

**ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS  
PERFORMANCE IN KENYA CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY  
EDUCATION IN PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THIKA  
WEST DISTRICT, KENYA**

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**A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of  
the Award of Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration**

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## **DECLARATION**

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree or any other award in any institution or university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the appointed university supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this work to my family, spouse and children Innocent, Michelle and Victor.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**CL** : Curriculum Leader

**HOD** : Head of Department

**HT** : Head teacher

**KCPE** : Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

**KCSE** : Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

**KEMI** : Kenya Educational Management Institute

**KICD** : Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

**KIE** : Kenya Institute of Education

**KNEC** : Kenya National Examination Council

**KSSHA**: Kenya Secondary School Heads Association

**NACOSTI**: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

**SPSS**: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

**TIQET**: Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training

**TSC**: Teachers Service Commission

**UNESCO**: United Nations, Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the administrative factors that influence students performance at KCSE public day secondary schools Thika West, District. Kiambu County, Kenya. This study sought to determine the extent to which Head teachers' competence in inducting new teachers, benchmarking, and administration of standardized examinations and syllabus coverage influence students' performance in KCSE. This study adopted ex-post facto research design. The target population included 38 secondary schools, 38 head teachers and 760 teachers. The sample was 14 head teachers and 56 teachers in 14 public day secondary schools in Thika West District. Kiambu County. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 14 public day secondary schools. Data was collected using two sets: headteachers' and teachers' questionnaires which had a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The data for headteachers and teachers was collected and presented in tables and line graphs. Various descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages and tables were used to arrive at conclusions. The findings indicated that where induction of new teachers is done the m.s.s. trends are 5.1, 4.8, 4.9, 4.691 and 4.667. Where it was not done the m.s.s. trends are 3.2, 3.0, 2.984, 2.789 and 2.475. Also where benchmarking was done the m.s.s. trends were 4.9, 3.7, 3.79, 4.231 and 4.393. In schools that administered standardized exams the m.s.s trends were 4.4, 4.4, 3.79, 4.23 and 4.393 and where not done the m.s.s trends were 3.4, 3.0, 2.24, 2.25 and 2.754. In schools where there was early coverage of syllabus, the m.s.s trends were 2.1, 2.1, 3.057, 4.0 and 4.051 where not done the m.s.s trends were 2.0, 2.7, 2.25, 2.143 and 2.350. In schools where there was regularization of instructional supervisions, the m.s.s trends were 5.1, 4.8, 4.9, 4.6 and 4.6 again whereas schools that did not practice the m.s.s trends were 3.6, 3.1, 3.8, 3.5 and 3.6. The findings lead to the conclusion that indeed induction of teachers, benchmarking, early syllabus coverage and regular administration of standardized examinations helps in improving student performance in KCSE. The study recommends that head teachers be required to take mandatory courses in education, administration and seek further guidance from experts of Kenya Educational Management Institute (KEMI) to enable them to manage schools more effectively and efficiently. Also, schools should embrace benchmarking with other well performing schools, encourage early syllabus coverage, and embrace administration of standardized examinations. See table 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.6. Also, teachers should design induction and orientation sessions for teachers in their schools and not to leave them find their own way in the school.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Research by Andrews (2008) exploring why some students achieve high academic performance than others; has revealed four theoretically important determinants. They include; school plant, leadership styles of the head teacher, teacher characteristics and student behavior.

Leithwood and Seashore (2004) believe that principals perform among other key functions shaping a vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, managing people, and data processes to foster school improvement. Today, improving school leadership ranks high on the list of priorities for school reforms; a detailed 2010 survey by Wallace foundation found principals' leadership as among the most pressing matters on a list of issues in public school education. Although in any school, a range of leadership patterns exist among principals, assistant principals, teachers and parents, the principal remains the central source of leadership influence in a school (Andrews 2008).

Writing on leadership, Andrews (2008) noted that effective principals are responsible for establishing a school wide vision of commitment to high standards and success of all students. For years, public school principals were seen as school managers and as recently as two decades ago, high standards were thought to be the province of the college bound success. He further noted that in a school that begins with the principal's spelling out high standards and rigorous learning

goals, high expectations for all including clear public standards is one key to closing the gap between the advantaged and less advantaged students and for raising the overall achievement of all students. Anderson and Seashore (2004) further argued that an effective principal makes sure that the notion of academic success for all gets picked up by the faculty and underpins a school wide learning improvement agenda that focuses on goals for students' progress.

