Strategic Leadership and School Success: Evaluating the Impact of Management Strategies on Public Secondary School Performance in Garissa Township, Kenya - A Mixed-Methods Approach

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Abstract

The performance of public secondary schools in Kenya poses a significant challenge, particularly in underserved areas like Garissa Township, where educational outcomes are adversely affected by a range of socio-economic issues, limited resources, and the quality of leadership. Effective leadership plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges and creating an environment that fosters academic achievement. This study seeks to explore the impact of leadership management strategies, especially those based on Servant Leadership Theory, on the performance of public secondary schools in Garissa. Servant Leadership Theory emphasises the significance of leaders who prioritise the needs of their teams and communities, thereby fostering support, empowerment, and collaboration. To investigate this matter thoroughly, a mixed-methods research design was implemented, focusing on a diverse group of 55 individuals, which included members of boards of management, principals, deputy principals, teachers, and students from eleven public secondary schools in Garissa Township. Employing a census method guaranteed the inclusion of all individuals in the target population as units of analysis. Data collection utilised both structured and unstructured questionnaires, which were validated through a pilot study involving six participants to ensure their clarity and effectiveness. The analysis incorporated descriptive and inferential statistics, revealing a positive and significant correlation between strategic leadership management strategies and the performance of public secondary schools ($r=0.675$; $p=0.000$; $p<0.05$). Furthermore, linear regression analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between these variables ($\beta =0.554$; $t=2.5888$; $p=0.001$; $p<0.05$). These findings highlight that effective leadership acts as a vital predictor of enhanced educational outcomes, indicating that school administrators, policymakers, and educational stakeholders must prioritise the development and implementation of strategic leadership management strategies to improve the performance of public secondary

schools. The insights gained from this study offer valuable recommendations for policymakers, promoting evidence-based educational policies that recognise the essential role of strategic leadership in advancing educational performance. This research ultimately contributes to the broader discussion on educational enhancement in Kenya, emphasising the importance of prioritising effective leadership to tackle the challenges encountered by public secondary schools in underserved areas.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Management Strategies, Performance, Public Secondary Schools

Introduction

The performance of public secondary schools serves as a crucial indicator of educational effectiveness and societal progress, reflecting not just academic success but also the ability to equip students for future challenges. Strategic leadership management has emerged as a key factor in enhancing school performance, focusing on the development and implementation of policies that align educational aims with institutional objectives. Research indicates that schools demonstrating strong strategic leadership experience improved student outcomes and increased stakeholder engagement. For instance, Njue et al. (2023) illustrate how innovative leadership practices positively impact academic performance by cultivating a constructive school culture. Wekesa et al. (2021) further contend that effective strategic planning and resource management lead to heightened accountability and performance levels in public secondary schools. Kamau and Njoroge (2020) highlight the importance of inclusive decision-making processes, which foster community support and collaboration, ultimately resulting in sustained enhancements in educational quality.

In the USA, the performance of public secondary schools has experienced notable developments and milestones, particularly following the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. This act decentralised education governance and empowered states to customise their accountability systems, aiming for better academic results (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of technology in education, compelling schools to utilise remote learning platforms such as Google Classroom. This shift underscored the necessity to address the digital divide and ensure all students have equitable access to resources (Dorn et al., 2020). Funding disparities remain a significant challenge, as schools in economically disadvantaged areas struggle to secure sufficient financial resources, leading to substantial gaps in educational quality (Baker et al., 2021). The teacher shortage crisis continues to affect public

secondary schools, primarily due to low salaries and high attrition rates, especially in schools serving low-income communities (Ingersoll, 2022). Various solutions have emerged to address these issues, including equitable funding initiatives that aim to redistribute resources to underfunded schools and programmes offering mentorship and professional development for teachers, which are essential for improving retention and job satisfaction (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

Germany has witnessed significant advancements and milestones in the performance of its public secondary schools, particularly through the implementation of the Education in Germany 2020 initiative, aimed at improving educational quality and equity nationwide (Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung, 2020). The introduction of digital education strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need to incorporate technology into the curriculum, facilitating innovative teaching methods and increased student engagement (Schmidt et al., 2022). Challenges remain, such as disparities in educational outcomes across various regions, particularly between urban and rural areas and among students from differing socio-economic backgrounds (OECD, 2021). The teacher shortage crisis significantly impacts education, especially in subjects like mathematics and science, where attracting and retaining qualified educators poses ongoing challenges (Holtappels et al., 2021). To confront these obstacles, the German government has concentrated on raising teacher salaries, enhancing professional development opportunities, and promoting inclusive educational practices to guarantee that all students receive a quality education (Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung, 2020).

