Operations refer to process standardization, use of best practice and decisions about school curriculum; monitoring indicates the principals' supervision of school activities and performance and the management of anomalies in school processes; target setting refers to the principal's ability of setting clear goals for the school and managing resources to reach them; people indicates whether the principle ensures the teachers' continuous professional development and can retain best teachers in the school; while

leadership measures the principals' leadership skills and their ability to clearly define roles and responsibilities within the school (Agasisti et al., 2020).

The holistic approach to human resource management has both positive and negative consequences for both individuals and organizations, depending on how it is implemented. Gratification, accomplishment, tolerance, and dignity are some of the positive results. Successful learning, increased student enrolment, management improvement, and increased teacher engagement are all holistic approaches in organizations. Stress, worry, frustration, anguish, annoyance, and powerlessness were among the negative impacts experienced by the individual (Mutiso, 2021). The school will have difficulty supporting teacher innovations, highlighting the relationship between school principals and teachers, and will experience dissatisfaction and emotional tiredness syndrome. Principals with this type of experience are more likely to run a successful classroom.

Participants in decision-making, ranging from parents to local representatives to staff to students, help reduce priority conflicts and promote harmony. The ability to keep the school environment calm is essential for improving academic and co-curricular performance. Principals who recognize the contributions of their teaching staff, including subordinates, and who recognize and reward hardworking teachers in their teaching disciplines consistently have solid educational outcomes in national exams (Njuki, 2018).

On this basis, the MoE and TSC have various rewards, such as the principal of the year award (POYA) and the Teacher of the Year Award (TOYA) (MoE, 2018). These rewards aim at recognizing the teachers who have managed in their unique way to

outshine their peers by producing exemplary results in their respective schools. Therefore, to motivate other teachers to work effectively towards improving academic performance in their various disciplines, human resources management is key.

According to the existing literature, the ball is on the principals' shoulders to fulfil the government's quality education goal. However, quality education can only be delivered if principals' leadership qualities are oriented toward complete, sustainable, and coordinated human resource growth (Kilonzo, 2018). Education is important for human resource growth because it contributes to the success of human resources. The condition requires human resource management to succeed in evaluating objective behaviour rather than emotion.

None of the reviewed studies has established the effect of principals' administrative practice in particular human resource management on academic performance, despite principals instilling positive work values besides affection, personal care, and warmth for the subordinates before they can lead. In return, the principals' caring attitude will strengthen the subordinates' sense of competence and self-sufficiency (Lai et al., 2014). Subordinates eventually will reduce the salience of dependency, personalized relationship, and status differentials among the leader-follower relationship. These eventually allow his subordinates to look for more freedom autonomy, and recognition and contribute to the school's well-being. This current study will fill the gap.

2.4.2 Curriculum Implementation Practices and Students' Academic Performance

Curriculum is described as "all strategic activities that are studiously planned and regularly carried out under the teacher's supervision." All circumstances that result in learning because of the school's arrangement and organization and unusual activities

inside and outside the classroom, an official schedule, or the syllabus are considered to have considerable priority. Similarly, curriculum is defined as “all tasks undertaken by students to achieve their academic objectives.” Curriculum implementation is, therefore, the formation of a formal curriculum system focused on learning and teaching principles. Implementing a curriculum is critical to successful classroom teaching.

The curriculum refers to all events that students must partake in to meet their academic goals. Therefore, curriculum planning is the formation of a formal curriculum system focused on learning and teaching principles. Jonyo and Jonyo (2019) discovered that implementing a program is critical to successful classroom teaching because it establishes a detailed learning schedule and the subject, goals, and implementation process. It also defines the topic, priorities, and implementation plan and a comprehensive learning schedule. Extracurricular practices and events are equally significant as those formally described in publications.

A study in Atlanta Georgia by Chan et al. (2022) examined principals’ perceptions of their roles as curriculum leaders in high, middle and elementary school levels. The study employed a qualitative design with direct personal interview technique to collect data. Principals from 22 high schools, 24 middle schools, and 36 elementary schools from five school districts in the Atlanta area participated in the study. Principals’ responses were coded by categories of curriculum development, organization, implementation, evaluation, and improvement. The findings show that principals’ perceptions of their curriculum leadership roles had more in common than difference among school levels in all the categories of curriculum development, organization, implementation, evaluation, and improvement.

In Rwanda, Modeste and Andala (2022) assessed the relationship between secondary school teaching factors and academic performance of students in science subjects in lower public secondary schools using a sample of 126 respondents drawn from the target population of 185 respondents. The findings revealed there is a statistically significant low positive relationship between curriculum implementation and the school achievements where $r = 0.291$ and $p\text{-value } 0.019$ is less than 0.05 , implying that at certain extent curriculum implementation contribute to the academic performance.

The learner receives information or expertise in a structured classroom environment and defined rules and regulations through a well-managed curriculum implementation exercise. The importance of the learner is stressed in the curriculum implementation phase (Gacheri, 2017). The learner acquires the intended interactions, expertise, talents, concepts, and attitudes during the implementation process. This viewpoint further stresses that curriculum implementation, as implemented, is an instructional program.

The school heads with adequate and prolific teaching staff coupled with objective supervision, meets the expectation of the effective curriculum implementation, which leads to improved learners' needs, skills and attitude and academic performance in KCSE performance, but, when schools are understaffed, the few teachers are overloaded and overstretched thus affecting curriculum implementation. Previous research on curriculum implementation has shown that consistently adopting and adhering to an integrated curriculum advances student academic performance goal. According to Gaard et al. (2017); Hersi et al. (2016) there are various benefits to teacher help through curricular and instructional reform to enhance application adherence. Encouraging teachers and maintaining grade coordination will help stabilize educational outcomes (Hersi et al., 2016).

Daily monitoring of classroom learning is used in schools to observe effective teaching. As a school principal, he can promote learning by facilitating desired improvements in teachers' professional conduct. Good educational oversight necessitates that they are knowledgeable instructors and stay up to date with new changes in the program and teaching management in general (Gaard et al., 2017).

The dismal performance in schools is attributed to the laxity of principals enforcing curriculum implementation strategies. Educational experts call such principals armchair leaders. The work of armchair principals is to sit in an office without visiting classrooms to see how teachers discharge their teaching duties. In such a scenario, principals have no clue about what goes on in their school. According to Osiri et al. (2019), effective principals are always alert in discharging their mandate. They constantly check how teachers effectively implement the curriculum in coverage of the syllabuses. A good principal should always give feedback about their evaluations of the teaching method employed by his staff.

The teaching staff has the primary objective of completing the syllabus. The teaching method should, therefore, be disciplined and ordered. Teachers and students must implement moral and ethical characteristics within the classroom. It is vital to enhance the cooperative relationship, friendliness and coordination between teachers, students and schoolmates. Classroom management's effectiveness incorporates well-organized and effective management of the learning objectives, education strategies, learning processes, etc. If there are discipline and effective communication between people, it helps them learn effectively and improve their academic performance (Kaptich et al., 2019).

A study in Kiambu County sought to establish the impact of monitoring teaching and learning process has on learners' performance academically. Contrary to other studies, the study illustrated that monitoring of teaching and learning process, singly, does not translate to enhanced learners' performance academically. This finding contradicts the findings of many scholars who hold the view that a strict monitoring practice by principals has a positive influence on students' academic performance (Irungu et al., 2019). These contradictory findings are an indication of existence of a research gap. Hence it was vital for this study to be conducted to establish whether the present study would agree or disagree with the other majority of scholars.

2.4.3 Students Welfare Practices and Students' Academic Performance

The inculcation of academic knowledge, skills, abilities and proficiency among the individuals is enhanced through learning and academic performance. In secondary schools, numerous factors contribute an important part in enhancing the academic performance of students. Academic performance determines the future goals and objectives of students (Kapur, 2018). What subject they will specialize in colleges and universities, which educational institutions they will get enrolled in, what career opportunities they would take up and so forth is greatly influenced by academic performance.

According to Gaftandzhieva et al. (2021) class attendance, class schedules, lesson plans, exams, evaluations, and involvement in contests or other activities contribute to a student's educational excellence. The emphasis exerted by parents and others on teachers and principals to increase student achievement has helped schools to devise cutting-edge initiatives. This includes encouraging additional courses for pupils, implementing classroom management approaches and educational techniques, using

technologies, praising students for successful success acts as a motivator. When they reach poor grades, they typically strive harder to better. Teachers would be encouraged to learn and enhance their student success if they adopt plans for rewarding successful performance. High school learners, mostly from upper-class and affluent backgrounds, are mindful of and hope to achieve a successful future.

School principals should have resources to build students' academic success. The essential resources include: textbooks, notes, instructional materials, hand outs, technology, library facilities, and science labs, particularly in science subjects (Brew et al., 2021). Students can understand academic principles and research better if given the requisite resources and equipment. Some students, especially those from deprived, impoverished, and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, seldom afford the textbooks needed for learning; thus, they must rely on library resources and classmates to access the reading materials.

The principal, teachers, and school personnel carry out the management duties of arranging, coordinating, managing, and directing activities. The principal has the exclusive authority to make decisions (Kalangi et al., 2021). Principals should be taken at one's discretion by consulting others and soliciting feedback and recommendations from teachers or school personnel. The management and school heads play a significant part in shaping the students' achievement. When proper guidelines, procedures, and administration are in place, students' academic success will increase.

A research by Kosgei et al. (2017) on the level of students' involvement in decision making and organizational effectiveness of secondary schools was conducted in Chepalungu sub-County, Bomet. The study utilized a descriptive research design to

gather the information from student leaders and principals. The study findings revealed that organisational effectiveness of the school had improved due to student leaders' involvement in decision making exercise.

They should have sufficient expertise and awareness about subjects they study and use of technology, new and creative approaches in the teaching process, overseeing discipline, leading classes and school events, and well-organized tasks (Mutiso & Itegi, 2020). Teachers can be strict sometimes, but they should keep it at a minimum. Teachers' ultimate focus should be to improve student's academic success and contribute to their successful growth. For learners, studying is a difficult task. It would help if you had perseverance, diligence and awareness to improve your learning. Students must preserve their cognitive functioning to produce high-quality academic results. Whenever a student is healthful, he can play a pivotal role in learning. Factors like tension, anxiousness, despair, mental distress, psychosis or physical ailments prove to hinder their academic performance. Principals, therefore, must provide counselling services to students. Students must take pleasure and look positively at their classroom and school practices.

Consuming a nutritionally balanced diet, doing extracurricular work, being calm and studying, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle will enhance mental well-being, thus improving students' performances (Laposha & Smallfield, 2022). Therefore, the school management must ensure the provision of healthy meals that can enhance students' well-being. When students encounter challenges and obstacles, they must request guidance from someone else. Parents and teachers must provide help and support to students who cannot reach the desired academic results rather than become upset with them. They could also inspire and motivate students to improve in future exams. They

should therefore recognize and address students' imperfections. Teachers should rehash ideas, provide classwork assignments, and develop a complete understanding of concepts when students find certain areas hard to grasp.

Schools in Kenya's secondary education system led by principals who are collaborative, integrative, and inspirational and who effectively delegate responsibility to teachers and staff also have students who are highly disciplined, according to a study of the correlation between principals' administrative styles and student conduct (Mestry, 2017). Discipline, is defined, as the ongoing process of regulating student and staff actions. It is essential to smoothly operating any school; without it, academic excellency will be hard to achieve. Discipline, as further noted by Tavares (2015), helps students to take ownership of their actions and learn to live with the results.

