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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF MIGORI COUNTY.

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ABSTRACT

Students' academic performance is measured by use of national examinations and these examinations are recognized as an important backbone of the education system. Examination outcome is used as the major basis for deciding a student's ability and is used as a means for acquiring employment and academic advancement. The importance of education to both national and individual development is indisputable. Many students do not excel in national examinations in many countries around the world, Kenya included. The underperformance has raised alarm and efforts have been made to identify the factors that lead to this but the problem still persists. The Objective of the study was to determine the influence of principal's leadership skills on students' academic performance in Kenya. It was established that principals' leadership skills highly influence students' academic performance with overall mean rating of mean = 4.07, SD =0.55. The principals' leadership skills accounted for 23.0% of the variation of the students' academic performance in secondary schools as signified by the adjusted R square. 230. This implies that 77% of the variation in students' academic performance was due to other factors which were not subject of this study. Since the influence was significant ($P < .05$) it means that students academic performance can be predicted by principals leadership skills. This data is significant to stakeholders in education and particularly the Directorate of Quality Assurance and principals of secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Another study on assessment of challenges facing secondary school guidance and counseling teachers in Nyamira District, Kenya by Nyamwange, Nyakan and Ondima (2012) found that there are a number of challenges facing the provision of guidance and counseling services. These include: lack of adequate guidance and counseling training for teacher counselors; inadequate resources; and lack of requisite support to guidance and counseling programs among other challenges. A fact that Sidama and Wako (2016) confirmed by indicating that many students in public secondary schools face myriad of psychosocial and academic problems that need the help of dedicated and strong school counselor. Sidine and Wako concluded that students who utilize school guidance and counseling services properly are always successful in their academic endeavors. Whereas the previous studies concentrated on the challenges facing guidance and counseling teachers and students, the present study focused influence of principals' guidance and counseling on students' academic performance. In a study by Gitome *et al.* (2015) on correlation between students' discipline and performance in KCSE, the

results showed that guidance and counseling, parenting and church involvement are mechanisms that can be used in inculcating discipline among secondary school students in Kenya. Similarly, a study by Kamore and Tiego (2015) on what hinders guidance and counseling effectiveness in enhancing discipline in high schools in Murang'a County, Kenya indicated that guidance and counseling departments are in effective in increasing school discipline. The study further noted that guidance and counseling teachers are inadequately trained, motivated and faced with several challenges such as lack of facilities and monetary support. The study hence concluded that most teachers are equally overwhelmed with the huge work load that they teach making them spent very little time on counseling services. Whereas the previous study dealt with what hinders guidance and counseling in high schools in Muranga, the present study was conducted in Migori County and focused on influence of principal guidance and counseling on students' academic performance. Awuor, Aloka and Raburu (2018) equally established that there is a correlation coefficient between guidance and counseling and the students' academic performance. They further argued that guidance and counseling regulates student's behavior and gives learner's moral dictates which enhances their academic performance.

This study however did not include school principals as part of their respondents even though they are the general supervisors of the schools. Wambui (2015) conducted a study on effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in Kenya secondary schools. The study found out that the time allotted for guidance and counseling sessions in most public secondary schools were too short and inappropriate as the sessions were scheduled during lunch break or at the end of the lesson after school at 4.00 pm. The findings further indicated that only a few students sought counseling from the teachers in charge. In general, the teachers appeared skeptical as to whether students' academic performance was deteriorating due ineffective career guidance in schools or due to the student's entry behavior. The focus of the present study was therefore to re-examine this relationship between guidance and counseling and students' academic performance that shown mixed results in some previous studies. Nzoka and Orodho (2014) conducted a study on school management and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Embu North District, Embu County, Kenya. The study established that school principals used various strategies to improve students' academic performance. The strategies included: monitoring of instructional processes, closer monitoring of students, making learning institution free of drugs and closer student assessment; subsidizing Government funding through free day secondary education using income generating activities; and uncoordinated guidance and counselling programmes. Despite these efforts, the expected increase in students' academic performance was not achieved largely due to the fact that several school managers had not undergone management skill training. The study was conducted in free day secondary schools whereas the present study was done in both day and boarding secondary schools where it is possible to gather a wider range of information. Makau, Ronoh and Tanui (2016) in their study on the relationship between principals' instructional supervision and students' academic performance in sciences in secondary schools found a strong relationship between the practice of instructional supervision and academic performance in all the science subjects. This study used Science subject only which is not a mirror to Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations performance as opposed to the present study which used Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations performance to show students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that was used in this study postulated that there was a hypothetical link or relationship between principals leadership skills as independent variables and students' academic performance as the dependent variable (Figure 1). Mukherjee (2013) notes that Principals carry out a lot of tasks that directly impact on students' performance. Students and teachers monitoring, execution of students' assessment, delegation of duties and responsibilities, incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools, uniting teaching and non-teaching staff (Akinola and Obafemi, 2013), initiating teamwork among the teaching staff, monitoring students' discipline, quality improvement measures, communication and listening skills, mobilizing of adequate staffing (Onyara, 2013), Coordination and supervisory and Training on managerial skills, (Modo, Sanni, Uwah and Mogbo, 2013). Principal of a school offers leadership to all other factors that assist him in achieving the goals of the school. If principals give direction to students and set a good