Japan has also made noteworthy progress and milestones in the performance of its public secondary schools, especially through the implementation of the Course of Study reform in 2020. This reform aimed to foster critical thinking and creativity among students by updating the curriculum to incorporate more inquiry-based learning approaches (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT], 2020). Challenges persist, including high stress levels associated with entrance exams, which can lead to mental health issues among students and hinder holistic learning (Nishida et al., 2021). Disparities in educational outcomes exist between urban and rural schools, largely due to variations in resources and access to qualified teachers (OECD, 2021). To tackle these challenges, Japanese authorities have introduced initiatives to enhance mental health support in schools, alongside strategies aimed at recruiting and retaining

teachers in underserved areas, such as providing incentives and professional development opportunities (MEXT, 2020). These efforts are crucial for ensuring the education system meets the evolving needs of students while maintaining high academic performance standards (OECD, 2021).

In South Africa, the performance of public secondary schools has seen significant improvements and milestones, primarily driven by the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP). This initiative aims to enhance the quality of education by 2030 through elevated curriculum standards and improved teacher training (National Planning Commission, 2020). The Revised Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), introduced in 2012, further streamlined the curriculum to foster critical thinking and the practical application of knowledge, positively influencing learner performance (Department of Basic Education, 2021). Challenges continue to arise, particularly concerning inequality and resource disparities among schools, especially in rural regions where infrastructure is often inadequate, and access to qualified teachers is limited (Pillay, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges by disrupting learning and raising dropout rates, particularly among vulnerable groups (Spaull, 2021). Solutions include targeted government interventions to improve infrastructure, initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining skilled educators in underserved areas, and the adoption of blended learning strategies that cater to diverse learning needs, ensuring a more equitable education system for all students in South Africa (National Planning Commission, 2020).

In Tunisia, the implementation of the Tunisian Education Reform Plan (TERP), initiated in 2016, has highlighted significant developments and milestones in public secondary schools. This reform focuses on modernising the curriculum and enhancing teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2021). The initiative introduced new pedagogical approaches that prioritise critical thinking and problem-solving skills, along with a digital transformation strategy to integrate technology into classrooms (World Bank, 2022). Challenges persist, especially concerning high dropout rates and the disparities in educational access between urban and rural regions, which hinder overall educational equity (UNICEF, 2023). Socio-economic issues such as unemployment and political instability have worsened these educational challenges, affecting students' engagement and motivation (Bouslama & Laabidi, 2022). Addressing these issues requires increased government investment in education, targeted support programmes for at-risk students, and enhanced

collaboration between schools and communities to create a supportive learning environment. These measures aim to establish a more inclusive and effective education system in Tunisia (World Bank, 2022).

In Kenya, the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), launched in 2017, has driven significant developments and milestones in the performance of public secondary schools. This curriculum prioritises skill development and holistic education over rote learning (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2022). Additionally, the 100% transition policy from primary to secondary education, introduced in 2018, seeks to ensure that all students complete their secondary education, leading to increased enrollment rates (Ministry of Education, 2021). Challenges remain, particularly regarding inadequate infrastructure and a lack of qualified teachers, especially in rural areas, which can negatively impact the quality of education (Mugo & Karanja, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further widened existing disparities in learning outcomes and access to educational resources, particularly for marginalised communities (Gachathi et al., 2021). Solutions to these challenges involve targeted investments in school infrastructure, initiatives for recruiting and training teachers to enhance their capacity, and the integration of technology to facilitate remote learning and improve resource accessibility. These efforts aim to create a more equitable and effective secondary education system in Kenya (Mugo & Karanja, 2022).

In Garissa Township, public secondary schools encounter substantial challenges that adversely affect their performance, primarily due to resource constraints and socio-economic factors. Although government initiatives strive to enhance educational quality, many schools struggle with inadequate infrastructure, including insufficient classrooms and poor sanitation facilities, which undermine effective learning environments (Owino & Ndunda, 2021). The region also suffers from a shortage of qualified teachers, worsened by difficulties in attracting educators to remote locations, resulting in a reliance on untrained personnel (Kenya National Union of Teachers, 2022). Socio-cultural issues, such as early marriages and a preference for boys' education over girls', exacerbate the situation, leading to low enrollment and high dropout rates, particularly among female students (Somali, 2023). These conditions necessitate this study to assess the impact of leadership management strategies on the performance of public secondary schools in this region.