There are many challenges and obstacles that students face in high school. Others might engage in abusive and illegal behaviour, substance addiction, HIV and other sexual diseases, adolescent pregnancy, forced abortions, and poverty. These causes have a significant effect not only on their academic success but also on their private lives. This may impair their therapeutic approach, and they may even suffer from depression, trauma, or stress of varying degrees. Counseling services and counseling facilities must be provided in schools to help students resolve issues, focus on their education, and be active community citizens. Individuals who serve as psychologists must practice in a specific field and have the proper experience, qualifications, and skills. Therapy can help with various topics, including career, education, anxiety, tension, fitness, and family problems. Therefore, school principals must provide necessary counselling services to students to enhance their psychological well-being (Shihundu et al., 2019). According to a study conducted by Wanzala (2019), students start riots in schools due

to numerous unsettled, inherent grievances and challenges in schools, such as poor living conditions, being subjected to mock exams, poor management, victimization, tough stands principals, influence from other schools, poor facilities, and drug and alcohol abuse.

2.4.4 Financial Management Practices and Students' Academic Performance

Financial management is a fundamental issue in any organisation. Proper accounting and financial skills will enable school principals to run the organisation objectively. Financial management in schools is the performance of administrative activities associated with schools' financial phases to provide quality education (Aina & Bipath, 2020).

In America a study conducted by Allis (2004) in his study on financial management discovered that no organization had ever succeeded without financial resources. Therefore, it was important for organizations to utilize their finances effectively to enhance their academic performance. Despite the importance of this resource to the organization Norman et al. (2015) in their study discovered that financial resources were prone to mismanagement and misappropriation by those in charge hence negatively affecting academic performance of schools. The studies adopted descriptive research design and were done in America while the current study was done in Kenyan public secondary schools particularly Machakos Town Sub County.

In France Crouch and Wrinkler (2008) in their study established that most countries had decentralized financial management in their schools which promoted accountability therefore this positively affected academic achievement in schools. In their study they discovered that prudent financial management practices positively

influenced academic performance among the surveyed institutions. The financial resources were used to procure basic learning materials that supported learning therefore affecting positively on academic achievement.

In Nigeria Eniang-Esien (2021) assessed principals' financial management skills and the quality of public secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The population of the study comprised 243 principal and vice-principals and 353 account officers and account Clerks from eighty-one (81) public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State which amounted to 596 respondents. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in selecting a sample of 413 respondents in the study. The findings revealed that; there is a significant influence of financial planning skills budgeting skills, accounting skills and auditing skills by principals have a significant influence on the quality of public secondary education.

To realise the ideal of quality inclusive education, proper financial management is vital. Existing literature indicates that the mismanagement of school funds is largely due to principals and the school governing bodies (SGB) in many schools not having good working relationships with stakeholders and lacking the financial skills in schools in townships. Lack of financial management skills and proficiency, incomplete knowledge of policies, poor monitoring and control of funds, as well as a lack of honesty, openness and trustworthiness are the causes of most financial mismanagement in public schools (Rangongo et al., 2016).

Like any other kind of business, educational institutions all over the world require proper financial management to run efficiently. Without it, they risk misappropriating

their funds, which would have a negative impact on their performance (Aliyu, 2018). Sustainable development is often a determining factor in whether an educational institution succeeds in providing quality education (Ackom-Wilson, 2016; Munge et al., 2016; Okeze & Ngwakwe, 2018). The quality of learning and assessment in secondary schools depends on the head teachers' capability to keep efficacious, efficient, balanced, flexible, appropriate, and reflexive financial management with a sustainability focus.

As in other developing countries, Kenya's educational sector relies heavily on sound financial management to ensure that schools can fulfil their outlined mission and vision. Providing adequate funding to schools is essential to achieving quality education that is both equitable and exemplary. High schools require sufficient funding to improve the quality of education under minimum requirements across three interrelated areas: infrastructure and services, curriculum, and human resources availability. One of the most crucial prerequisites for successful curriculum implementation and high-quality education delivery is proper financial handling of educational resources. This can be done through well-established and solidified school-based income-generating projects, such as the rental of school-owned halls, vehicles, and playgrounds to neighbouring communities needing such resources (Amos & Koda, 2018). Therefore, rather than relying solely on the government and school fees, head teachers must be authorized and equipped to generate funds through non-budgetary sources of funds (Amos & Koda, 2018).

To ensure that all schools' financial reports are accurate and transparent, it is imperative that school principals keep a close eye on their budget estimates regularly (Munyalo & Njoka, 2022). If such statements were prepared monthly, at the very least, steps could

be taken to identify and ultimately fix financial challenges before they become crises. Therefore, it is important for school heads to have experience with creating and implementing school budgets to link school improvement strategies to financial resources. Finance is a key resource that determines performance of any organization. Principals are managers of financial resource in secondary schools.

A study by Wanjala et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between principals' financial management practices and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County. The target population was all principals, deputy principals and heads of department in public secondary schools in the Sub-County. Stratified random sampling was used to select the study sample. 180 respondents, comprising of 33 principals, 33 deputy principals and 114 heads of department, were picked from 33 sampled schools. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis collected using questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis guide. Descriptive statistics involved frequencies, percentages and means while inferential statistics involved Spearman's Rank order correlation. Wanjala et al. (2020) established a strong positive relationship between principals' financial management practices and academic achievement in public secondary schools, whereby, principals with high scores on financial management practices recorded high academic mean scores in their schools.

Ngigi and Tanui (2019) conducted a study in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya which adopted correlational research design and stratified sampling technique was used to select 57 principals out of the target population of 191 principals in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. A bivariate and multivariate correlation analyses were employed in data analyses using data collected with a closed-ended, self-administered principals'

questionnaire. Ngigi and Tanui (2019) established a weak positive correlation of 0.152, with an associated p-value which exceeds 0.05, between financial management practices and performance. In addition, financial management level did not significantly predict the level of performance since the estimated coefficient of 0.122 had an associated p-value which was greater than 0.05, and hence not statistically significant. Particularly, principals should know how to put together a budget. Knowledge of financial principles and guidelines is just one example of how these abilities benefit school administrators. After that, principals and superintendents need to put in the time and effort to learn how to effectively monitor and evaluate the school's budget. One of a principal's primary responsibilities is to ensure that the limited resources of the school are managed effectively and efficiently, with an eye toward the school's top priorities.

In addition, school heads should be familiar with auditing to identify financial problems, prevent fraud, and trace the origins of surpluses or deficits. Given that schools obtain money from a wide range of sources (County and national grants, city and county taxes, donations in kind, endowments, etc.), they should have someone on staff with auditing experience checking accounting books. The integrity of those entrusted with schools' finances should therefore be assessed through inspections and audits (Espinosa, 2017). It is the responsibility of the school principal, who also serves as the internal auditor, to review the school's income and expenditure accounts and to verify the school's financial statements to ensure that the school is adequately funding its operations to ensure that students receive a high-quality education and that student achievement increases because of improved teaching and learning.

2.5 Knowledge Gap

This new study in Machakos County, Kenya, builds upon existing knowledge by focusing on how specific administrative practices of principals, including human resource management, curriculum implementation, student welfare, and financial management, impact student academic performance in public secondary schools. This research sought to identify key factors and specific practices within each area that have the greatest influence on student achievement. The study addresses the existing knowledge gap by focusing on the specific administrative practices of school principals within the Machakos Sub-County.

The key areas of focus are human resource management which included practices related to teacher recruitment, training, compensation, and overall well-being, which can significantly influence classroom instruction and student learning. The study examined how principals oversee the implementation of the curriculum, including the provision of teaching and learning resources, which directly impacts student access to knowledge and skills. Student welfare encompassed practices related to creating a safe and supportive learning environment, addressing student needs, and promoting overall student well-being, which can impact attendance, engagement, and academic performance. The study investigated how principals manage school finances, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to support instruction, infrastructure, and other essential services that contribute to student success.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between principals' administrative practices and student academic performance. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for school principals, policymakers, and other stakeholders to improve

school leadership, enhance teaching and learning, and ultimately, improve student academic achievement. This study contributed to the existing body of knowledge by providing a more granular understanding of the link between principals' administrative practices and student academic performance, particularly within the context of public secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings can inform policy decisions, improve school leadership training, and ultimately contribute to more equitable and effective education for students in the region.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 Human Capital Theory

Human capital is described by Wuttaphan (2017) as the pool of competencies, skills, sociological and psychological characteristics, including imagination and reasoning capabilities, embedded in the willingness to execute labor to generate economic benefit. It is an aggregate economic perception of the human acting within societies, seeking to grasp the social, biological, cultural, and psychological complexities as they engage in overt and economic transactions.

Many theories explicitly connect investment in human capital development to education, and the role of human capital in economic development, productivity growth, and innovation has frequently been cited as a justification for government subsidies for education and job skills training (Almendarez, 2011; Kuzminov et al., 2019). This sub-section reviews and extends the literature on the social returns to human capital accumulation, emphasizing the social returns to education. Here and in what follows, “social returns” are the sum of a human capital unit’s private and external marginal benefits. The focus is on the study of the problem of human capital externalities does an individual’s personal decision to accumulate human capital confer

external benefits or costs on others? This theory could help to provide insight in this study on how school principals in secondary education and how much they will invest in it. The stakeholders also understand their contribution towards the success of their respective schools.

2.6.2 Prudential Theory

This theory was propounded by Laffer (1980). According to this theory everybody including school managers must know how to handle and spend money wisely. According to him, to be prudent simply means to spend money wisely to achieve maximum goal. It is essential to note that prudence implies being careful acting only after careful thought, fore thought or planning and exercising sound judgment in the management of practical affairs (Kinyanzii et al., 2019). In handling financial resources, the school administrator should eliminate wants and reduce unproductive costs in terms of time and money.

The finances for learning institutions are used for daily operations and activities of concerned institutions. In the case for secondary schools, school principals and administrators are charged with the responsibility of planning the school budget to achieve the objectives of the school and more so effective financial management (Munge et al., 2016). Delay in disbursement of funds to institutions, lack of adequate training of educational heads, negligence of school financial clerks among others are factors that fuel poor management of funds in institutions in Kenya (Aina & Bipath, 2020). On the same note, poor state of schools in Kenya was because of poor financial management skills such as the inability to generate revenue internally and misappropriation of existing resources.

According to Munge et al. (2016) the government of Kenya has been influencing financial management in schools and institutions. This is through financial regulations such as financial management policies that involve imprest management, financial auditing among others, credit management policy and inventory management policy. It is noted that many schools especially in Machakos County have failed to follow the recommended government financial management practices. Understanding what school financial management entails and compliance with the legal requirements when making financial decisions are vital requirements for achieving effective financial management in schools (Aina & Bipath, 2020).

The theory relates to the study as it helps to understand the how principals' financial management skills have helped their schools perform better than other schools. Most schools in Kenya have poor structures and working conditions which contributes to poor academic performances in KCSE exams. However, some schools have best structures and been performing well because school principals have the concrete financial administrative skills.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. The conceptual framework is used to show the relationship between the dependent, independent variable with the intervening variables. Figure 2.1 illustrates that the principals' administrative practices namely human resources management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices and financial management practices directly affects students' academic performance.