working atmosphere for teachers, then realization of the set goals may be easier. He must also relate well with the parents to allow him get other requirements not provided by the government. In a school, principal, teachers, parents and students should pool towards the same direction in order to achieve the set goals. In this study, administrative skills, staff improvement, guidance and counseling and supervision, monitoring and assessment skills are studied. Good leadership offered by principals is bound to enhance students academic performance. In this study, improved performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education which is done at the end of four years' period in secondary school is considered key as it assesses the learners' ability throughout their secondary education. Intervening variables serve as moderating factors on the influence of principals leadership skills (independent variable) on students' academic performance (Dependent variable). Government policies form the foundation upon which school activities and decisions are executed, therefore the Principal is expected to strictly adhere to them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey and correlation research designs.) The study population was 245 principals and 14300 students within Migori County. Fisher's formula (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003) was used to determine the sample sizes. The sample sizes consisted of 152 principals and 384 students, 120 students and 20 principals were interviewed whereas 116 principals were issued with questionnaires in which the response rate was 116(76.31%). Both questionnaire and interview schedule were used for principals and focus discussion group for students were used to collect data. Piloting was done to establish reliability of instruments; where 24 principals, 16 students were involved in piloting. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine reliability of the questionnaires. Principals' questionnaires attained reliability coefficient of 0.79. Experts in Educational management and foundations were used in determining validity of the instruments by including their input in the content and face validity of the instruments. Analysis of quantitative data was done using frequency counts, Percentages and means, and regression analysis while qualitative data was coded, transcribed and organized thematically.

RESULTS

Demographic Data of Respondents: The study sought to investigate the demographic characteristics of the participants. This information was considered necessary for the determination of whether the respondents were representative sample of the target population for generalization of the results of the study. Demographic information investigated in this study includes gender, category of schools and nature of schools where the respondents come from. From Figure 2, it is clear that a significant most of the principals were males, with females being just about a third of the principals who participated in the survey, implying that majority of the secondary school principals in Migori County are males signifying glaring gender disparity. However, this may not be surprising because it is generally believed that although teaching is inherently dominated by female teachers, this is not the case in Kenya secondary schools. Predominant gender of secondary school