Problem Statement

The performance of public secondary schools heavily depends on effective leadership management strategies, which provide the foundation for achieving educational excellence. Leadership plays a crucial role in establishing clear goals and expectations, aligning school activities with strategic objectives to cultivate a culture of accountability and continuous improvement (Leithwood et al., 2020). Competent leaders involve teachers and staff in collaborative decision-making processes, enhancing motivation and commitment to school initiatives, which, in turn, positively influences student outcomes (Bryk et al., 2020). Strong leadership also facilitates the introduction of professional development programmes that equip educators with essential skills and knowledge to improve their teaching practices (Harris, 2021). By fostering a supportive school environment and encouraging stakeholder engagement, leadership management strategies can substantially enhance the overall performance of public secondary schools (Fullan, 2021).

The Government of Kenya has introduced several initiatives designed to improve the performance of public secondary schools in Garissa Township, Garissa County, primarily through strategic policy measures and targeted interventions. One significant initiative is the implementation of the 100% Transition Policy, aimed at ensuring that all students completing primary education advance to secondary school, thereby increasing enrollment rates and decreasing dropout rates (Ministry of Education, 2021). Additionally, the government has prioritised infrastructure development by allocating resources for constructing classrooms and enhancing sanitation facilities, which are vital for creating conducive learning environments (Owino & Ndunda, 2021). Training programmes have been initiated to improve teachers' skills, focusing on innovative teaching methodologies and effective classroom management to enhance educational outcomes (Kenya National Union of Teachers, 2022). Furthermore, partnerships with non-governmental organisations have been established to support mentorship programmes for students, especially targeting vulnerable populations to ensure they receive the guidance and assistance necessary throughout their educational journey (Gachathi et al., 2021).

Significant challenges continue to impede educational progress in Garissa Township, despite the government's initiatives to enhance the performance of secondary schools. A major issue is the persistent resource disparity, where schools in Garissa frequently lack essential facilities such as libraries and laboratories, which are crucial for a comprehensive learning experience (Karanja, 2022). The region also faces a shortage of qualified teachers willing to work there, worsened by

security concerns and inadequate remuneration, leading to a reliance on untrained or underqualified personnel (Oduor & Akinyi, 2023). Socio-cultural barriers, including early marriages and gender bias, significantly impact girls' education, resulting in higher dropout rates and lower enrollment figures among female students (Dagnachew, 2023). These challenges present substantial obstacles to achieving educational equity and quality, limiting the overall performance of secondary schools in Garissa Township. If these issues remain unaddressed, the quality of education in the public secondary schools of Garissa Township will likely continue to deteriorate, perpetuating a cycle of poor academic performance, increased dropout rates, and limited opportunities for students, ultimately hindering the region's socio-economic development. This context underscores the need for this study to evaluate the effect of leadership management strategies on the performance of public secondary schools in the area.

Research Question

What is the relationship between leadership management strategies and the performance of the public secondary schools in Garissa Township?

The null hypothesis for this study assumed that there is no significant relationship between leadership management strategies and performance of public secondary schools in Garissa Township.

Underpinning Theory

The study is grounded in Servant Leadership Theory, which was introduced by Greenleaf in 1977. This theory highlights the importance of leaders prioritising the service of others, empowering their followers, and cultivating a positive organisational culture (Greenleaf, 1977). It asserts that leaders should concentrate on fulfilling the needs of their followers, fostering strong relationships, and promoting personal growth and well-being, rather than merely seeking power or self-interest (Spears, 2010). Characteristics of servant leaders include empathy, active listening, stewardship, and a commitment to the development of others, which contribute to enhanced trust, job satisfaction, and organisational effectiveness (Liden et al., 2008).

Servant Leadership Theory provides a valuable framework for elucidating leadership management strategies that enhance public secondary school performance by highlighting the significance of creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment. Leaders who embrace this approach

prioritise the needs of both teachers and students, recognising that empowered and motivated staff are essential for improving educational outcomes (Spears, 2010). For example, by attentively listening to educators' concerns, servant leaders can implement tailored professional development programmes that address specific challenges faced by teachers, thereby enhancing their teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction (Liden et al., 2008). Furthermore, servant leaders work to establish strong relationships within the school community, promoting collaboration and teamwork among staff, which can foster innovative teaching practices and increased student engagement (Greenleaf, 1977). This collaborative environment also nurtures a sense of belonging among students, positively influencing their academic performance and overall well-being. Through the promotion of stewardship, servant leaders encourage a culture of accountability, wherein all stakeholders, including students, parents, and community members, share in the responsibility for the school's success (Liden et al., 2008). Ultimately, implementing Servant Leadership Theory in public secondary schools can cultivate a more positive organisational culture marked by trust, mutual respect, and a collective commitment to student success, significantly enhancing overall school performance (Spears, 2010).