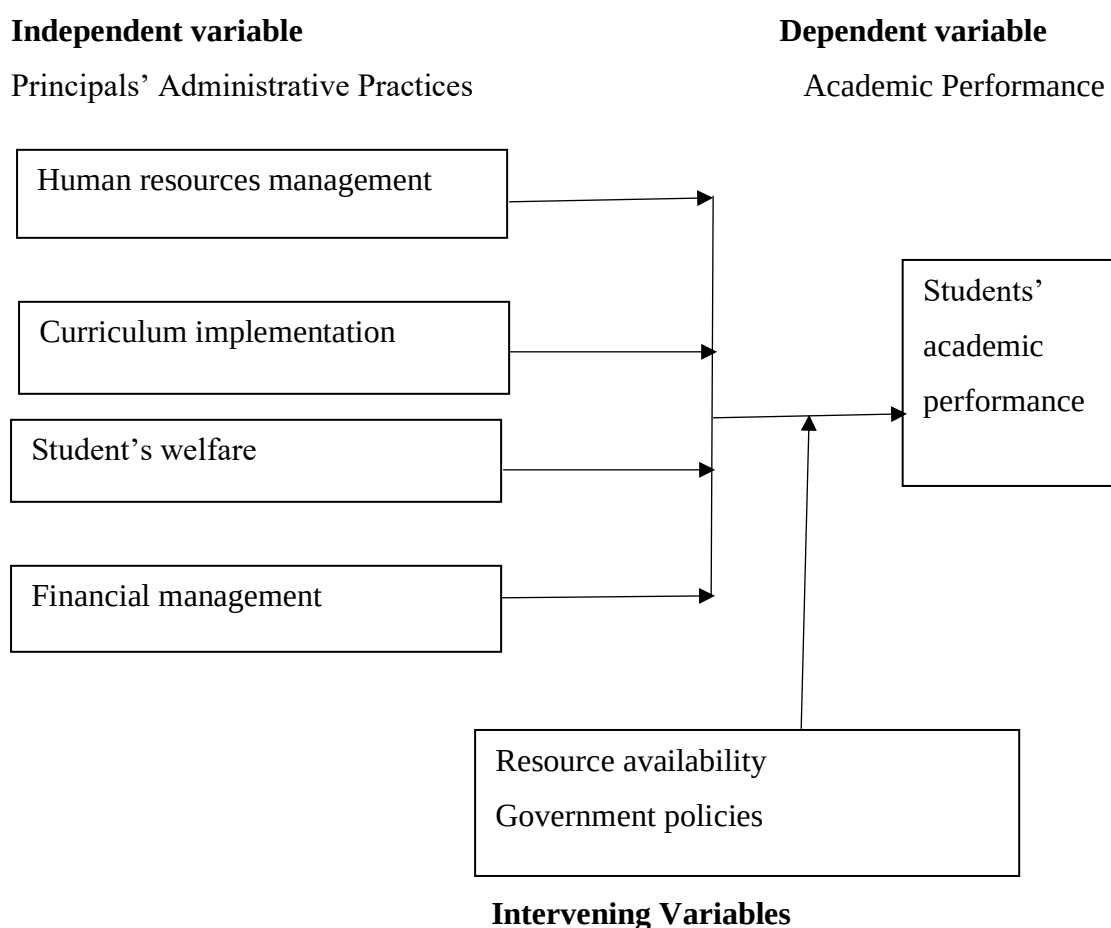


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

The independent variables in this study were human resources management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices and financial management practices. Human resource management as measured by effective recruitment, training, and development of teachers, coupled with fair compensation and performance management, create a supportive environment that boosts teaching quality and student performance. Curriculum implementation Principals who effectively oversee curriculum implementation, ensuring proper resource allocation, timely delivery, and appropriate pedagogical approaches, foster a positive learning environment that leads to higher academic achievement. Pertaining to student welfare, providing a safe and supportive learning environment, addressing student needs, and

promoting healthy school culture are crucial for students' well-being and academic success. Prudent financial management, including efficient resource allocation and spending, ensures the availability of necessary resources for teaching and learning, ultimately impacting student academic outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the research design, study population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, pilot study, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is a blueprint or a plan of how the research was conducted by describing the research sites, how the subjects are selected, and data collection procedures to anticipate the decisions to be taken to maximize the findings' reliability and credibility. A research design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what data collection methods are used. A descriptive survey research design was used to investigate the effect of principals' administrative practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County, Kenya. This design allows for the collection and analysis of data to describe the existing situation and identify relationships between variables.

Surveys are excellent vehicles for collecting original data to study a phenomenon's predictors in a large population. Therefore, through this design, the researcher assessed how principals' administrative practices has affected public secondary school academic performance in Machakos County. Some studies that have used descriptive research design in educational leadership include; Gacheri (2017) who studied how classroom management practices affect students' academic qualifications in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County. Osiri et al. (2019) also used a descriptive research

survey design to examine how schools administration affects students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nairobi County.

3.3 Location of the study

The study was carried out in Machakos sub-county in Machakos County. The global positioning of the county is on the latitude $1^{\circ}16'1.23''\text{S}$ and longitude $37^{\circ}19'12.64''\text{E}$. Machakos county has a total area of 6208.2 km^2 (Republic of Kenya, 2018). Machakos sub-county, like many areas in Kenya, has struggled with relatively lower academic outcomes, making it a relevant area for research on factors influencing school performance. The study's focus on Machakos sub-county allowed for a deeper understanding of the specific challenges and context within the area, such as resource availability, teacher capacity, and other local factors.

3.4 Target Population

A target population is the larger group with similar characteristics, which the researcher hopes to generalize the findings from the access population. According to the Machakos sub-County education office, Machakos sub-County has 48 public secondary schools, hence the study's target population were 48 principals from the 48 public secondary schools and 400 teachers. These groups were selected because they are more experienced with the topic under study.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Population Category	Target population
Principals	48
Teachers	400
TOTAL	448

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.5.1 Sample Size

It is always cumbersome and financially straining to cover the whole target population. Therefore, researchers usually choose an access population, a realistic population for the study. Access population is a sample size that is a member representative of the targeted population under study. Statisticians and research experts clarify that a chosen sample size must match the study's selected research design. It is, therefore, vital to employ various statistical techniques to keenly help the researcher choose the sample size keenly about the targeted population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), a 10-30 % range on a targeted population can yield an optimal sample size for a descriptive survey study. The study was narrowed to 15 principals and 120 teachers in 15 sampled public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County.

Table 3.2: Sample Determination Matrix

Population Category	Target Population	%	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Principals	48	30%	15	Simple Random
Teachers	400	30%	120	Simple Random
Total	448		135	

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique is the criterion used in choosing a section of member presentation from the entire population in testing the research hypotheses (Omondi, 2018). Stratified random sampling was applied to categorise the schools by public or otherwise. Public Secondary Schools in Machakos County formed the unit of analysis of the study. While the principals and TSC teachers formed the study's unit of observation. The study adopted the simple random without replacement sampling

technique in obtaining the number of respondents because of the homogenous nature of the public secondary schools.

3.6 Research Instruments

Research instruments are the tools to help the researcher get the necessary data for analysis to meet the objectives. The study adopted the questionnaires as the research instrument to gather primary data. A questionnaire is a written set of questions to which the subject responds in writing. Both closed and open-ended questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The researcher administered questionnaires to the principals and the teachers. Each item was followed by a five-point Likert Scale, having adverbs indicating the frequency with which the respondents were engaged in a activity as per objectives.

The decision to use questionnaires as the primary data collection method for investigating the effects of human resource management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices, and financial management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County is well-justified on multiple grounds. The alignment between questionnaire methodology and the quantitative nature of the research objectives, combined with practical considerations related to efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and cultural appropriateness, makes this approach optimal for achieving the study's goals. The standardized, systematic nature of questionnaire data collection ensures reliability and validity while facilitating the statistical analyses necessary for establishing relationships between management practices and academic performance outcomes.

Moreover, the decision to limit questionnaire administration to teachers and principals in this study of educational management practices and student academic performance in Machakos Sub-County represents a methodologically sound, theoretically grounded, and practically justified approach. These educational professionals possess the specialized knowledge, direct experience, and analytical capabilities necessary to provide meaningful insights into the complex relationships between human resource management, curriculum implementation, student welfare practices, financial management, and academic outcomes.

The exclusive focus on teachers and principals ensures data quality, enhances research efficiency, and aligns with the specific objectives and theoretical framework of the study. Their unique positioning within the educational system, combined with their professional expertise and institutional knowledge, makes them the most appropriate and valuable respondents for addressing the research questions posed in this investigation. This targeted approach maximizes the potential for generating actionable insights that can inform educational policy and practice improvement efforts in the region.

The study excluded document analysis as a data collection method due to these key reasons. First, it may prioritize the direct, qualitative insights of principals' perceptions and experiences, which are best captured through interviews or surveys. Second, document analysis can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, especially when dealing with a large sample of schools. Finally, the study was more focused on understanding the current state of administrative practices and their impact, rather than delving into historical documents or policy analysis.

3.7 Piloting of Research Instruments

Piloting of research instruments ensures that the research instruments provide accurate and dependable data. Therefore, it helps in testing the validity and reliability of research instruments. The instruments were piloted in Kathiani sub-county using two schools. Two Principals and 16 teachers participated in the pilot study. The schools chosen did not participate in the actual study.

3.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity is the degree with which instruments measures what it intends to measure. This study used both contents and construct validities to determine whether data obtained from the instruments correctly and accurately represent what they purport. The questionnaire were tested in two pilot schools in the neighbouring sub-County study to validate the research instrument. Content validity is the amount to which information collected using a particular instrument represents a specific domain or content of express consent. To assess content validity, supervisors who are experts in the profession and the field gave instructions. A panel of specialists obtained content validity, specifically the university lecturers and supervisors were consulted to judge and advice.

3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability is a measure of how consistent the results of the tests are if trials are done repeatedly. A pilot study was conducted amongst selected potential respondents to pre-test the instruments in research assistants' presence. The researcher selected 2 principals and 16 teachers and then administered the questionnaires to them. For reliability, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha (α), which demonstrates how an arrangement of estimation things were handled as estimating a single latent variable.

The research used Cronbach alpha formula to test reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.9641 was realized indicating the consistency of research instruments since a reliability index with a value of exceeded 0.7, the instruments were reliable for data collection.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained permit from Machakos University used to obtain a research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). A courtesy call was also made to the County Education Officer before the research onset. The researcher visited the selected schools and self-administered the questionnaires. Once filled in, the researchers then collected them after a week.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis was based on the research questions. The filled-in questionnaires were collected and edited by the researcher for completeness and consistency. Data was then summarised, coded, edited, and then synthesized to reveal the data's essence. The issues requiring open-ended questions were analysed qualitatively by thematic areas. Data was then entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and analysed using Statistics and Data (Stata) Version 17 software. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. In addition, to test the study hypothesis pairwise correlation and regression analysis were conducted and statistical significance ascertained at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels of significance.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is key when carrying out any research in any field of study. It involves adhering to all protocols to ensure that research is done effectively infringing no policies or individual copyrights. Approvals from relevant authorities are vital, and

the researcher sought to address this through written formal documents from the institution of study. One of the ethical considerations is that of plagiarism. The study cited all sources used correctly, acknowledging the authors to adhere to the rule of plagiarism. Another ethical consideration adhered to was that of the confidentiality of respondents. All data collected, including names, school names, and any personally identifiable information, were kept confidential and anonymized to protect the privacy of individuals. More importantly, the study asked the respondents not to write their names on the questionnaires for confidentiality purposes. Also, concerning gathered information for commercial purposes, the researcher ensured that the information provided was purely for academic purpose, not otherwise.