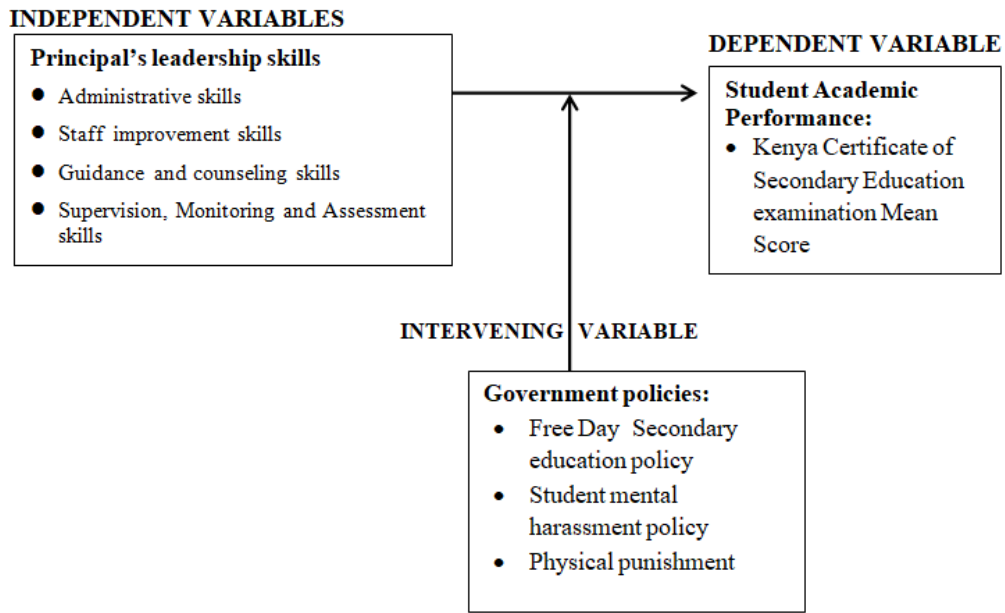
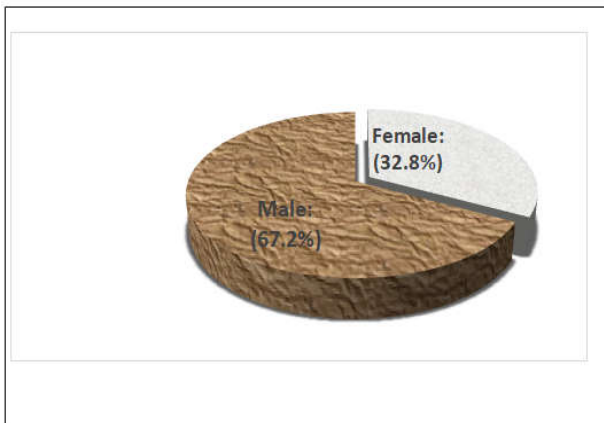


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework showing Influence of Principals' Leadership skills on Students' Academic Performance



Source: Field data (2018)

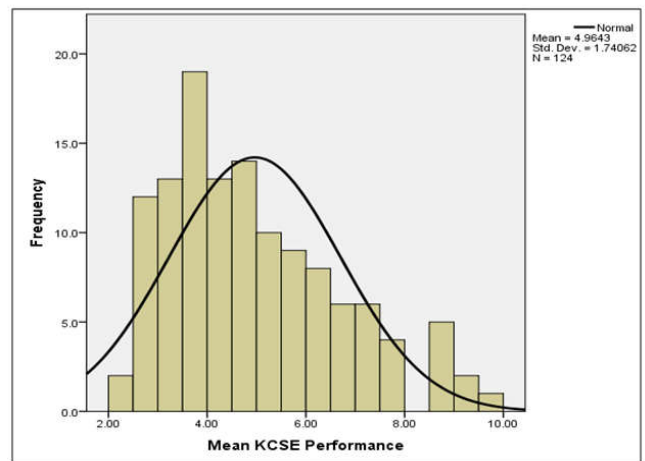


Figure 3. Distribution of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations 2017 School Mean Score in Migori County

Figure 2. Distribution of the Principals by gender

Table 1. Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations Mean Scores

| Performance index | Number of Schools | Frequency | % | Cumulative Frequency % |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|---|------------------------|
| 1.00 -2.54 | 2 | 1.72 | | 1.72 |
| 2.55 -4.09 | 42 | 36.21 | | 37.93 |
| 4.10 -5.64 | 30 | 25.86 | | 63.79 |
| 5.65 -7.19 | 27 | 23.28 | | 87.07 |
| 7.20 -8.74 | 12 | 10.34 | | 97.41 |
| 8.75 -10.29 | 3 | 2.59 | | 100.0 |
| 10.30 -12.00 | 0 | 0.00 | | 100.0 |
| Total | 116 | 100.00 | | |

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 2. Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations Average Mean Scores- Migori County 2010-2017

| Year | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Mean | 5.81 | 6.06 | 5.85 | 6.18 | 6.17 | 6.38 | 4.78 | 4.96 |
| SD | 1.57 | 1.54 | 1.81 | 1.82 | 1.73 | 1.94 | 1.64 | 1.73 |