2.2 Empirical Review

Many studies have been conducted to establish the influence of leadership management strategies on the performance of public secondary schools. Owolabi and Adedoyin (2020) investigated the connection between transformational leadership and academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The researchers employed a quantitative research methodology, utilising a descriptive survey design to gather data. The study's target population included teachers from selected secondary schools in Lagos State, with a sample size of 200 educators. To ensure validity, the researchers conducted expert reviews, and they verified reliability through a pilot study that produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85. Data collection involved structured questionnaires, which were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. The results indicated a positive correlation between transformational leadership and academic performance, leading to the conclusion that effective leadership practices enhance student engagement and achievement.

Akinola et al. (2021) conducted research to examine the influence of servant leadership on school performance in Kenya. They utilised a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and

qualitative data. The study targeted principals and teachers from 50 public secondary schools in Nairobi County, with a sample size of 150 respondents. Validity was assured through expert evaluations, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a score of 0.83. Data collection consisted of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data and descriptive statistics for quantitative data. Findings demonstrated that servant leadership positively affected teacher collaboration and student performance, concluding that schools led by servant leaders create a supportive learning environment.

Fadekemi et al. (2022) sought to evaluate the effects of instructional leadership on student achievement in South Africa's public secondary schools. This quantitative research adopted a correlational design, targeting teachers from 100 schools nationwide, with a sample size of 300 teachers. To validate the study, the researchers conducted a pilot study, and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87. Data were gathered through questionnaires and analysed using regression analysis. The results revealed that effective instructional leadership practices significantly enhance student performance, leading to the conclusion that school leaders must actively support and develop their teachers to improve educational outcomes.

Juma and Nandwa (2023) explored how transformational leadership affects teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Uganda. This study utilised a quantitative research approach, employing a cross-sectional survey design with a target population of teachers from 60 public secondary schools, resulting in a sample size of 180 teachers. The researchers achieved validity through expert reviews, while reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. Data collection involved structured questionnaires, and data analysis employed descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The study concluded that transformational leadership positively influenced teachers' job performance, highlighting the need for school leaders to inspire and motivate their staff.

Mwangi et al. (2020) examined the relationship between participative leadership and academic performance in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study adopted a quantitative approach, using a descriptive survey design with a target population of teachers from 80 schools and a sample size of 240 teachers. Validity was ensured through expert evaluation, and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.84. Data were collected via questionnaires and analysed using

correlation analysis. Findings revealed that participative leadership practices significantly contributed to improved academic performance, leading to the conclusion that inclusive decision-making fosters a sense of ownership among staff and positively affects educational outcomes.

Alhassan and Nketiah (2021) investigated how transformational leadership impacts student motivation in secondary schools in Ghana. The research employed a mixed-methods design, targeting both teachers and students from 30 public secondary schools, resulting in a sample size of 120 respondents. Validity was achieved through expert reviews, and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.85. Data collection included structured questionnaires and focus group discussions, with descriptive statistics and thematic analysis used for data analysis. The study found that transformational leadership significantly improved student motivation and engagement, concluding that effective leadership practices can cultivate a motivating learning environment.

Kira et al. (2022) focused on ethical leadership and its effects on student performance in public secondary schools in Tanzania. The researchers adopted a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design, targeting teachers from 70 public secondary schools and obtaining a sample size of 210 teachers. Validity was assured through expert evaluations, while reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.86. Data collection involved structured questionnaires, and regression analysis was employed for data analysis. Findings indicated a significant relationship between ethical leadership and student performance, leading to the conclusion that ethical practices in school leadership are essential for promoting a positive school climate.

Oduor and Nyaga (2023) examined the relationship between various leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction in Kenyan secondary schools. This quantitative study utilised a descriptive survey design, targeting teachers from 50 public secondary schools, resulting in a sample size of 150 educators. Validity was achieved through expert reviews, and reliability was established with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.83. Data collection consisted of structured questionnaires, and data analysis involved descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The study concluded that democratic leadership styles positively influenced teachers' job satisfaction, which subsequently improved student learning outcomes.

Yengoh and Agbenyega (2024) explored strategic leadership and its role in school improvement initiatives in public secondary schools in Cameroon. Researchers adopted a qualitative research approach, targeting principals and teachers from 40 public secondary schools, resulting in a sample size of 100 respondents. Validity was assured through expert reviews, and reliability was established through member checking. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, which were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings indicated that schools led by strategic leaders effectively implemented improvement initiatives that significantly enhanced student performance, leading to the conclusion that strategic leadership is crucial for driving educational reforms.