Informed consent was obtained from principals and teachers before collecting any data from them, ensuring they understand the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the potential risks and benefits. They were informed that participation is voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Honesty and objectivity was ensured in conducting the research through collecting, analyzing, and reporting data accurately and fairly. The purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the potential benefits and risks to all stakeholders were clearly communicated. Transparency was ensured about how data is collected and analyzed. The methods used to collect and analyze data and how the findings would be used were also explained.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the findings of the study based on the study objectives. The first objective of the study sought to establish the effect of human resource management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County; the second objective was to establish the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County Machakos County; while the third objective determined the effect of students' welfare practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County; and the fourth objective sought to examine the effect of financial management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County.

4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

Table 4.1 presents the response rate of sampled respondents. The study targeted 120 teachers and 15 principals out of which 120 teachers and 15 principals' questionnaires were returned. This represented a 100 percent return rate for the teachers, and 100 percent for principals.

Table 4.1: Response Rate of the Sampled Respondents

Category	Targeted sample	Response rate
Teachers	120	120 (100%)
Principals	15	15 (100%)
Total	135	135 (100%)

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Knowing more about the respondents helped to interpret the results of the study and understand how the different groups of respondents were affected by the principals' practices. Background information could also highlight factors that might explain why some teachers were more or less affected by the principals' practices than others. By understanding the characteristics of the sample, the researcher can better assess the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts or populations.

Some of the demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in this section. The demographics include gender, age bracket, education level attained, length of stay in the current school and administrative experience of the respondents.

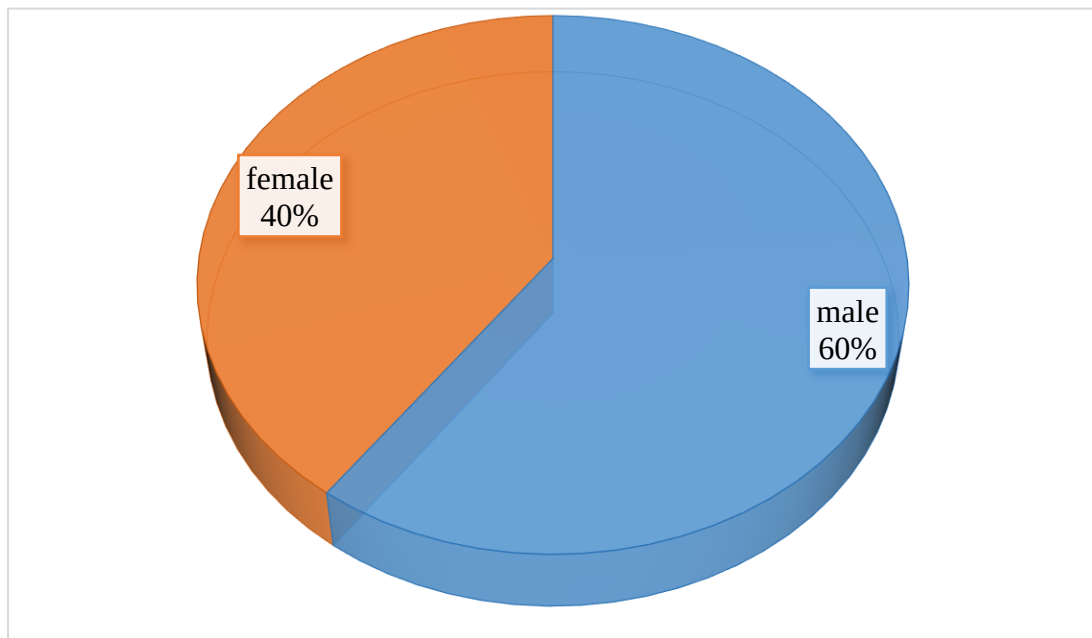


Figure 4.1: Gender of the Principals

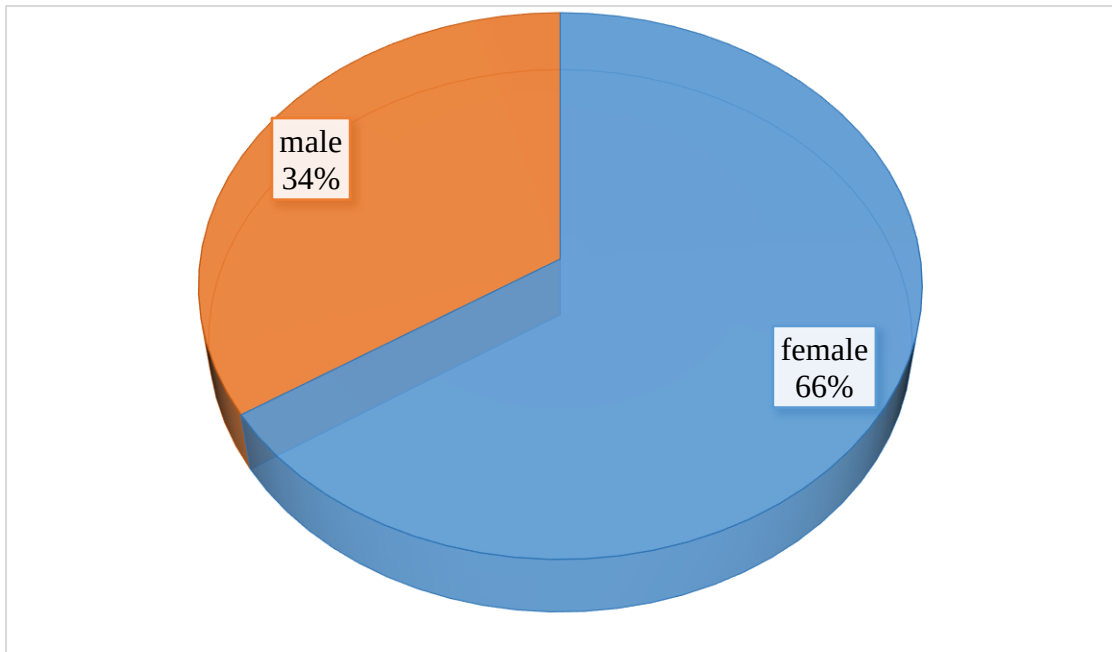


Figure 4.2: Gender of the Teachers

Figure 4.1 illustrates the gender distribution of the school Principals. The figure shows that 9 (60 percent) of the principals were male while 6 (40 percent) of the principals were female. This indicated that the male principals exceeded the female principals. Figure 4.2 displays the gender distribution of the teachers, which shows that the male teachers were 41 (34 percent) and the female teachers were 79 (66 percent). This indicated that the female teachers exceeded the male teachers.

The quantitative analysis reveals significant patterns in the relationship between teacher gender and student academic performance outcomes. Schools with higher proportions of female teachers demonstrate marginally superior academic performance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.127 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a weak but statistically significant positive relationship. This finding suggests that female teachers may contribute to enhanced student academic outcomes through various mechanisms including teaching approaches, classroom management strategies, and student engagement techniques.

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

Teachers Age	Frequency	Percent	Principals Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	5	4.17	18-25 years	0	0.00
26-45 years	72	60.00	26-45 years	0	0.00
Above 45 years	43	35.83	Above 45 years	15	100.00

Table 4.2 presents the age of the respondents. The Table shows that 15 (100 percent) of the Principals are above 45 years of age. This indicates that the Principals were in the active age bracket. However, age distribution analysis reveals distinct patterns across the defined categories. Teachers aged 18-25 years comprise 4.17 percent of the sample, representing the youngest cohort entering the profession. This group often brings contemporary pedagogical training and technological familiarity but may lack extensive classroom experience. The 26-45 years age bracket constitutes the largest segment at 60.00 percent of the sample, representing teachers in their prime professional years who typically combine substantial experience with continued professional vigor. Teachers above 45 years account for 35.83 percent of the sample, bringing extensive experience and institutional knowledge while potentially facing challenges with technological integration and contemporary teaching methodologies.

The analysis of age-related patterns reveals complex relationships between teacher age categories and student academic performance. Teachers in the 26-45 years age bracket demonstrate the strongest positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.189$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that this age group may represent the optimal balance between experience and professional vigor. Schools with higher proportions of teachers in this age category achieve mean scores approximately 0.12 points higher than schools with

different age distributions.

Teachers aged 18-25 years show a moderate positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.098$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that younger teachers contribute positively to student outcomes despite their limited experience. This relationship may reflect the contemporary training these teachers receive, their familiarity with modern pedagogical approaches, and their enthusiasm for innovative teaching methods. However, the correlation strength is notably lower than that observed for the middle age category, suggesting that experience remains a crucial factor in teaching effectiveness.

Teachers above 45 years demonstrate a more complex relationship with academic performance. While the overall correlation is positive ($r = 0.076$, $p < 0.10$), the relationship varies significantly based on other factors including educational qualifications and length of service. Experienced teachers in this age category with advanced degrees show strong positive correlations ($r = 0.134$, $p < 0.01$), while those with basic qualifications show weaker relationships with academic performance.

Table 4.3: Responses on Education Level of the Respondents

Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Principals	Frequency	Percent
Education Level			Education		
			Level		
Diploma	3	2.50	Diploma	0	0.00
Degree	66	55.00	Degree	8	53.33
Masters	51	42.50	Masters	7	46.67
Doctorate	0	0.00	Doctorate	0	0.00

Table 4.3 presents those responses on education level of the respondents. From the analysis of professional qualification 8 (53.33 percent) of the school principals had

achieved bachelor's degree, and 7 (46.67 percent) had attained master's degree. This shows that the principals had attained bachelor's degree and above. In addition, for the teachers educational qualification distribution demonstrates the professional development trajectory within the teaching workforce. Diploma holders represent 2.50 percent of the sample, primarily consisting of teachers who entered the profession through traditional teacher training colleges. Degree holders constitute the largest group at 55.00 percent, reflecting the increasing emphasis on university-level preparation for secondary school teaching. Master's degree holders account for 42.50 percent of the sample, indicating significant investment in advanced professional development.

The relationship between teacher educational qualifications and student academic performance demonstrates clear hierarchical patterns with important nuances. Master's degree holders demonstrate substantial positive correlations with academic performance ($r = 0.187, p < 0.001$), suggesting that graduate-level preparation provides teachers with enhanced subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and research skills that benefit student learning. The relationship remains strong even when controlling for other variables including age and experience, indicating that advanced education provides independent benefits for teaching effectiveness.

Degree holders, representing the largest qualification category, show moderate positive correlations with academic performance ($r = 0.112, p < 0.01$). This relationship, while statistically significant, is notably weaker than that observed for advanced degree holders, suggesting that while university-level preparation provides important foundations for teaching effectiveness, additional graduate study enhances these capabilities substantially.