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 3 .Mean Average Percentage of students who got C+ and above

| Year | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Mean (%) | 31.90 | 35.39 | 37.24 | 37.65 | 37.42 | 40.44 | 21.25 | 20.35 |
| SD | 27.12 | 28.30 | 31.61 | 33.64 | 32.65 | 32.28 | 17.12 | 15.89 |

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 4. Influence of Principals' Leadership Skills on Students' Academic Performances (n=116)

| Skills | Principals Ratings | |
|--|--------------------|----------|
| | Mean | Std Dev. |
| X ₁ Students and teachers monitoring | 4.06 | 0.88 |
| X ₂ Execution of students' assessment | 4.04 | 0.92 |
| X ₃ Delegation of duties and responsibilities | 4.06 | 0.92 |
| X ₄ Incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools | 3.94 | 0.93 |
| X ₅ Uniting teaching and non-teaching staff | 4.03 | 0.94 |
| X ₆ Initiating teamwork among the staff | 4.28 | 0.81 |
| X ₇ Monitoring students' discipline | 4.26 | 0.80 |
| X ₈ Quality improvement measures | 4.03 | 0.92 |
| X ₉ Communication and listening skills | 4.03 | 0.92 |
| X ₁₀ Mobilizing of adequate staffing. | 4.03 | 0.84 |
| X ₁₁ Coordination and supervisory | 4.04 | 0.79 |
| X ₁₂ Training on managerial skills | 4.04 | 0.87 |
| Overall rating on leadership skills | 4.07 | 0.55 |

Source: Field data (2018)

Interpretation of mean Ratings:

1.00-1.44 Very low

1.45-2.44 Low

2.45-3.44 Moderate

3.45- 4.44 High

4.45-5.00 Very high

Table 5. Model Summary of Regression Analysis of the influence of Principals' Leadership Skills on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .486 ^a | .236 | .230 | 1.46330 | .236 | 35.273 | 1 | 114 | .000 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Leadership Skills

b. Dependent Variable: Students' Academic Performance

Table 6. ANOVA on Influence of Principals Leadership Skills on Students' Academic Performance

| | Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 75.529 | 1 | 75.529 | 35.273 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 244.103 | 114 | 2.141 | | |
| | Total | 319.632 | 115 | | | |

Table 7. Multiple Regression Analysis of Influence of Principals' leadership skills on Students' Academic Performance

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 1.231 | 1.234 | | .997 | .001 |
| X ₁ | .232 | .219 | .123 | 1.058 | .009 |
| X ₂ | .165 | .210 | -.092 | -.788 | .033 |
| X ₃ | .179 | .225 | .100 | .797 | .027 |
| X ₄ | .184 | .237 | .103 | .774 | .041 |
| X ₅ | .041 | .206 | -.023 | -.200 | .042 |
| X ₆ | .019 | .235 | .009 | .080 | .087 |
| X ₇ | .126 | .259 | .061 | .487 | .028 |
| X ₈ | .184 | .209 | .102 | .880 | .031 |
| X ₉ | .054 | .244 | .030 | .219 | .027 |
| X ₁₀ | .078 | .256 | .039 | .306 | .760 |
| X ₁₁ | -.141 | .256 | -.067 | -.550 | .083 |
| X ₁₂ | .253 | .214 | .133 | 1.181 | .040 |

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Academic Performance

Regression Equation: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9$

KEY:

X₁- Students and teachers monitoring

X₂- Execution of students' assessment

X₃- Delegation of duties and responsibilities

X₄- Incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools

X₅- Uniting teaching and non-teaching staff

X₆- Initiating teamwork among the staff

X₇- Monitoring students' discipline

X₈- Quality improvement measures

X₉- Communication and listening skills

X₁₀- Mobilizing of adequate staffing

X₁₁- Coordination and supervisory

X₁₂- Training on managerial skills

teachers in Kenya is male, a fact that is confirmed by this study. On the same note this finding indicates male are more in the leadership position than their female counterparts. However, it is noted that both gender was represented in the study. Students' academic performance was assessed on the basis of students' performance in exams. Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations was therefore, it is a good indicator of the academic performance of students in a school. This is because of its being a standardized instrument and therefore is reliable for measuring students' academic performance. The principals were asked to indicate the school's overall mean score in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in the last eight years (2010-2017). Table 1 shows the schools' mean average score in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations for these years.