Osei and Antwi (2020) investigated the effects of leadership management strategies on school effectiveness in Nigerian public secondary schools. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, targeting teachers and administrators from 80 schools, resulting in a sample size of 240 respondents. Validity was assured through expert evaluations, and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.84. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interviews, with data analysis utilising both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The study concluded that effective leadership strategies, including clear communication and performance monitoring, significantly contributed to enhanced school effectiveness.

Most of the studies discussed above have majorly assessed the effect of leadership styles on performance of schools, in different contexts using different methodologies. None of these has focused on leadership management strategies in Garissa Township, a gap that this study intended to fill.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed research methodology that integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess respondents' perceptions of stakeholder management strategies and the performance of public secondary schools in the study area. Researchers collected and analysed these perceptions using both numerical and non-numerical methods. A descriptive research design enabled a comprehensive understanding of participants' viewpoints regarding the research questions. The target population comprised all 11 public secondary schools in Garissa Township. The study specifically targeted principals, deputy principals, deans of studies, chairpersons of the Board of Management (BOM), and leaders of the student council, resulting in

a total study population of 55, as outlined in Table 1. Researchers posited that the respondents had adequate knowledge to effectively respond to the research questions.

Table 1: Target Population

Subject	Target Population
Chairman BOM	11
Principals	11
Deputy Principals	11
Dean of Studies	11
Student Leaders	11
TOTAL	**55**

Source: County Government of Garissa Education Department (2023)

The study's target population was small enough to necessitate a census approach, thus including all 55 respondents in the research. Primary data collection occurred through semi-structured questionnaires that contained both closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions facilitated the gathering of quantitative data, while open-ended questions provided qualitative insights, consistent with the overall research methodology.

Researchers conducted a pilot test of the research instruments to evaluate their validity and reliability. A secondary school randomly selected outside Garissa Township was chosen for this pilot, where six questionnaires were distributed. To ensure validity, content analysis was employed, with the supervisor evaluating the content of the questionnaires. Feedback from the supervisor informed refinements to the instruments. Reliability was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha

coefficient, with a threshold set at 0.7. This process involved distributing questionnaires to 10% of the sample size, corresponding to six respondents.

Quantitative data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics, utilising the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Researchers analysed quantitative data through means and standard deviations, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis through narration. Inferential statistics, including correlation and simple linear regression analysis, explored the relationships between independent and dependent variables. This analysis was conducted at a 0.05 confidence level, informing decisions about the null hypothesis. The findings were presented using frequency distribution tables and figures.

Throughout the study, the researcher maintained ethical standards, securing the necessary permissions prior to data collection. Respondent identities remained confidential, and their anonymity was safeguarded. Participation was voluntary, with no coercion to answer the research questions. The researcher explicitly communicated the study's purpose in the questionnaires.

Response Rate

Researchers distributed a total of 55 questionnaires to participants, which included school principals, chairpersons, deputy principals, deans of students, and student leaders. Of these, 42 questionnaires were completed and returned for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 76.4%, as shown in Figure 4.1. This response rate is considered adequate for analysis, aligning with the viewpoint of Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), who assert that a response rate exceeding 70% suffices for such purposes. The researcher employed a drop-and-pick data collection technique to achieve this response rate, providing respondents with sufficient time to complete the questionnaires.
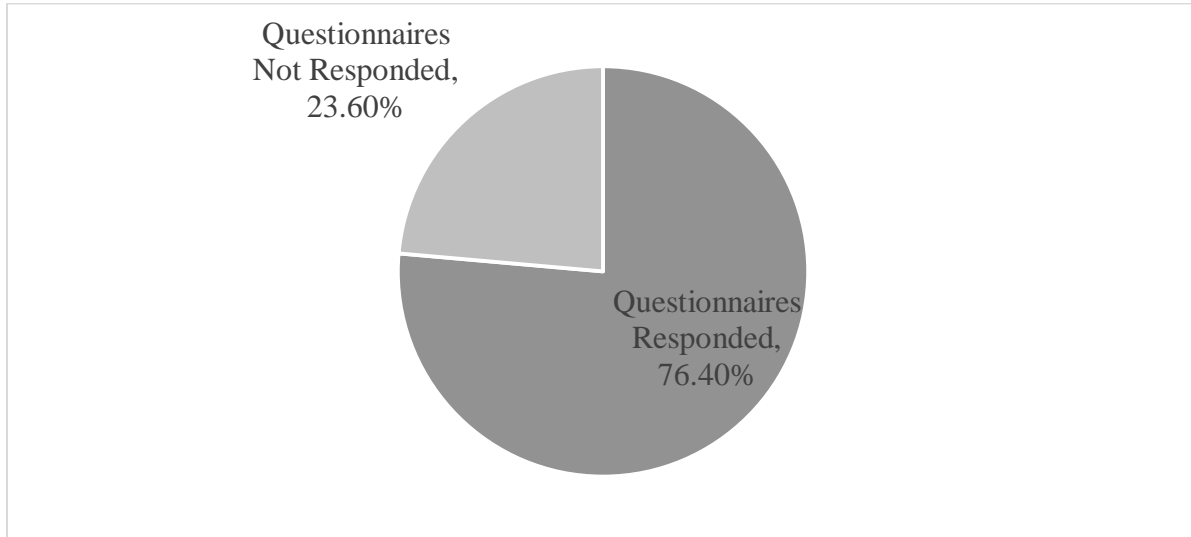
Figure 1: Response Rate
Source: Field Data, 2024