Diploma holders demonstrate the weakest correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.067$, $p < 0.10$), though the relationship remains positive. This pattern may reflect differences in preparation depth, subject matter expertise, and pedagogical training between diploma and degree programs. However, interaction effects reveal that diploma holders with extensive experience show stronger correlations with academic performance, suggesting that practical experience can partially compensate for differences in formal educational preparation.

Table 4.4: Length of Stay in Current School of the Respondents

Teachers Age	Frequency	Percent	Principals Age	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 years	7	5.83	Less than 1 years	3	20.00
1-5 years	60	50.00	1-5 years	2	13.33
6-10 years	34	28.33	6-10 years	9	60.00
Over 10 years	19	15.83	Over 10 years	1	6.67

Table 4.4 presents the length of stay in current school of the respondents. The Table shows that 3 (20.00 percent) of the Principals had stayed in the current school for less than 1 years, 2 (13.33 percent) had stayed in the current school for 1-5 years, 9 (60.00 percent) had stayed in the current school for 6-10 years, with 1 (6.67 percent) having stayed in the current school for over 10 years. However, the length of service analysis provides insights into teacher retention and experience accumulation patterns. Teachers with less than one year of service comprise 5.83 percent of the sample, representing new entrants who are still adapting to the school environment and developing their teaching competencies. Those with 1-5 years of experience constitute 50.00 percent of the sample, representing teachers who have moved beyond initial adjustment phases but are still developing their full professional capabilities. Teachers with 6-10 years of

service account for 28.33 percent of the sample, representing experienced educators who have typically achieved professional stability and pedagogical maturity. Those with over 10 years of service comprise 15.83 percent of the sample, bringing extensive experience and often serving in leadership or mentorship roles within their institutions.

The relationship between teacher length of service and student academic performance reveals a curvilinear pattern that reflects the complex interplay between experience accumulation and professional development. Teachers with 6-10 years of service demonstrate the strongest correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.201$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that this experience range represents optimal teaching effectiveness. This period typically encompasses the transition from developing teacher to experienced professional, combining accumulated classroom experience with continued professional growth and adaptation.

Teachers with 1-5 years of service show moderate positive correlations with academic performance ($r = 0.134$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that even relatively new teachers contribute positively to student outcomes once they have moved beyond initial adjustment periods. Teachers with over 10 years of service demonstrate positive but somewhat diminished correlations with academic performance ($r = 0.156$, $p < 0.01$) compared to the 6-10 year group. This pattern may reflect various factors including potential professional stagnation, reduced adaptability to new methodologies, or increased administrative responsibilities that may detract from direct teaching effectiveness.

Teachers with less than one year of service show the weakest correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.089$, $p < 0.05$), reflecting the challenges associated with initial

professional adjustment and the learning curve inherent in developing teaching competencies. However, the positive correlation suggests that even novice teachers contribute to student achievement, particularly when supported by effective mentorship and professional development programs.

Table 4.5: Administrative Experience of the Principals

Principals Experience	Observations	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
	15	9.4	3.158	1	15

The administrative experience of the Principals is presented in Table 4.5. The Table shows that on average the Principals had an experience of 9.4 years, with a minimum experience of 1 year and a maximum experience of 15 years.

4.4 Students' Academic Performance

In this section, the researcher presents the measurement of the dependent variable which is students' academic performance, in addition to providing the responses of principals and teachers on students' academic performance.

4.4.1 Measuring the Dependent Variable

Table 4.6: Academic performance over the years

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
KCSE 2018 mean score	120	4.21	1.730	2.07	7.59
KCSE 2019 mean score	120	4.33	1.801	2.45	8.62
KCSE 2020 mean score	120	4.29	1.948	1.90	8.69
KCSE 2021 mean score	120	4.39	1.727	2.30	7.98
KCSE 2022 mean score	120	4.34	1.639	2.00	8.01
KCSE 2018-2022 mean score	120	4.31	1.746	2.38	8.18

The KCSE performance data reveals encouraging trends in academic achievement across the study period as shown in Table 4.6. The 2018 baseline mean score of 4.21

established the initial performance benchmark, reflecting the academic standards and outcomes at the beginning of the analysis period. This score, while representing solid academic performance, indicated room for improvement in student achievement levels across the participating schools.

The progression to a mean score of 4.34 in 2022 represents a notable improvement of 0.13 points over the four-year period, suggesting positive trends in educational quality and student achievement. This improvement trajectory, while modest, demonstrates consistent upward movement in academic performance that may be attributed to various factors including improved teaching practices, enhanced resource allocation, better curriculum implementation, and strengthened institutional management approaches.

The overall mean score of 4.31 across the 2018-2022 period provides a comprehensive performance indicator that accounts for annual variations and establishes a baseline for examining correlations with teacher characteristics. This aggregate measure serves as the dependent variable in subsequent analyses examining the relationship between academic performance and various teacher demographic and professional attributes.

4.4.2 Responses of Principals and Teachers on Students' Academic Performance

This study sought to determine the influence of four determinants on students' academic performance where Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 gives the responses of principals and teachers on the indicators of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. Students' academic performance was measured using four indicators for the teachers and principals. Mean and standard deviation (SD) statistics for each questionnaire items were tabulated. The findings of Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 are as indicated respectively

Table 4.7: Responses of Principals on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
Most of our students attain university entry mean grade C+ and above	<i>f</i>		13	2			2.13	0.352
	%		86.67	13.33				
The overall mean score of the school is above 5	<i>f</i>	9	6				1.40	0.507
	%	60	40					
The school is ranked among the top best performing schools in the county	<i>f</i>	6	9				1.60	0.507
	%	40	60					
Most of our students qualify for prestigious courses' (e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades	<i>f</i>	9	6				1.40	0.507
	%	60	40					

The results in Table 4.7 have indicated that according to the responses of the Principals 13 (86.67 percent) of them disagreed that most of their students attain university entry mean grade C+ and above. 15 (100 percent) of the Principals disagreed that the overall mean score of the school is above 5. In addition, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals disagreed that the school is ranked among the top best performing schools in the county. Lastly 15 (100 percent) of the Principals disagreed that most of their students qualify for prestigious courses' (e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades. The results in Table 4.7 have indicated that the rating for the Principals on average ranged from 1.40

to 2.13 indicating that the Principals disagreed regarding students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. This study sought to establish from the teachers the indicators of students' academic performance, the findings are as stated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Responses of Teachers on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
Most of our students attain university entry mean grade C+ and above	<i>f</i>	29	63	3	14	11	2.29	1.219
	%	24.17	52.50	2.50	11.67	9.17		
The overall mean score of the school is above 5	<i>f</i>	34	53	5	9	19	2.38	1.385
	%	28.33	44.17	4.17	7.50	15.83		
The school is ranked among the top best performing schools in the county	<i>f</i>	38	51	6	7	18	2.30	1.370
	%	31.67	42.50	5.00	5.83	15.00		
Most of our students qualify for prestigious courses' (e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades	<i>f</i>	55	34	12	13	6	2.01	1.206
	%	45.83	28.33	10.00	10.83	5.00		

The results in Table 4.8 have indicated that according to the responses of the teachers 92 (76.67 percent) of them disagreed that most of their students attain university entry mean grade C+ and above. 87 (72.5 percent) of the teachers disagreed that the overall mean score of the school is above 5. In addition, 89 (74.17 percent) of the teachers

disagreed that the school is ranked among the top best performing schools in the county. Lastly 89 (74.17 percent) of the teachers disagreed that most of their students qualify for prestigious courses‘(e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades. The results in Table 4.8 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 2.01 to 2.38 indicating that the teachers disagreed regarding students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. This indicates the schools within Machakos sub-county have not been performing well.

4.5 Diagnostic tests

4.5.1 Multicollinearity Test

Before carrying out the correlation analysis, multicollinearity test was conducted to establish the possibility and extend of linear dependence between the variables. The details are provided in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Variance Inflation Factor Test for Multicollinearity

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Financial management practices	3.12	0.3207
Human resource management practices	3.01	0.3323
Curriculum implementation practices	2.80	0.3576
Students’ welfare practices	2.56	0.3908
Gender	1.74	0.5737
Education	1.61	0.6196
Duration	1.52	0.6564
Age	1.52	0.6597
Mean VIF	2.23	

The results in Table 4.9 have shown that, the mean variance inflation factor (VIF) was estimated at 2.23, which is greater than the critical value of 1. It’s called the VIF because it estimates how much the variance of a coefficient is “inflated” because of linear dependence with other predictors. Thus, a VIF of 2.23 tells us that the variance

(the square of the standard error) of a particular coefficient is 123% larger than it would be, if that predictor was uncorrelated with all the other predictors. As stated in Table 4.9, no VIFs were greater than 10, which indicates absence of strong multicollinearity.

4.6 Correlation Test

In this section, the Pearson correlation test was performed as shown in Table 4.10. In the table HRM denotes human resource management practices, CI is curriculum implementation practices, SW represents students' welfare practices, and FM indicates financial management practices.

Table 4.10: Pearson Correlation Test

	Mean score 2018-2022	HRM	CI	SW	FM	Gender	Age	Education	Duration
Mean score 2018-2022	1								
HRM	0.419*	1							
	0.000								
CI	0.283*	0.689*	1						
	0.002	0.000							
SW	0.398*	0.452*	0.277*	1					
	0.000	0.000	0.002						
FM	0.447*	0.479*	0.530*	0.718*	1				
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000					
Gender	0.171***	-0.054	0.241*	0.231**	0.367*	1			
	0.062	0.557	0.008	0.011	0.000				
Age	-0.053	0.311*	0.111	0.269*	0.260*	0.099	1		
	0.566	0.001	0.230	0.003	0.004	0.293			
Education	-0.092	-0.007	-0.141	-0.136	-0.198**	-0.176	0.390*	1	
	0.319	0.941	0.125	0.139	0.031	0.054	0.000		
Duration	0.281*	0.089	0.008	0.156***	0.016	0.294*	0.266*	0.375*	1
	0.002	0.335	0.931	0.089	0.866	0.001	0.003	0.000	

*, ** and *** represents 1%, 5% and 10% levels of significance

Table 4.10 shows that the academic performance as measured by the mean score 2018-

2022 is positively and significantly related to human resource management practices ($r=0.419^*$, $p=0.000$), curriculum implementation practices ($r=0.283^*$, $p=0.002$), students' welfare practices ($r=0.398^*$, $p=0.000$), and financial management practices ($r=0.447^*$, $p=0.000$) at the one per cent level of significance.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

In this section, four hypotheses were formulated and tested using a multiple regression model in Table 4.11, based on the mean score for 2018-2022 as the measure for students' academic performance.

Table 4.11: Multiple Regression Results

Students' academic performance	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P-value
Human resource management practices	0.904*	0.236	3.82	0.000
Curriculum implementation practices	-0.506**	0.248	-2.04	0.043
Students' welfare practices	-0.055	0.189	-0.29	0.772
Financial management practices	0.778*	0.218	3.56	0.001
Gender	0.123	0.345	0.36	0.723
Age	-1.165*	0.279	-4.18	0.000
Education	-0.047	0.292	-0.16	0.874
Duration	0.700*	0.185	3.78	0.000
Constant	1.385	0.949	1.46	0.147
Number of obs	=	120		
F(8, 111)	=	10.73*		
Prob > F	=	0.000		
R-squared	=	0.4362		
Adj R-squared	=	0.3955		

*, ** and *** represents 1%, 5% and 10% levels of significance

A positive coefficient of 1.385 on the constant term was realized with a p-value of 0.147 not statistically significant. This indicates that all the factors which have a significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos

County were accounted for in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.3955 indicate that, 39.55% of the variations in academic performance are explained by the joint effect of human resource management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices, financial management practices, and other background characteristics such as gender, age, education, and duration.