From Table 1, it is clear that most of schools had low average mean grade in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations, with only 87.07% of them having a mean of less than 7.20. Equally, the findings of the study show that over the last eight years, most secondary schools in Migori County recorded fairly low performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. This was reflected by the summaries of the sampled schools' Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations mean scores as indicated in Table 2. It is evident that the county's mean scores in Kenya Certificate Of Secondary Education Examinations has not gone beyond seven points, as indicated by the summary of average mean scores for the sampled schools in the last eight years. Within this period, the best score was recorded in the year 2015 at 6.38 with a standard deviation of 1.94, while the worst mean score was recorded in 2016 at 4.78 with a standard deviation of 1.64. Further exploration of 2017 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations examination results for Migori County reveals that most of the secondary schools did not do very well in 2017 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations, as was revealed by a mean average score of only 4.96 (standard deviation=1.73) from the sampled schools. The relatively large standard deviation of 1.73 shows that the scores were quite spread and not very close to the mean, implying that the data was quite skewed as indicated in Figure 3.

The distribution curve reveals that the scores were positively skewed; there is a long tail and distortion that is caused by many small values which pull the mean downward so that it is less than the median, indicating that most of the schools scored below the mean of 4.96. This finding mirrors the records held at the County Director of Education's Office, Migori (2018).

Principals were also asked to indicate the proportion of the students who had got grade C+ and above. Table 3 shows mean average percentage of the students per school in the county who scored at least C+ and above in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations in the last eight-year period. It is clear that the percentages were under forty percent, except in the year 2015 with an average mean of 40.4% (standard deviation=32.42). The worst years were 2016 and 2017 at 21.3% and 20.4%, respectively. These findings point out that significant majority of the students got below C+, which is an indication that most of secondary school students in Migori County perform poorly in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations, which is a pronounced wastage in education. However, fairly large standard deviations shown in the table implies that there is big disparity between

schools in terms of students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations; some schools perform quite well while others perform dismally.

Research Objective: To determine the influence of principals' leadership skills on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The study used both descriptive and inferential to establish the influence of principals' leadership skills on students' academic performance. From Table 4, responses were summarized in percentage frequencies. From Table 4, it can be established that although the respondents held varied views on the influence of leadership skills on students' academic performance, they all agreed that leadership skills have significant amount of influence on students' academic performance. This was reflected by overall ratings of the principals (Mean=4.07; SD=0.55) on influence of leadership skills on students' academic performance. Suffice it to say that, majority of the respondents held that the value of education in their school is contingent to the leadership skills provided by their school principal. For example, a significant majority of principals agreed that the principal's skills on students and teachers monitoring is of high influence on school academic performance, as reflected by the ratings of 4.06 (SD=0.88). The respondents held a strong belief that the level of academic success of a school is highly influenced by the leadership skill exhibited by the principal in monitoring students' discipline, as indicated by the ratings of 4.26 (SD=0.80) by the principals. Equally, close to four out of every five (79.6%) of the principals who participated in the survey held the assertion that execution of students' assessment is of great influence (mean=4.04; SD=0.92) to school academic performance. The results of the survey established that training of the school leadership on managerial skills is very important step towards high school academic performance. This was reflected by 83 (71.5%) of the principals who rated the influence of training on managerial skills on academic performance at 4.04 (SD = 0.87). In addition, the results of the survey show that quality of improvement measures put in place by the principal towards the schools' academic performance is key to the level of school's academic success and ensuing students' performance. This was reflected by close to three quarters 86 (74.1%) of the principals who rated this influence at 4.03 (SD=0.92).