Pilot Test Results

Before conducting the main study, the researcher carried out a pilot study to assess the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument. For this pilot, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 10% of the sample size, administering a total of six questionnaires at a randomly selected secondary school outside Garissa Township.

Reliability Test Results

The study utilised the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, applying a threshold of 0.7. As indicated in Table 2, all variables recorded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient exceeding 0.7, confirming that the questionnaires were reliable for data collection in the main study.

Table 2: Reliability Test Results

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Comment
Leadership Management Strategy	0.894	5	Reliable
School Performance	0.926	2	Reliable

Source: Field Data, 2024

Validity Test Results

To establish content validity, the supervisor evaluated the concepts within the questionnaire to ensure they accurately reflected the intended measurements. Feedback received from the supervisor was integrated to improve the questionnaire's content.

Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Management Strategies and Performance of Public Secondary Schools

The researcher employed descriptive analysis to gather insights into the respondents' views on stakeholder management strategies and their effect on school performance, as depicted in Table 3. The findings indicated that respondents agreed with several statements, such as the existence of a free flow of information within the school (mean=3.96), the presence of policies that support academic programmes (mean=4.13), and the high level of discipline within the school (mean=4.27). Additionally, they concurred with the statements that a strategic plan guides the school's academic programmes (mean=4.17) and that the school administrators possess the necessary skills to manage these programmes (mean=3.94). On average, respondents agreed with the leadership management strategy statements, as reflected by an overall mean response of 4.094. The standard deviation of 0.352 suggests that most responses were clustered closely around the mean.

From the qualitative analysis, respondents provided insights on how school leadership could enhance performance. Some emphasised the importance of establishing and effectively communicating a compelling vision for academic success, inspiring all stakeholders to pursue excellence. Others stressed the necessity of optimal resource allocation, such as finances and personnel, to effectively support teaching and learning activities. A number of respondents suggested that continuous professional development opportunities should be offered to teachers and staff to improve their skills and teaching methods. A few also highlighted the need for robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track student progress and adapt strategies as necessary.

Table 3: Leadership Management Strategies and Public Secondary School Performance

Leadership Management Strategies	N	Mean	Average
There is free flow of information in the school	42	3.96	0.573
There are school policies that support academic programmes	42	4.13	0.244
There is high level of discipline in the school	42	4.27	0.195
There is a strategic plan guiding academic programmes in the school	42	4.17	0.229
The school administrators have the necessary skills to manage academic programmes	42	3.94	0.517

| **Average** | | **42** | **4.094** | **0.352** |

Source: Field Data, 2024

Public Secondary Schools Performance

The study aimed to gather respondents' views on the performance of the schools involved in the research. Findings showed agreement with statements such as the schools' improvement in performance over the last five years (mean=4.26) and a 100% transition rate within the schools (mean=3.54). The average response to statements about school performance was 3.9, with a standard deviation of 0.408, indicating a moderate level of consensus among respondents.

In the qualitative analysis, several recommendations emerged regarding measures to improve school performance. Some respondents highlighted the importance of investing in teacher training and professional development to enhance instructional quality. Others focused on the need for effective and equitable resource distribution to support teaching and learning. A few respondents pointed out the value of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the strategies in place, which would allow for ongoing adjustments to improve the performance of public secondary schools in the region. These results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Public Schools' Performance

Performance of Public Secondary Schools	N	Mean	Average
The school has improved performance over the last five years	42	4.26	0.105
The school's transition rate is 100%	42	3.54	0.711
Average	**42**	**3.9**	**0.408**

    a. Dependent Variable: Public School Performance b. Predicator (Stakeholder Management Strategies)