The most effective principals focus on building a sense of a school community with attendant characteristics which include respect for every member of school community; welcoming, solution-oriented, no blame, professional environment; and effort to involve staff and students in a variety of activities, many of them school wide. Principals who get high marks from teachers for creating a strong climate for instruction in their schools also receive high marks than other principals for spurring leadership in the faculty. (Seashore and Leithood, 2004).

Further, to the research from the University of Minnesota and University of Toronto by Seashore and Leithood (2004), these scholars found out that effective leadership from all sources – principals, influential teachers, staff teams and others is associated with better student performance on mathematics and reading tests. They concluded that principals have the most influence on decisions in all schools. However, they do not lose influence as others gain. Indeed, higher performing schools awarded greater influence to stakeholders. Principals themselves agree almost unanimously on the importance of several specific practices including keeping track of teachers' professional development needs and

monitoring teachers work in the classroom; observing and communicating on what's working well and what is not. Moreover, they shift the pattern of the annual evaluation cycle to one of ongoing and informal interactions with teachers Michael and Brandley (2003).

Michael and Brandley (2003) described five key responsibilities of the principal: shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high Academic Standards; creating climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail; cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision; improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn their utmost; and managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

Research conducted in the United States indicated that very small schools have lower academic performance than large schools. However, a school cannot provide a reasonable well qualified staff for the different subjects of curriculum below a minimum size. There will be an optimum size of school beyond which the level of attainment falls. Studies conducted in US by Marvel and Morton (2006) identified the principal as the single most influential person in a school. He/she is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school building. It is the principals' management practices that set the tone of the school, the climate for teaching, the level of professionalism, the morale of

teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. The principal is the main link between the community and the school and the way he/she performs in this capacity largely determines the attitudes of parents and students about the school. Seashore and Leithood (2010) observed that if a school is vibrant, innovative and child centered, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if the students are performing well, one can almost always point to the principals' management practices as key to success.

A number of studies in several African countries (Foster and Chigret, 2004 and Heyman, 2004) found a strong relationship between resources and students' achievement. They gave the laboratory a central and distinctive role in education. In addition, studies done in less developed countries such as Uganda, India, Ghana, Brazil, Chile and Malaysia, indicated that access to textbook availability is positively related to students' achievement. For instance, the data for India and Chile showed that a block of factors, which included textbook availability accounts for more of the variance in test scores than does a block, which includes circumstances and students' age and sex (Heyman 2004).

Fuller (2007) noted that management practices can vary enormously at times independent of school official goals and that head teachers employ a variety of means in supervising the staff and motivating teachers to improve their practices. The head teacher's leadership behavior is given serious attention by educators and policy makers. The head teacher is the central figure when the school is considered as a formal organization. His position in the school provides him with an opportunity to motivate his staff and to improve the standards of academic

performance in the school. Head teachers are greatly accountable for academic achievements of their students. Jode and Jacoby (2006) concur that instructional processes are affected directly or indirectly by various management practices exercised by head teachers. This leads to high or low academic achievement in schools.

Head teachers are charged with the task of managing human resources in their schools. Their managerial behavior has great impact either negatively or positively. Effective head teachers usually concentrate on planning, coordinating and facilitating the work without neglecting interpersonal relationships with the staff, support staff and the student body.

Studies conducted by Andrews, Jode and Jacoby (2006) all concur that the strong leadership of the head teachers is the greatest prediction of student achievement in national examinations. In their studies Andrews, Jode and Jacoby (2006) observed that efficient use of instructional time within the classroom is more strongly determined by the management practices of the head teacher. More effective head teachers are likely to set high performance goals for their schools and improved performance in national examinations. Studies conducted by Brookover (1979) observed that good performing schools are run by head teachers who exercise assertive leadership while unsuccessful schools are run by head teachers who are bogged down with administrative details which render them unable to engage in leadership activities. These studies stress that the managerial practices of head teachers are important in determining the schools' performance in national examinations.

Eshiwani (1993) identified the following policy-related factors that may cause poor academic performance; school plant and resources (textbooks, library and laboratory facilities), leadership styles of the head teacher (school administration and management), teacher characteristics (training, teacher certification, professional commitment, and experience and transfer index) and students' behavior (early childhood education, primary education and social characteristics).