Last, in ascertaining the joint effect of human resource management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices, financial management practices, and other background characteristics such as gender, age, education, and duration on students' academic performance. This produced an F-statistic of 10.73 with a P-value of 0.0000 statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Thus the researcher reject the hypothesis, illustrating that human resource management practices, curriculum implementation practices, students' welfare practices, financial management practices, and other background characteristics such as gender, age, education, and duration has a statistically significant joint effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County.

4.8 Effect of Human Resource Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

This study sought to establish the effect of human resource management practices on students' academic performance where Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 presents the responses of principals and teachers on the indicators of human resource management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. Human resource management practices was measured using nine indicators for the teachers and nine indicators were used for the principals. Mean and standard deviation

(SD) statistics for each questionnaire items were tabulated. Each scale was rated on a five Likert like scale ranging from 1 denoting “strongly disagree” to 5 denoting “strongly agree”. The findings of Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 are as indicated respectively.

Table 4.12: Responses of Principals on the Effect of Human Resource Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education	<i>f</i>				13	2	4.13	0.352
	%				86.67	13.33		
The school has been holding various activities involving teachers, students, parents and the community	<i>f</i>			2	5	8	4.40	0.737
	%			13.33	33.33	53.33		
There is a high parental and community involvement in decision-making practices at this school	<i>f</i>		3		10	2	3.73	0.961
	%		20		66.67	13.33		
The principal decides based on the current situation and the policy of the Government Education	<i>f</i>				13	2	4.13	0.352
	%				86.67	13.33		
The principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses	<i>f</i>				7	8	4.53	0.516
	%				46.67	53.33		
The principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities	<i>f</i>				7	8	4.53	0.516
	%				46.67	53.33		
The principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community	<i>f</i>				7	8	4.53	0.516
	%				46.67	53.33		
The principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal	<i>f</i>				7	8	4.53	0.516
	%				46.67	53.33		
The principal is result-oriented, and he/she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement	<i>f</i>				10	5	4.33	0.488
	%				66.67	33.33		

Centered on the responses of the Principals as presented in Table 4.12, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education. 13 (86.67 percent) of the Principals agreed that the school has been holding various activities involving teachers, students, parents and the community. The Principals who agreed there is a high parental and community involvement in decision-making practices at this school were 12 (80.00 percent). In addition, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal decides based on the current situation and the policy of the Government Education; the principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses; the principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities; the principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community; the principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal; and the principal is result-oriented, and he/she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement.

The results in Table 4.12 have indicated that the rating for the Principals on average ranged from 3.73 to 4.53 indicating that the Principals agreed regarding human resource management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. A mean rating of 4.53 for the statements “the principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses”, “the principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities”, “the principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community” and “the principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal” indicates the Principals strongly agreed regarding human

resource management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County.

This study sought to establish from teachers the effect of human resource management practices on students' academic performance and the findings are as stated in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Responses of Teachers on Effect of Human Resource Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education	<i>f</i>	7	18	29	47	19	3.44	1.106
	%	5.83	15.00	24.17	39.17	15.83		
The school has been holding various activities involving teachers, students, parents and the community	<i>f</i>	6	5	29	55	25	3.73	1.002
	%	5.00	4.17	24.17	45.83	20.83		
There is a high parental and community involvement in decision-making practices at this school	<i>f</i>	8	10	21	62	19	3.62	1.063
	%	6.67	8.33	17.50	51.67	15.83		
The principal decides based on the current situation and the policy of the Government Education	<i>f</i>	6	2	11	85	16	3.86	0.853
	%	5.00	1.67	9.17	70.83	13.33		
The principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses	<i>f</i>	7	3	36	51	23	3.67	1.007
	%	5.83	2.50	30.00	42.50	19.17		
The principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities	<i>f</i>	2	4	11	72	31	4.05	0.798
	%	1.67	3.33	9.17	60.00	25.83		
The principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community	<i>f</i>	5	7	26	56	26	3.76	0.996
	%	4.17	5.83	21.67	46.67	21.67		
The principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal	<i>f</i>	4	8	21	59	28	3.83	0.976
	%	3.33	6.67	17.50	49.17	23.33		
The principal is result-oriented, and he/she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement	<i>f</i>	7	5	28	55	25	3.72	1.030
	%	5.83	4.17	23.33	45.83	20.83		

The results in Table 4.13 have indicated that according to the responses of the teachers 66 (55 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education. 80 (66.66 percent) of the

teachers agreed that the school has been holding various activities involving teachers, students, parents and the community. The teachers who agreed there is a high parental and community involvement in decision-making practices at this school were 81 (67.50 percent). In addition, 101 (84.16 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal decides based on the current situation and the policy of the Government Education, while 74 (61.67 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses. The teachers who agreed that the principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities were 103 (85.83 percent). 82 (68.34 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community, while 87 (72.5 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal. Lastly 80 (66.67 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal is result-oriented and he/she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement. The results in Table 4.13 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 3.44 to 4.05 indicating that the teachers agreed regarding human resource management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County save for the statement "the principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education" in which the teachers were neutral.

4.8.1 Hypothesis Testing for the Effect of Human Resource Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

This was done using a multiple regression model tested at the 1 percent, 5 percent and 10 percent level of significance in Table 4.11. The results of hypothesis testing gave a positive coefficient of 0.904 on human resource management practices was realized

with a p-value of 0.000 statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Hence the researcher reject the hypothesis that, human resource management practices does not affect students' academic performance. This indicates that, human resource management practices has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. This study findings conforms to those from Italy by Agasisti et al. (2020) who established that the indicators about managerial practices have positive coefficients, but low statistical significance.

4.9 Effect of Curriculum Implementation Practices on Students' Academic Performance

This study sought to establish the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance where Table 4.14 and Table 4.15 presents the responses of principals and teachers on the indicators of curriculum implementation practices in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. Curriculum implementation practices was measured using five indicators for the teachers and the principals. Mean and standard deviation (SD) statistics for each questionnaire items were tabulated. The findings of Table 4.14 and Table 4.15 are as indicated respectively

This study sought to establish from Principal's the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance, the findings are as stated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Responses of Principals on Effect of Curriculum Implementation Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Variable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality	<i>f</i> %			11 73.33	4 26.67	4.27	0.458
The principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers	<i>f</i> %			7 46.67	8 53.33	4.53	0.516
The principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress	<i>f</i> %		2 13.33	8 53.33	5 33.33	4.20	0.676
The principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school	<i>f</i> %			7 46.67	8 53.33	4.53	0.516
The principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time	<i>f</i> %			5 33.33	10 66.67	4.67	0.488

The results in Table 4.14 have indicated that according to the responses of the Principals 15 (100 percent) of them agreed that the principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality. Likewise, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers. The Principals who agreed that the principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress were 13 (86.67 percent). In addition, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school, while still 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time. The results in Table 4.14 have indicated that the rating for the Principals on average ranged from 4.20 to 4.67 indicating that the Principals agreed regarding curriculum implementation practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. The Principals strongly agreed that the principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers, the principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school, and the principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time.

This study sought to establish from teachers the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance, the findings are as stated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Responses of Teachers on Effect of Curriculum Implementation Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality	<i>f</i>	7	6	38	48	21	3.58	1.026
	%	5.83	5.00	31.67	40.00	17.50		
The principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers	<i>f</i>	1	2	33	56	28	3.90	0.803
	%	0.83	1.67	27.50	46.67	23.33		
The principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress	<i>f</i>	5	24	17	46	28	3.57	1.172
	%	4.17	20.00	14.17	38.33	23.33		
The principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school	<i>f</i>	4	4	16	68	28	3.93	0.896
	%	3.33	3.33	13.33	56.67	23.33		
The principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time	<i>f</i>	2	0	8	68	42	4.23	0.719
	%	1.67	0.00	6.67	56.67	35.00		

The findings in Table 4.15 have indicated that according to the responses of the teachers 69 (57.50 percent) of them agreed that the principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality. Likewise, 84 (70 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers. The teachers who agreed that the principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress were 74 (61.67 percent). In addition, 96 (80 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school. Lastly 110 (91.67

percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time. The results in Table 4.15 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 3.57 to 4.23 indicating that the teachers agreed regarding curriculum implementation practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County.

4.9.1 Hypothesis Testing for the Effect of Curriculum Implementation Practices on Students' Academic Performance

This was done using a multiple regression model tested at the 1 percent, 5 percent and 10 percent level of significance in Table 4.11. The results of hypothesis testing gave a negative coefficient of -0.506 on curriculum implementation practices was realized with a p-value of 0.043 statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence the researcher reject the hypothesis that, curriculum implementation practices affects students' academic performance. This indicates that, curriculum implementation practices have a negative and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. The study findings are in line with those in a study in Kiambu County by Irungu et al. (2019) which illustrated that monitoring of teaching and learning process, singly, does not translate to enhanced learners' performance academically.

4.10 Effect of Students' Welfare Practices on Students' Academic Performance

This study sought to determine the effect of students' welfare practices on students' academic performance where Table 4.16 and Table 4.17 gives the responses of principals and teachers on the indicators of resource allocation in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Students' welfare practices was measured using seven indicators for the teachers and principals. Mean and standard deviation (SD) statistics

for each questionnaire items were tabulated. The findings of Table 4.16 and Table 4.17 are as indicated respectively.

Table 4.16: Responses of Principals on Effect of Students' Welfare Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food	<i>f</i>				11	4	4.27	0.458
	%				73.33	26.67		
The principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons	<i>f</i>	3	2		5	5	3.47	1.598
	%	20	13.33		33.33	33.33		
The principal allows students to participate in co-curricular activities	<i>f</i>				4	11	4.73	0.458
	%				26.67	73.33		
The principal emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization	<i>f</i>				4	11	4.73	0.458
	%				26.67	73.33		
The principal always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, meals hence improved self-esteem	<i>f</i>				13	2	4.13	0.352
	%				86.67	13.33		
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare	<i>f</i>				9	6	4.40	0.507
	%				60	40		
The principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community	<i>f</i>				5	10	4.67	0.488
	%				33.33	66.67		

The results in Table 4.16 shows that all the Principals agreed that they strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food. 10 (66.67 percent) of the Principals agreed that he/she ensures all students stays in good health through qualified

nurses and school matrons. The Principals who agreed that he/she allows students to participate in co-curricular activities were 15 (100 percent). In addition, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that he/she emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization, while 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that he/she always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, and meals hence improved self-esteem. 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that he/she strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare. Lastly 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that he/she participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community. The results in Table 4.16 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 3.47 to 4.73 indicating that the teachers agreed regarding students' welfare practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County save for the statement "the principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons" in which the teachers were neutral. In addition, the Principals strongly agreed that he/she allows students to participate in co-curricular activities; emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization; and participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community.