Source: Field Data, 2024

Correlation Analysis

The study sought to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. The correlation findings, as outlined in Table 5, demonstrated a significant positive correlation between leadership management strategies and the performance of public secondary schools. These results indicate that leadership management strategies are positively and significantly associated with the performance of the schools. This is reflected in the correlation coefficient of 0.675 and a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05 (r=0.675; p=0.000; p<0.05). The findings suggest that improving leadership management strategies leads to better performance outcomes for public secondary schools in Garissa Township.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

		Leadership Management Strategy	School Performance
Leadership Management Strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (1-tailed)		
School Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.675	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	
	N	42	42

a. Dependent Variable: Public Secondary School Performance b. Predicator (Leadership Management Strategies)
Source: Field Data, 2024

Linear Regression Analysis

The study utilised an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine if the model linking the independent and dependent variables was statistically significant. The findings in Table 6 indicated a significance value of 0.40154. As this value falls below the 0.05 threshold, it confirms that the model was statistically significant and well-suited for evaluating the relationship between the variables within the study.

Table 6: ANOVA (Model Significance)

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.457	3	30.1523	10.4014	0.040154[b]
	Residual	110.157	38	2.8989		
	Total	200.614	41			

a. Dependent Variable: Public Secondary School Performance
b. Predictor: (Constant), Leadership Management Strategies
Source: Field Data, 2024

The study incorporated model coefficient results to assess how variations in the independent variable influence the dependent variable. Findings demonstrated that leadership management strategies had a positive and significant relationship with the performance of public secondary schools in Garissa Township ($\beta = 0.554$; t = 2.5888; p = 0.000; $p < 0.05$). These results imply that a one-unit increase in leadership management strategies leads to a 0.306-unit improvement in the performance of public secondary schools in Garissa Township, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Model Coefficients

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.912	0.205		4.4488	0.023
Leadership Management Strategies	0.554	0.214	0.485	2.5888	0.000

    a. Dependent Variable: Public Secondary School Performance
    b. Predictor: (Constant), Leadership Management Strategies
Source: Field Data, 2024

Discussion of Results

This research confirmed a positive and significant relationship between leadership management strategies and the performance of public secondary schools in Garissa Township ($\beta = 0.554$, p = 0.000; $p < 0.05$). Various studies align with these findings. Muthoni and Nyabuto (2020) identified a strong positive connection between transformational leadership and school performance in Kenyan public secondary schools ($\beta = 0.671$, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, Orodho and Omboko (2022) established that servant leadership significantly predicts academic success in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya ($\beta = 0.517$, $p < 0.05$). Mwangi and Nyambegera (2020) also reported a positive correlation between distributed leadership and school performance in Kenyan public secondary schools (r = 0.623, $p < 0.01$). Kiragu and Mwangi (2022) found that instructional leadership has a significant impact on student outcomes in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.591$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, Gacigua and Muriithi (2023) demonstrated that strategic leadership is a strong predictor of school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.582$, $p < 0.01$).

Contrarily, some studies present differing perspectives. Okello and Odegi (2020) observed no significant relationship between transactional leadership and school performance in Ugandan public secondary schools ($\beta = 0.124$, $p > 0.05$). Mwaura and Mwangi (2022) reported that laissez-faire leadership does not significantly predict academic success in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.093$, $p > 0.05$). Additionally, Ochieng and Oloo (2023) concluded that demographic factors such as age and experience, rather than leadership management strategies, are stronger predictors of school performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.05$).

Theoretical Implications

This research provides essential theoretical insights by linking leadership management strategies to Servant Leadership Theory, enhancing understanding of how this approach impacts school performance. Findings reinforce Servant Leadership Theory by showing that a supportive, service-oriented leadership style positively influences public secondary schools in Garissa Township, validating Greenleaf's (1977) view that effective leadership centers on serving and empowering others. Improved leadership strategies correlating with better school performance underscore the practicality of servant leadership principles in educational settings, demonstrating a strong association with positive institutional outcomes.

Servant Leadership Theory promotes empathy, active listening, and stewardship—qualities the study found to enhance performance in public secondary schools. This connection highlights servant leadership's role in creating an environment that supports both teachers' and students' development. For example, the study indicates that listening to teachers' concerns and providing tailored professional development improves teaching efficacy and job satisfaction. This alignment with the theory's focus on personal growth shows that prioritising teachers' well-being directly benefits students, fostering a supportive learning environment.

The study also demonstrates the importance of servant leadership in building a collaborative school culture that encourages innovation and mutual support. Trust-based relationships among staff foster a climate where teachers feel motivated to try new approaches and work together, boosting student engagement and academic success. This impact is particularly valuable in public secondary

schools, where limited resources may challenge progress. By promoting shared responsibility, servant leaders inspire dedication among students, parents, and staff, strengthening the school community and aligning with Liden et al.'s (2008) emphasis on creating a cooperative environment.