It has often been said that schools are as good as their head teachers. Sergon (2005) notes that a school's success depends on the head teacher. According to him, a leader gets things done and has the ability to inspire, moderate, guide, direct and listen. These qualities are crucial for head teachers to be effective in their work. Managing a school is like charting a ship through turbulent waters. According to Wekesa (as cited in Ngala, 1997), the process of certifying, recruiting, hiring and promoting teachers does not fully emphasize on teacher traits essential for classroom performance. This responsibility is left to the head teacher. However, Sackney and Johnston (2001) have reported that principals might not do effective supervision due to lack of confidence, lack of knowledge and skills in clinical supervision and, lack of knowledge in curriculum and teacher effectiveness. Ndege (as cited in Cheruiyot, 2003) says that teachers are likely to perform well if they trust in their principal. A head teacher whose credentials have a bias for sciences stands a better chance of bringing harmony between the

administrative wing and the science department, a factor that is essential for high performance.

The traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools are no different from those regarding leadership in other institutions. The principal is considered to be vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school.

Kenya like any other country values education because of its intrinsic and extrinsic gains. Education is an important phenomenon in the society because it helps the individual learners to overcome their limits and transcends in order to have their aspirations achieved. The government of Kenya has a duty to ensure that its citizens are educated to enable them to participate fully in the development of their country. Education is important in Kenya because the kind of job one acquires generally depends on his/her level of education. Normally, the higher the level of education, the more prestigious the job and the greater the earnings are.

The Kenya Education Commission Report (1964) observed that secondary education not only serves as a base for higher education but also opens the door for wage employment. One's level of education determines the kind of occupation he/she gets into because education is seen as a powerful weapon which can be used for economic, social and intellectual advancement. Education equips the child with appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of the world in which he lives and helps the child to attain his/her full formation or completeness as a person. Examination and certification are central to education and training process in Kenya because they are a means of evaluating the level of achievement for purposes of further education, training and/or employment. The Kenyan education

system is examination oriented, because the success of any school is measured by the quality of results in national examinations.

The Daily Nation as reported by Muya (1987) observed that public examinations had become a matter of life and death in the country because we are living in an examination-oriented society. Without a good certificate one cannot get a better future. There is high competition among Kenyan schools each trying to produce good results every year. There is much emphasis on good performance in examinations and acquisition of good academic certificates that would enable school leavers to gain further education or employment. There has been increasing pressure from parents, taxpayers and stakeholders in schools to perform better in national examinations. They evaluate schools in terms of students' performance in national examinations. It is evident that some secondary schools perform better every year in national examinations than others. One factor which is responsible for this is the differences in school organization and the head teachers' managerial practices.

The minister of education (1993) noted that the admission of best students and facilities does not matter, what matters is what goes on inside the schools. Positive climates, hard work by teachers and students, discipline and effective teaching were the most vital factors behind good results in national examinations. The school's effort is measured by the quality of results in national examinations. The head teachers are charged with implementation of the curriculum and general school organization, which contributes to good performance in examinations. Good examination results are the ultimate blessing of schools. The Kenyan

parents assess the schools effectiveness on how students perform well in national examinations. The head teacher therefore occupies a strategic position in the school organizations structure for developing a school climate which is conducive for learning. Since the success of teaching and learning takes place in the school, the quality of education is greatly determined by the head teachers managerial practices, which play a major role in determining the schools performance in national examinations.

Studies by Moore (2001) demonstrate that academic performance is an indicator of the value of human capital. The importance of human capital in relation to educational performance and quality emerged in discussions about the value of national wealth and the economic value of population more than its quantity, it was the composition and the quality of the population that contributed to its value by improving on the quality of the labor force, by raising its productivity and its ability to seize new and better opportunities, i.e. by improving the technical and allocative efficiency of the economy in general are the main engines of economic growth (Moore, 2001). The main emphasis in education and training is given in order to take into account its quality improvement, notably by giving a much stronger visibility to education and other main forces improving potentially the quality (and productivity) of labor. The calling for a renewed attention on the economic contribution of education to economic growth and development is directly related to the beneficial properties of a quality (skilled) labor force and

the promotion of technological process which can be achieved by improving performance of students thus promoting their quality (Thompson, 2000).