On the same note, the principals who participated in the survey agreed, but at a varied level, that delegation of duties and responsibilities influence academic performance of the school. This was established by the fact that the principals rated delegation of duties and responsibilities at 4.06 (SD=0.92) on its influence on student academic performance. However, it emerged that although the principals were in agreement that leadership skills of the principal's influence schools' academic performance; their ratings on influence of some aspects of leadership skills varied. For example, whereas more than 94 out of 116 (81.03%) of the principals who took part in the survey rated the principals' abilities of initiating teamwork among the teaching staff as of very high influence (mean=4.28; SD =0.81) on academic performance. Similarly, while the principals rated the influence of uniting teaching and non-teaching staff as very high (mean=4.03; SD=0.94). By the same token, majority of the principals were in agreement that their communication and listening skills influence academic achievement, they rated it at 4.03 (SD=0.92). This implies that most of principals held a common point of view that principal's ability to unite the teaching and non-teaching staff, and

improving on communication and listening skills have great influence on student academic performance in secondary schools. To establish the actual influence of principals' leadership skills on students' academic performance, the Null hypothesis 'Ho₁: Principals' Leadership Skills do not influence Students' Academic Performance' was used. In this respect, the data in Tables 1 and 4 was used to compute regression analysis. The results were as shown in Tables 5, 6 and 7. The model indicates that principals' leadership skills accounted for 23.0% (Adjusted R²=.230) of the variation in students' academic performance in secondary schools in Migori County. 77% of variation in students' academic performance was due to other factors which are not subject of this variable. The null hypothesis; Principals' Leadership Skills have no significant influence on students' academic performance was rejected because $r=.486$, $N=116$, and $p<.05$. This means that principals' Leadership Skills influenced Students' Academic Performance. This was a fairly considerable amount of effect by only one predictor on the dependent variable. However, to establish whether principals' leadership skill was a significant predictor of students' academic performance, Analysis of Variance was then computed as shown in Table 6.

The *F*-ratio in the ANOVA Table (Table 6) tests whether the general regression model is a good fit for the data. The finding of the study shows that principals' leadership skills significantly predict the students' academic performance, $F(1, 114) = 35.273$, $p<.05$ (i.e. the regression model is a good fit of the data). This means that information on the level of principals' leadership skills could be used to significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools. To determine the actual influence of principals' leadership skills, multiple linear regression analysis was computed and the results were as indicated in Table 7. From Table 7, it can be observed that nine principals' leadership skills out of twelve were found to be predictors of students' academic performance. This implies that they significantly influence students' academic performance. These factors were; Students and teachers monitoring, execution of students' assessment, delegation of duties and responsibilities, incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools, uniting teaching and non-teaching staff, monitoring students' discipline, quality improvement measures, communication and listening skills and training on managerial skills. The prediction model therefore is as follows; $Y = 1.231 + .232X_1 + .165X_2 + .179X_3 + .184X_4 + .041X_5 + .126X_7 + .184X_8 + .054X_9 + .253X_{12}$. These means that for every one-unit increase in Students and teachers monitoring by one unit, students' academic performance improved by .232 units as signified by coefficient of .232.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that Principals leadership skills significantly influence students academic performance. These findings are in line with findings of Buhere (2007) who found that quality of leadership plays a vital role in students' academic achievement as it is concerned with teachers, students, rules, regulations and policies that govern the school. This finding further confirms the belief that school leadership skills are critical in improving school management and it is a major factor influencing the on school academic performance. The same view was supported by the findings of Seashore and Leithood (2010) who noted that if a school is vibrant, innovative and child centered, has a reputation for excellence in

school teaching and students perform well, then principals' management practices is valued as a key to this success. In line with this finding and the findings in related literatures, it is clear that principals' leadership skills are a very important factor in the students' academic performance. During the interview, it was noted that secondary school principals need to have the ability to clarify the path to successful achievement of goals set to the students on their academic work; they must also, be able to remove obstacles on the path to achievement of these set targets for the students. In this respect one principal stated: "I have discovered that the principal who have interpersonal skill; view their primary role as that of providing support for their teachers so that they could put in their best to teaching, achieving school effectiveness and ensuring that the best result is realized from the students" (Principal 9). From the verbatim quote from principal 9, it is clearly realized that for a school principal to be able to remove obstacles to achievement of school goals at any work environment, the principal must have the necessary leadership skills to know when there are obstacles, what to do and how to do it. Principal's leadership skills are crucial in ensuring academic performance of students. The poor academic performance of most public secondary school students in external examinations cast doubts on the possession of leadership skills by their principals.