This study sought to establish from the teachers, the effect of students' welfare practices on students' academic performance, the findings are as stated in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Responses of Teachers on Effect of Students' Welfare Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food	<i>f</i>	17	41	9	31	22	3.00	1.384
	%	14.17	34.17	7.50	25.83	18.33		
The principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons	<i>f</i>	5	38	8	47	22	3.36	1.222
	%	4.17	31.67	6.67	39.17	18.33		
The principal allows students to participate in co-curricular activities	<i>f</i>	0	24	16	40	40	3.80	1.112
	%	0.00	20.00	13.33	33.33	33.33		
The principal emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization	<i>f</i>	6	17	15	51	31	3.70	1.149
	%	5.00	14.17	12.50	42.50	25.83		
The principal always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, meals hence improved self-esteem	<i>f</i>	0	15	24	57	24	3.75	0.919
	%	0.00	12.50	20.00	47.50	20.00		
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare	<i>f</i>	0	17	28	50	25	3.69	0.960
	%	0.00	14.17	23.33	41.67	20.83		
The principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community	<i>f</i>	2	25	35	28	30	3.49	1.130
	%	1.67	20.83	29.17	23.33	25.00		

The results in Table 4.17 indicated that 53 (44.16 percent) of the teachers indicates that the principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food. 69 (57.50 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons. The teachers who agreed that the principal allows students to participate in in co-curricular activities were 80 (66.67 percent). In addition, 82 (68.33 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization, while 81 (67.50 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, and meals hence improved self-esteem. 75 (62.50 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare. Lastly 58 (48.33 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community. The results in Table 4.17 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 3.00 to 3.80 indicating that the teachers agreed regarding students' welfare practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. Although the teachers were not sure as pertains to the principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food; the principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons; and the principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community.

4.10.1 Hypothesis Testing for the Effect of Students' Welfare Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Hypothesis testing in this study was done using a multiple regression model tested at the 1 percent, 5 percent and 10 percent level of significance in Table 4.11. The results

of hypothesis testing gave a negative coefficient of -0.055 on students' welfare practices was realized with a p-value of 0.772 not statistically significant even at the 10 percent level. Hence the researcher fail to reject the hypothesis that, students' welfare practices does not affect students' academic performance. This indicates that, students' welfare practices does not have a statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. The lack of statistical significance could be attributed to the teachers response in which they were not sure. Specifically, the principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food; the principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons; and the principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community.

This study findings negates the deductions by Laposha and Smallfield (2022) that consuming a nutritionally balanced diet, doing extracurricular work, being calm and studying, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle will enhance mental well-being, thus improving students' performances. In addition, the study contradicts the findings of a research by Kosgei et al. (2017) in Chepalungu sub-County, Bomet which revealed that organisational effectiveness of the school had improved due to student leaders' involvement in decision making exercise.

4.11 Effect of Financial Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

This study sought to examine the effect of financial management practices on students' academic performance where Table 4.18 and Table 4.19 gives the responses of principals and teachers on the indicators of financial management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. Financial

management practices was measured using seven indicators for the teachers and the principals. Mean and standard deviation (SD) statistics for each questionnaire items were tabulated. The findings of Table 4.18 and Table 4.19 are as indicated respectively.

Table 4.18: Responses of Principals on Effect of Financial Management Practices On Students' Academic Performance

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal has a good administrative financial skills	<i>f</i>	3			4	8	3.93	1.580
	%	20			26.67	53.33		
The principal ensures that the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time	<i>f</i>	3			7	5	3.73	1.486
	%	20			46.67	33.33		
The principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears	<i>f</i>				6	9	4.60	0.507
	%				40	60		
The principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept	<i>f</i>				7	8	4.53	0.516
	%				46.67	53.33		
The principal always ensures students improve breakfast, lunch, and supper hence improved self-esteem	<i>f</i>				13	2	4.13	0.352
	%				86.67	13.33		
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare	<i>f</i>				9	6	4.40	0.507
	%				60	40		
The principal has been initiating the building projects in the school	<i>f</i>				4	11	4.73	0.458
	%				26.67	73.33		

The results in Table 4.18 have indicated that according to the responses of the Principals 12 (80 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal has a good administrative financial skills. 12 (80 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal ensures that the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time. The Principals who agreed that the principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears were 15 (100 percent). In addition, 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept. The Principals who agreed that the principal always ensures students improve breakfast, lunch, and supper hence improved self-esteem were 15 (100 percent). 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare. Lastly 15 (100 percent) of the Principals agreed that the principal has been initiating the building projects in the school. The results in Table 4.18 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 3.73 to 4.73 indicating that the Principals agreed regarding financial management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. In addition, the Principals strongly agreed that the principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears; the principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept; and the principal has been initiating the building projects in the school.

This study sought to establish from teachers the effect of financial management practices on students' academic performance, the findings are as stated in Table 4.19.

**Table 4.19: Responses of Teachers on Effect of Financial Management Practices
On Students' Academic Performance**

Variable		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. dev.
The principal has a good administrative financial skills	<i>f</i>	16	44	11	24	25	2.98	1.396
	%	13.33	36.67	9.17	20.00	20.83		
The principal ensures that the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time	<i>f</i>	10	41	19	33	17	3.05	1.236
	%	8.33	34.17	15.83	27.5	14.17		
The principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears	<i>f</i>	7	35	25	28	25	3.24	1.243
	%	5.83	29.17	20.83	23.33	20.83		
The principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept	<i>f</i>	4	24	32	42	18	3.38	1.070
	%	3.33	20.00	26.67	35.00	15.00		
The principal always ensures students improve breakfast, lunch, and supper hence improved self-esteem	<i>f</i>	2	12	31	58	17	3.63	0.907
	%	1.67	10.00	25.83	48.33	14.17		
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare	<i>f</i>	4	18	25	49	24	3.59	1.073
	%	3.33	15.00	20.83	40.83	20.00		
The principal has been initiating the building projects in the school	<i>f</i>	8	17	24	42	29	3.56	1.194
	%	6.67	14.17	20.00	35.00	24.17		

The results in Table 4.19 have indicated that according to the responses of the teachers 49 (40.83 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal has a good administrative financial skill. 50 (41.67 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal ensures that

the bursars' office provides full accounting reports on time. The teachers who agreed that the principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears were 53 (44.16 percent). In addition, 60 (50 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept. The teachers who agreed that the principal always ensures students improve breakfast, lunch, and supper hence improved self-esteem were 75 (62.5 percent). 73 (60.83 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare. Lastly 71 (59.17 percent) of the teachers agreed that the principal has been initiating the building projects in the school. The results in Table 4.19 have indicated that the rating for the teachers on average ranged from 2.98 to 3.63 indicating that the teachers agreed regarding financial management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County. Even though on average the teachers were not sure regarding the principal has good administrative financial skills; the principal ensures that the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time; the principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears; and the principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept.

4.11.1 Hypothesis Testing for the Effect of Financial Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Hypothesis testing in this study was done using a multiple regression model tested at the 1 percent, 5 percent and 10 percent level of significance. The results of hypothesis testing gave a positive coefficient of 0.778 on financial management practices was realized with a p-value of 0.001 statistically significant at the 0.01 level in Table 4.11. Hence the researcher rejects the hypothesis that, financial management practices does not affect students' academic performance. This indicates that, financial management

practices has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County.

Similar findings were deduced in France by Crouch and Wrinkler (2008) that prudent financial management practices positively influenced academic performance among the surveyed institutions. Likewise in Nigeria Eniang-Esien (2021) findings revealed there is a significant influence of financial planning skills budgeting skills, accounting skills and auditing skills by principals have a significant influence on the quality of public secondary education. Similarly, a study by Wanjala et al. (2020) in Bungoma East Sub-County established a strong positive relationship between principals' financial management practices and academic achievement in public secondary schools. However, the study negates findings by Ngigi and Tanui (2019) on a study in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya who found that financial management level did not significantly predict the level of performance since the estimated coefficient of 0.122 had an associated p-value which was greater than 0.05, and hence not statistically significant.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes, makes conclusions based on the study findings in relation to the study objectives. It also discusses the recommendations for further research as well as recommendations for policy and practice.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study was guided by four objectives namely:

- i. To establish the effect of human resource management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- ii. To establish the effect of curriculum implementation practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County Machakos County, Kenya.
- iii. To determine the effect of students' welfare practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.
- iv. To examine the effect of financial management practices on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.

In this study following hypothesis were tested:

- i) **H01:** Human resource management practices does not affect students' academic performance.

- ii) **H0₂**: Curriculum implementation practices does not affect students' academic performance.
- iii) **H0₃**: Students' welfare practices does not affect students' academic performance.
- iv) **H0₄**: Financial management practices does not affect students' academic performance.

5.2.1 Effect of Human Resource Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Results from the multiple regression gave a positive coefficient of 0.904 on human resource management practices with a p-value of 0.000 statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Hence the researcher rejects the hypothesis that, human resource management practices does not affect students' academic performance.

5.2.2 Effect of Curriculum Implementation Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Results from the multiple regression gave a negative coefficient of -0.506 on curriculum implementation practices with a p-value of 0.043 statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence the researcher rejects the hypothesis that, curriculum implementation practices affects students' academic performance.

5.2.3 Effect of Students' Welfare Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Results from the multiple regression gave a negative coefficient of -0.055 on students' welfare practices was realized with a p-value of 0.772 not statistically significant even at the 10 percent level. Hence the researcher does not reject the hypothesis that, students' welfare practices does not affect students' academic performance.

5.2.4 Effect of Financial Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Results from the multiple regression gave a positive coefficient of 0.778 on financial management practices was realized with a p-value of 0.001 statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Hence the researcher rejects the hypothesis that, financial management practices does not affect students' academic performance.

5.3 Conclusion

From the study findings the following conclusion can be drawn:

5.3.1 Human Resource Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Human resource management practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County.

5.3.2 Curriculum Implementation Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Curriculum implementation practices have a negative and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County.

5.3.3 Students' Welfare Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Students' welfare practices does not have a statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County. The teachers were not sure that the principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food; the principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons; and the principal

participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community.

5.3.4 Financial Management Practices on Students' Academic Performance

Financial management practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County.

Public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County have not been performing well based on the KCSE mean scores of 4.21 in 2018, 4.33 in 2019, 4.29 in 2020, 4.39 in 2021, and 4.34 in 2022 thus the overall mean score of the school was below 5. Most of their students did not attain university entry mean grade C+ and above, and hence most students did not qualify for prestigious courses' (e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades.

The research area of principals' administrative practices and their impact on student academic performance in Machakos County, Kenya, opens up several avenues for future research. These include investigating the influence of specific leadership styles, the impact of school culture on academic performance, and the role of ICT in school management.

5.4 Recommendations

Emanating from the study findings and the conclusions thereof, this study recommends that:

- i) In the aspect of human resource management practices, there is need for the principal to recognize teachers who have contributed positively to improving the academic performance in the school.