Students' performance in examinations is dependent on many variables. Such variables include the type of school and its facilities, the qualification of teachers, the students' academic background, the environment from which they come from, the type of leadership provided by head teachers and their qualifications and parentage. Year after year results of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) in Kenya generally and particularly in Thika West District reveal that boarding schools perform better in national examinations than public day secondary schools. Furthermore, a number of researchers have approached the question of performance from the pupils' socio-economic background and have barely touched on school administrative factors and their influence on performance. This study therefore sought to find out administrative factors which influence performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District and recommended ways of improving such performance.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In Kenya as in many countries in Africa, performance in examination has been used as the basis for judging a student's ability and also a means of selection for education advancement and employment prospects. Over the years, disparities have been observed in the performance of examinations by pupils at different levels of the education system, with some students performing well and others performing poorly. In Kenya, performance in KCSE is the key to institutions of

higher learning and eventually securing employment and thus benefiting from education. Persistent disparities in academic performance in Thika West District over the years have raised great concern to students, teachers and other stakeholders in the education sector. In the district there exist high, average and low performing public secondary schools. These performance disparities are recognized especially across the school category namely national, county, boarding and day schools. Further to that, schools have varying performance levels ranging from top to bottom schools despite the schools having similar academic facilities and infrastructure and that they usually enroll form ones from within the same KCPE grade group. Moreover low performance levels have been recorded in public day school in Thika West district over the years as illustrated in table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1 KCSE performance for Thika West District public in day secondary schools since 2010 to 2014**

<b>Name of school</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
Thika Garrison	5.541	5.407	5.541	NEW	NEW
Kimuchu	4.758	5.439	5.53	5.2	4.2
Broad way	4.667	4.691	4.929	4.8	5.1
Thika Sec. F.Blind	4.433	4.729	4.338	4.4	4.4
Juja Farm	4.393	4.231	3.79	3.7	4.9
Karibaribi	4.051	4.000	3.057	2.1	2.1
Gachororo	4.042	4.042	3.56	3.8	3.8
Queen of Rosary	3.692	3.545	2.825	NEW	NEW
Juja secondary	3.576	3.263	3.82	3.1	3.6
Kenyatta girls	3.344	3.203	4.49	4.1	4.2
Thika girls	3.308	3.32	2.13	NEW	NEW
THEOS	2.71	2.591	2.24	3.00	3.4
St Xavier	2.182	2.909	2.667	2.7	3.1
St Mark Gatuanyaga	1.897	2.208	1.6	2.3	2.5

The above data only confirms the deteriorating performance in KCSE examinations over the five years especially when compared to the boarding and private schools in the District and schools in the other sub counties in Kiambu County and neighboring counties like Murang'a County. This is a worrying trend that needed to be addressed without much delay. This study therefore wanted to

find out the reasons behind this declining performance specifically with regard to the administrative factors influencing performance in KCSE in the District and document the findings.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate school-based administrative factors influencing students' performance in KCSE in public day secondary schools in Thika West district in Thika Sub county in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i) To determine the extent to which head teachers' induction of new teachers influence students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District.
- ii) To establish the influence of benchmarking on students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District.
- iii) To establish the influence of early syllabus coverage on students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District, and
- iv) To establish the influence of regularity of administration of standardized examinations on students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The study aimed at answering the following research questions:-

- i) To what extent does head teacher's induction of new teachers influence students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District?
- ii) How does benchmarking influence KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District?
- iii) How does early syllabus coverage influence students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District?
- iv) How does the regularity of administration of standardized examinations affect students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

It was hoped that the findings from this study was to benefit the head teacher by providing information on those factors that affect performance of students in their schools. Secondly, it was hoped to help the policy makers in general to assess performance of the head teachers with a view of promoting only those who have high organizational ability and good in achieving high academic performance. The findings of this study would be useful to the Education policy makers and other stakeholders in the field of education as they could be used to improve on performance in KCSE examinations through working on the school administrative factors. The findings would also be by head teachers to improve on their supervisory and motivation techniques with a view to enhance quality teaching

and learning in the schools. The MoE may also use these findings in prioritizing the allocation of resources that designing ways of supporting school administrative activities.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The study was confined to Thika West District in Kiambu County. It could not have been possible for the researcher to conduct the study in all the secondary schools in the county due to cost factor and the time factor. The researcher therefore carried out the study in only 14 public day secondary schools.

Furthermore, in the course of conducting this study, it was not be possible to control the attitudes of the respondents. This could have adverse effects on the research findings since the respondents may just have given information to impress the researcher. The researcher therefore insisted on the need for the respondents to be honest in giving the information and assured them of total confidentiality.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

This study was limited to only one district and further restricted only to public day secondary schools. Private and boarding schools were excluded from this study because reports from the Thika sub-county Education office indicated that these schools performed relatively well compared to public day secondary schools. Therefore, the findings from this study are not a reflection performance in KCSE in Kiambu county or the entire country.