Nzoka and Orodho (2014) found that school principals used various strategies to improve students' academic performance; monitoring of instructional processes, closer monitoring of students, making learning institution free of drugs and closer student assessment; subsidizing Government funding through free day secondary education using income generating activities; and uncoordinated guidance and counselling programmes. Despite these efforts, the expected improved students' academic performance was not achieved largely due to the fact that majority of school managers had not undergone management skill training. In consideration of these study findings, it is an evident that principals need training on managerial skills to be effective in their supervision and monitoring of students and teachers. The respondents held a strong belief that the level of academic success of a school is highly influenced by the leadership skill exhibited by the principal in monitoring students' discipline, as indicated by the principals. This response is still in line with Nzoka and Orodho who supported it but calls for training on managerial skills to improve on performance. In relation to this study findings, it is clear that monitoring of students' discipline is very important but needs more skills from principals. Nzoka and Orodho who established that school principals used various strategies to improve students' academic performance like: inconsistent monitoring of instructional process, closer monitoring of students, making learning institution free of drugs and closer students' assessment. This will help in eradicating poor academic performance and promote discipline among students leading to improved performance. The other item asked to know how the leadership skills of a school principal affect candidates' academic performance in final exam. One of the respondents reiterated that: "It is a common knowledge that lack of effective leadership skills demonstrated by school principal's decreases students' academic performance because the absence of quality leadership often results in ill adapted school organization and programs which in most cases end up interfering with learners learning process hence dilapidated performance." (Principal 11). From the excerpts, it is evident that lack of appropriate principals' leadership skills leads to unstable and difficult staffing in most secondary schools,

students' negative attitudes to academic work and discipline, an unhealthy school system and temperature and non-cooperation of both teachers and students in matters of academics. The consequences of failed school leadership skills are grave and lead to poor academic achievements of the learners. This finding is in agreement with Guruchandran (2009) who stated that principals with appropriate leadership skills are characterized by certain key qualities. They have self-belief and motivation both to the teachers and students, they are team players, they are visionaries and they are listeners and observers and also, possess a personality that aids them achieve their set targets within their schools. In view of the findings and the literature arguments, it sounds clearly therefore that school principals need to emphasize on transformative leadership skills as the application will influence academic performance. Ouma, Akinyi and Obama (2015) who established that principals in the study locale used leadership skills that were not conducive to teacher-student interactive learner-centred learning that enhanced students' academic performance. This contradiction means there is need for workshop, seminars and short courses for secondary school principals to improve on their managerial skills.

Akinola and Obafemi (2013) who stipulated that possession of technical, interpersonal, conceptual and administrative skills is crucial in school academic performance. This implies that principals must possess leadership qualities that will enable them to identify improvement measures to be taken towards the improvement of students' academic performance. Likewise, the findings of the study confirmed that academic performance of a school is highly influenced (Mean =4.04) by the level of coordination and supervision by the principals. The findings that resonate with Oluremi (2013) who argued that principals who adopted quality improvement measures encourage team work with personnel, delegation of duties and students participate in academic activities influenced academic performance in secondary schools. The findings that were in contrast with Suleiman, Mustapha and Ibrahim (2016) who observed that there were no significant relationships between principals' teamwork initiative and students' academic performance in secondary schools. This study confirms that there is need of teamwork or delegation as confirmed by the findings to improve on students' academic performance and not as opposed to other scholars. It was noted from the interviews that most well-coordinated schools do initiate and encourage a participatory decision making process through regular staff meetings, consultation with implementation committees and heads of department and a discussion with students. This was in line with Okello (2018) who argued that secondary school principals with relational leadership skills focuses on the satisfaction, motivation and general well-being of team members which encourages school academic performance. On the other hand, Principal 13 stated that: "In my school, I have realized that the beliefs, attitudes and conduct of my teachers are influenced by the personal qualities or traits of me as their leader" (Principal 13). The verbatim narrations from principal 13 above outline that the school principals' personal character and values play a role in the school's effectiveness as these have influence on the attitude and cooperation of the school staff and students thereby contributing to the academic performance of the students. On the contrary, it emerged from the findings of this study that although incorporation of guidance and counselling programs in schools by the principals was found to be of influence to academic performance, principals (mean=3.94) agreed that its influence is high. This is