- ii) Principals ought to devise other ways of curriculum implementation practices which motivates the teachers and the students other than monitoring the classroom attendance of the teachers, regular internal assessments in the school, or even putting emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time.
- iii) The principal should keep up the good work they are doing of ensuring all students stay in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons; in addition, the principal should participate effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community.
- iv) Regarding financial management practices there is need for the principal to have good administrative financial skills; ensure the bursars office provides full accounting reports on time; allow students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears; and ensure all the accounts records are well kept.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Based on the conclusions the study gives the following suggestions for further research

- i. Future research should examine the long-term effects of management practice improvements on academic performance through longitudinal studies spanning multiple academic years.
- ii. The geographical and institutional specificity of this study suggests opportunities for comparative research examining management practice-academic performance relationships across different contexts.
- iii. Future research should examine the mediating and moderating factors that influence the relationship between management practices and academic performance.

- iv. The rapidly evolving technological landscape in education presents opportunities for research examining how technology integration influences the relationship between management practices and academic performance.
- v. Future research should examine the cost-effectiveness of various management practice improvements and their return on investment in terms of academic performance gains.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN DATA COLLECTION.

I am a postgraduate master's student at Machakos University conducting academic research on **'Effect of Principals' Administrative Practices on Academic Performance in Public secondary Schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.'**

Kindly note that, none of the information collected through questionnaires will be used for commercial gains or any intimidations. The project is purely for academic purposes and the information provided will be treated with utmost secrecy. Your responses will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance,

Yours Faithfully,

Tiffany Ndanu.

0718091567

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Principals

This research is for academic purpose only and not for commercial gain. All the information you provide here will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Do not indicate your name on the data sheet for your security reasons. Kindly provide the accurate information by filling out the questionnaires attached.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your gender
Male []
Female []
2. Kindly, indicate your age bracket
18-25 years []
26-45 years []
Above 45 years []
3. Your highest Educational qualification
Diploma []
Bachelor's Degree []
Master's Degree []
PhD []
4. How long have you been to this school?
Less than 1 year []
1-5 years []
6-10 years []
Over 10 years []
5. How many years have you served as a school principal?.....

SECTION B: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Does the school perform well in K.C.S.E examination?

a) Yes [] b. No []

What was the KCSE school mean score performance in the last year's

KCSE Year	Mean Score Point	Mean grade
2018		
2019		
2020		
2021		
2022		

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with these statements on academic performance in your school based on the following scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
Most of our students attain university entry mean grade C+ and above					
The overall mean score of the school is above 5					
The school is ranked among the top best performing schools in the county					
Most of our students qualify for prestigious courses' (e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades					

SECTION C: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' human resource management skills on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education					
The school has been holding various activities involving teachers, students, parents and the community					
There is a high parental and community involvement in decision-making practices at this school					
The principal decides based on the current situation and the policy of the Government Education					
The principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses					
The principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities					
The principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community					
The principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal					
The principal is result-oriented, and he/she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement					

SECTION D: CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' curriculum implementation management skills on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality					
The principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers					
The principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress					
The principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school					
The principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time					

SECTION E: STUDENTS' WELFARE

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' take on students' welfare on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food					
The principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons					
The principal allows students to participate in co-curricular activities					
The principal emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization					
The principal always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, meals hence improved self-esteem					
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare					
The principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community					

SECTION F: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' financial management skills on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal has a good administrative financial skills					
The principal ensures that the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time					
The principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears					
The principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept					
The principal always ensures students improve breakfast, lunch, and supper hence improved self-esteem					
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare					
The principal has been initiating the building projects in the school					

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Teachers

This research is for academic purpose only and not for commercial gain. All the information you provide here will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Do not indicate your name on the data sheet for your security reasons. Kindly provide the accurate information by filling out the questionnaires attached.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your gender
Male []
Female []
2. Kindly, indicate your age bracket
18-25 years []
26-45 years []
Above 45 years []
3. Your highest Educational qualification
Diploma []
Bachelor's Degree []
Master's Degree []
PhD []
4. How long have you been to this school?
Less than 1 year []
1-5 years []
6-10 years []
Over 10 years []

SECTION B: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Does the school perform well in K.C.S.E examination?

a) Yes [] b. No []

What was the KCSE school mean score performance in the last year's

KCSE Year	Mean Score Point	Mean grade
2018		
2019		
2020		
2021		
2022		

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with these statements on academic performance in your school based on the following scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
Most of our students attain university entry mean grade C+ and above					
The overall mean score of the school is above 5					
The school is ranked among the top best performing schools in the county					
Most of our students qualify for prestigious courses' (e.g. law, engineering) university entry grades					

SECTION C: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' human resource management skills on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal recognizes teachers who have contributed positively to improving the quality of education					
The school has been holding various activities involving teachers, students, parents and the community					
There is a high parental and community involvement in decision-making practices at this school					
The principal decides based on the current situation and the policy of the Government Education					
The principal pays attention to the school's needs and interests of individual teachers upon having in-service courses					
The principal gives full credence to the teachers in terms of managing curricular and co-curricular activities					
The principal has adopted an open-door policy between teachers, students, parents and the community					
The principal delegates duties to achieve the school goal					
The principal is result-oriented, and he/she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement					

SECTION D: CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' curriculum implementation management skills on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal strives to improve the classroom and learning quality					
The principal monitors the classroom attendance of the teachers					
The principal monitors and discusses individual learner academic progress					
The principal emphasizes the need for regular internal assessments in the school					
The principal always emphasizes on covering the syllabus on time					

SECTION E: STUDENTS' WELFARE

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' take on students' welfare on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal strives to improve provision of a better accommodation, and food					
The principal ensures all students stays in good health through qualified nurses and school patrons					
The principal allows students to participate in co-curricular activities					
The principal emphasizes on fair treatment of students to increase commitment and reduce demoralization					
The principal always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, meals hence improved self-esteem					
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare					
The new principal participates effectively towards creating a good relationship with teachers, parents and the community					

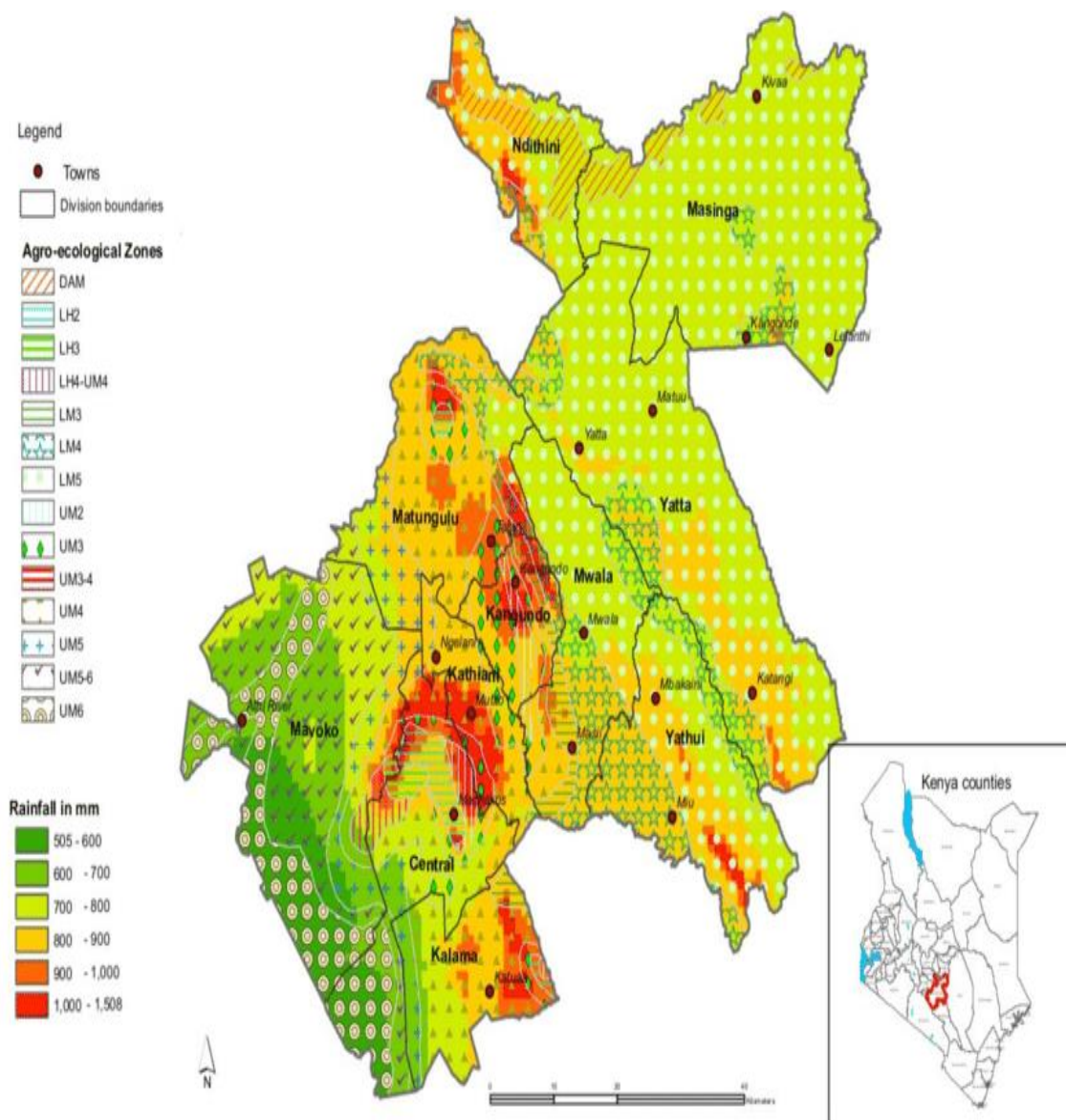
SECTION F: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

These questions seek your opinion regarding the principals' financial management skills on a scale of 1-5. Kindly tick () where appropriate.

Key: SD=1 - Strongly disagree, D=2 – Disagree, NS=3 – Not Sure, A=4 – Agree, SA=5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	S D	D	N S	A	SA
The principal has a good administrative financial skills					
The principal ensures all that the bursar office provides full accounting reports on time					
The principal allows students to continue learning even though they have fee arrears					
The principal ensures that all the accounts records are well kept					
The principal always ensures students improve lunch, breakfast, meals hence improved self-esteem					
The principal strives to improve the learning environment for students hence improving their social welfare					
The principal has been initiating the building projects in the school					

Appendix IV: Location of Study



Appendix V: Introduction Letter from Machakos University



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE DEAN GRADUATE SCHOOL

Telephone: 254-(0)735247939, (0)723805929
Email: graduateschool@mksu.ac.ke
Website: www.machakosuniversity.ac.ke

P.O Box 136-90100
Machakos
KENYA

REF. MksU/GS/SS/011/VOL.1

1st November, 2023

The Director,
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation,
P.O Box 30623,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir,

RE: TIFFANY NDANU NDUNDA (E55/2767/2019)

The above named is a Master's student in the second year of study and has cleared course work. The University has cleared her to conduct a research entitled: **Effect of Principals' Administrative Practices on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Machakos Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya.**

Kindly assist her with a Research Permit in order to undertake the research.

Thank you


PROF. RICHARD PETER, PhD
DEAN GRADUATE SCHOOL

KRP/gm



ISO 9001:2008 Certified *S soaring Heights in Transforming Industry and Economy*

Appendix VI: NACOSTI Research Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
RefNo: 884096	Date of Issue: 06/February/2024
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. Ndanu Tiffany Ndunda of Machakos University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Machakos on the topic: EFFECT OF PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MACHAKOS SUB- COUNTY, MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 06/February/2025.	
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