## **1.9 Assumptions of the study**

This study was carried out based on the following assumptions:

- i) That challenges facing public day secondary schools in regard to performance in KCSE examinations are similar.
- ii) That the respondents in this study were honest when filling the questionnaires and when they were interviewed.
- iii) That administrative tasks for head teachers are similar and that performance of these tasks has an impact on academic performance.
- iv) Teachers in secondary schools in Thika West District attend induction courses conducted by head teachers.

## **1.10 Definition of significant terms**

**Competence:** This term has been used in this study to refer to the ability of the teachers to deliver their services or teaching in a professional and competent manner. This was measured in terms of the ability of the teachers' teaching until the students excel in their examinations.

**Performance:** This is an achievement or action as regards educational matters. In Kenya, the KCSE examination is graded on a twelve point scale from the lowest, E to the highest which is an A. for the purpose of this study, performance refers to the mean scores of the various schools in the various subjects in KCSE examinations.

**Organization:** This refers to any institution that operates on certain rules and regulations and has a vision, mission, objectives and core that values that guides its operations. In this context, a school is our organization.

**Administration:** This means the organization of the internal arrangements of the school or whether in the light of personality determined objectives.

**High academic performance:** Those who attain at least C+ and above in examinations.

### **1.11 Organization of the study**

Chapter one comprises of the background information, statement of the problem, assumptions of the study, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, limitations, delimitations, significance of the study, definition of significant terms and ethical considerations.

Chapter two reviews literature related to the topic with the aim of identifying gaps which this study intends to address, the concept of school administration, the concept of academic performance, performance in national examinations globally, student academic performance in Kenya, the role of school administration in academic affairs, influence of benchmarking on student academic performance, influence of teaching resources on students performance, effect of coverage of syllabus on academic performance, regularity of standardized examinations, research findings of earlier studies on the influence of administrative practices on performance, summary of the literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

Chapter three presents the research methodology under the following headings; research design; target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity of research instruments, reliability of research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study, discussion and interpretation.

Finally, chapter five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations on how to improve KCSE performance and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this Chapter, the researcher presents a review of related literature on administrative practices of head teachers in secondary schools and their impacts on students' academic performance. The first part presents literature in general form on head teachers' administrative practices in schools, importance of benchmarking, management of teachers by head teachers, the impact of syllabus coverage and the impact of early syllabus coverage on students' academic performance in national examinations. Finally, the chapter presents the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework for this study.

#### **2.2 The concept of school administration**

The desire to excel has been there since the formal education was introduced in Kenya at the time of Africa's quest to obtain education like that of Europeans that made them pursue it with a great interest. This called upon the need for good management and leadership style. Good performance in school is relatively equivalent to good administration. Raju (1973) emphasizes that the administrative role of the head teacher involves directing, controlling and management of all matters pertaining to education enhancement in the school. This implies that all the activities done in the school are performed on behalf of the head teacher.

Eshiwani (1993) identifies that schools which consistently perform well tend to have sound and efficient leadership. He further stresses that leadership is a crucial factor in the success of a school. The qualities that are expected of a school head

teacher include setting a climate of high expectations for staff and students, encouraging collegial and collaborative leadership and building commitment.

According to Mwaoria (1993), the main tasks of the school head teacher are to interpret national policies, executing curriculum program, seeing to students' welfare, equipping physical facilities and finances, inducting and retaining school community relations. In other words, if the school fails in performance of examinations the head teacher has failed.

Duignan in Rodrigueiz (2014) identifies school leadership as a crucial factor in the success of a school. He mentioned activities that constitute effective leadership by the school principal to include setting an atmosphere of order, creating a climate of high expectations of staff and students, encouraging collegial and collaborative relationships and building commitment among students and staff to the school goals. Furthermore, the head teacher has a role of translating educational policies and objectives into programme within the school. He is also expected to execute administrative functions as well as instructional supervision. To carry out his role effectively he should be knowledgeable in managerial skills which would enable him to plan, supervise, control, evaluate and make proper decision. An effective head teacher plays his/her role in six task areas which includes pupil person, staff personnel, school community relation, provision of physical facilities and financial management.

Kathuri (1986), notes that there is a strong relationship between the quality of administration in a particular school and performance in KCPE Examination. He maintained that the first aspect of administration is staff meeting. Such meetings

give a head teacher an opportunity to convey any useful information. Teachers are also expected to air their views on how the school should be managed. The head teacher also does other duties which are important for facilitation of curriculum and instruction. Sifuna (1988) asserts that the lack of communication, poor relationships between head teachers, teachers and students, inefficient instructional policies and practices and leaving parents out of school activities are significant factors contributing to poor performance in high schools.