in agreement with the findings by Jackline and John (2014) who established that guidance and counseling programs in schools is one of the strategies that help enhance students' academic performance. This is a clear indication that there is a common agreement that guidance and counseling should be promoted in secondary school for the improvement of students' academic performance. The family should be active to take appropriate measures in curbing their children as children take much time with family members especially during holidays. The religious bodies should also approach the issues of alcoholism and drug addiction by the youths with more firm measures. On staffing, the results of the survey revealed that the principals' leadership skills regarding staff mobilization has considerable influence on academic performance, as reflected by ratings of 4.03 from the principals. This is supported by the view of Oluremi (2013) who concluded that principals who employed the use of quality improvement measures encourage team work with staff and student's participation in academic activities that influenced academic achievement in secondary schools. There is need for the school administrators to encourage communication between students and the office, the facilities like school libraries and laboratories should be improved to help in controlling and eradicating students' unrest.

The findings of Nzoka and Orodho (2014) who supported this. Increase of execution of students' assessment by one unit there is an improvement of the students' academic performance by .165 units as signified by a coefficient of .165. It is also clear that an increase of delegation of duties and responsibilities by one unit, students' academic performance improves by .179 units as signified by a coefficient of .179. It has also been established that an increase of incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools by one unit there is an improvement of students' academic performance by .184 units as signified by coefficient of .184. Similarly, an increase of uniting teaching and non-teaching staff by one unit, there is an improvement of students' academic performance by .041 units as signified by a coefficient of .041. Also an increase of monitoring students' discipline by one unit, there is an improvement of students' academic performance by .126 units as signified by a coefficient of .126. Increasing quality improvement measures, communication and listening skills and training on managerial skills also improve students' academic performance by .184, .054, .253 units as signified by coefficients of .184, .054, .253 respectively.

The other factors namely; Initiating teamwork among the staff, mobilizing of adequate staffing, Coordination and supervisory were not significant predictors of students' academic performance. This means that they cannot be relied on to predict students' academic performance. This also means that if principals have to improve on students' academic performance, then the focus should be on Students and teachers monitoring, execution of students' assessment, delegation of duties and responsibilities, incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools, uniting teaching and non-teaching staff, monitoring students' discipline, quality improvement measures, communication and listening skills and training on managerial skills. All these factors are strong and therefore tends to override other factors found not to be significant and perform better and vice versa. For instance, if they are directed to effective use by the principals, then students' academic performance will improve.

This is in line with (Akinola and Obafemi, 2013; Bolanle, 2017; Waswa, (2017; Oluremi, 2013) who supported positively the significant effect on principals' leadership skills on students' academic performance. Similarly, if use of principals' leadership skills is directed to effective promotion of academic performance, then students' academic performance will improve. By comparing the literatures, new knowledge is that, among other principals' leadership skills, only nine (Students and teachers monitoring, execution of students' assessment, delegation of duties and responsibilities, incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools, uniting teaching and non-teaching staff, monitoring students' discipline, quality improvement measures, communication and listening skills and training on managerial skills) can predict students' academic performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that principals' leadership skills, namely; Students and teachers monitoring, Training on managerial skills, delegation of duties and responsibilities, incorporating guidance and counseling programs in schools, Uniting teaching and non-teaching staff, initiating teamwork among the staff, monitoring students' discipline, quality improvement measures, communication and listening skills, and execution of students' assessment influenced students academic performance in public secondary schools. The two principals' leadership skills namely; mobilizing of adequate staffing and coordination and supervisory did not significantly influence students' academic performance.

Recommendation

The Directorate of Quality Assurance in the Ministry of Education need to facilitate the induction of newly appointed school principals on how to integrate and moderate school and home based factors to enhance students' academic performance in public secondary schools. The school principals should equally embrace the use of an inclusive leadership skills to enable students and teachers to motivate students and teachers in their academic undertakings so as to improve students' academic performance.

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