This research further extends Servant Leadership Theory beyond corporate settings, proving its effectiveness in education. While servant leadership is often linked to organisational efficiency and job satisfaction in business, this study provides empirical evidence that these principles also benefit educational contexts. By fostering accountability and stewardship, leaders create a productive educational atmosphere that enhances students' academic and personal growth. These findings broaden the application of Servant Leadership Theory, showing its adaptability across sectors and its value in driving performance in schools and public service institutions.

Policy and Practice Implication

This study offers important implications for practical application and policy development aimed at improving public secondary school performance. The positive link between leadership strategies and school outcomes underscores the need to equip school leaders with essential management skills. Continuous training for administrators fosters environments where staff and students can thrive. Effective leadership practices, such as strategic planning, policy coherence, and disciplined management, are vital for enhancing school performance.

Policy implications suggest that government and educational bodies should prioritise leadership development in schools. Allocating resources for training and providing frameworks for structured, well-organised school environments empower administrators to implement strategies that drive academic success. Key policy measures include structured professional development, clear strategic planning guidelines, and incentives for leadership excellence.

The study also emphasises the importance of open communication within schools, urging both practitioners and policymakers to support initiatives that improve information flow among staff, students, and stakeholders. Practically, this may involve regular feedback sessions, accessible communication channels, and collaborative decision-making. Policy standards for communication practices would further promote transparency and shared accountability, enhancing school culture and performance.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation are also essential for maintaining school performance. Regular assessment protocols enable administrators to make timely adjustments, ensuring strategies remain responsive to evolving needs. Policymakers could mandate ongoing evaluations within schools to foster a culture of improvement, aligning schools with performance goals and supporting their long-term success.

Conclusion

The research highlights a robust positive connection between strategic leadership management strategies and the performance of public secondary schools in Garissa Township. The implementation of effective strategic leadership practices plays a crucial role in boosting school performance, suggesting that schools integrating these approaches tend to achieve enhanced educational outcomes. These findings underscore the pivotal role of strategic leadership in fostering an environment that supports academic success. Therefore, prioritising the improvement of strategic leadership management strategies is essential for school administrators and policymakers who seek to elevate the overall performance of public secondary schools in the area.

This study presents valuable implications for both practical application and policy development aimed at enhancing the performance of public secondary schools. The positive correlation between leadership management strategies and school performance highlights the necessity of practical approaches that equip school leaders with essential management skills. School administrators benefit from continuous leadership training that fosters environments where both staff and students can excel. Directly applying effective leadership practices, such as strategic planning, policy coherence, and disciplined management, to daily operations is essential in driving school performance improvements.

Findings suggest that policies prioritising leadership development within schools should become a focal point for government and educational authorities. Allocating resources for leadership training and providing frameworks for structured, well-organised school environments enable administrators to implement consistent strategies that promote academic success. Structured professional development programmes, explicit strategic planning guidelines, and incentives for leadership excellence are crucial policy measures for systematically achieving educational goals.

The study also underscores the role of open communication within schools, calling on practitioners and policymakers to promote initiatives that enhance information flow among staff, students, and stakeholders. In practice, this could include implementing regular feedback sessions, accessible communication channels, and collaborative decision-making frameworks. Policy standards for communication practices in schools would further support transparency and shared accountability, positively influencing school culture and performance outcomes.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation emerge as key to sustaining school performance. School administrators benefit from regular assessment protocols that allow for real-time adjustments to strategies, enabling them to adapt dynamically to changing needs. Policymakers may consider mandates for ongoing evaluation processes within schools to ensure that strategies remain adaptable and responsive. Embedding evaluation in school management practices establishes a culture of continuous improvement, aligning schools closely with performance targets and supporting their long-term success.

Recommendations

The study suggests strengthening communication channels within schools to ensure a smooth exchange of information among all stakeholders, which is essential for promoting collaboration and transparency. Establishing well-defined school policies that back academic programmes is crucial, providing a structured framework for achieving academic success. Schools should organise regular training for both staff and students to uphold a high level of discipline, cultivating a positive culture grounded in respect and accountability.

Creating a detailed strategic plan to guide academic programmes is important for aligning educational objectives with actionable strategies. This plan should include contributions from various stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and students to ensure it adequately addresses the school community's needs. Additionally, investing in professional development for school administrators is key to equipping them with the necessary skills for effective academic programme management. Ongoing training will enhance their leadership abilities and help them adapt to the ever-changing educational environment.

Building an atmosphere that fosters feedback and participation from all school community members can pinpoint areas for improvement and reinforce the academic framework as a whole.

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