Wochami (1986) notes that student's achievement is largely determined by the school quality, which in turn is determined by the performance of the teachers whose effectiveness in working partly depends on the school administration. According to Rum Berger (2003), school administrators could devise strategies to assist the students on good performance. He advises that school administration could develop programmes that are in course with the students' interest, needs and understanding. If educational programmes were made interesting to the teachers and students, teaching and learning would become enjoyable.

According to Olembo (1977) a head teacher who is frustrated may gamble the energy generated by his/her legal authority in an attempt to crush those in school opposed to his practices. If this happens then the teachers' efficiency in teaching may be affected.

### **2.3 The concept of academic performance**

Generally, the concept of organizational performance is founded upon the thought that, an organization is a voluntary alliance of productive assets that include human, physical, and capital resources with the aim of realizing a shared purpose

Barney (2001). Armstrong (2001) quotes Brumbach (1988), as having indicated that performance refers to results as well as behaviors, and fine-tuning organizational behaviors and work activities with the aim of achieving results or outcomes. These behaviors are as a result of physical and mental effort applied to tasks. The behavioral aspect of performance has to do with what an individual does at work place. In a school set up this will include for instance, teaching basic reading skills to elementary school children. For any behavior to be subsumed under the performance concept, it has to be relevant to the organizational goals Campell (1999). On the other hand, the results aspect refers to the consequence of the individuals behavior; these results are however dependant on other factors apart from the individuals behavior. In a school setup, the results aspect of performance can be defined but is not limited to students test scores, examination results, students capability to generally apply what is learnt, and the graduation rate to institutions of higher learning.

Kenya's education system is dominated by examination orientated teaching where passing examination is the benchmark for performance because there is no internal system of monitoring learning education cycle. Maiyo (2009) noted that examinations are generally accepted as valid measures of achievement. The responsibility of checking professional documents like teachers schemes of work and lesson plans lies in the hands of the head teacher. This may be done in person or he may delegate to the deputy head teacher or the senior the teacher. Preparation and use of schemes of work by the teachers, enhances sequential

teaching and results to improved academic achievement. This should be done frequently to allow the head teachers to monitor curriculum implementation. Lack of this close monitoring is a factor which could contribute to poor performance in national examinations. Writing on the American set up Usdan (2001) noted that the role of the principal is that of manager where it is the duty of the principal to manage the budget, manage personnel and carry out other operational issues. In the same scenario in Kenya it is the principal who is the TSC agent in the school who oversees the implementation of the curriculum as stipulated by MOE. The management practices of the principal ensure the effectiveness of the school.

#### **2.4 Performance in national examinations globally**

Globally, success in public examinations is of great importance to the students. In china for example, achievement in public examinations is highly valued, and so education is transmitted by highly trained and qualified teachers. Teachers are committed for they all aim at success in public examinations leading to employment. For Tanzania, education is perceived as a means for self reliance. They don't emphasize on the success in public examinations, instead what should be acquired during learning and teaching process ([www.org/eteenye.htm](http://www.org/eteenye.htm)).

Coleman (2004) in his study, where he sought to establish role played by school plant on learner's academic performance, indicated that some factors are effective while others have shown the opposite .It revealed that, for instance in the USA physical facilities or the schools bring little influence to student performance. The students are usually independent of their home background influence.

Coulough (1993) carried out a study in twenty three developing countries trying to investigate factors determining school achievements. The findings were that learner's home background greatly determined their success in school. It is important to note here that Coulough (1993) and Coleman (2002) researches employed data from USA where schools are of high quality.

Research conducted in the United States indicated that very small schools have lower academic performance than large schools. However, a school cannot provide a reasonable well qualified staff for the different subjects of curriculum below a minimum size. There will be an optimum size of school beyond which the level of attainment falls.

In Uganda, most candidates registered poor performance in sciences with about 45% failing to attain the minimum competence level (Bukewa, 2012). In mathematics for example, Bukenya said poor performance was evidenced in construction of graphs, solving of simultaneous equations, skills of geometrical construction, vectors, set theory, fraction expressions and computation of compound interest. He further noted that despite the tremendous effort made by the education ministry to supply laboratory equipment in schools, students performed poorly in practical subjects. The majority of candidates, especially those who performed a poorly exhibited poor grasp of the Queen's language, Bukenya said. He said such candidates found it difficult to comprehend the meaning of essential words used in questions, leading to the misunderstanding of questions called "model compositions" and to reproduce them irrelevantly when answering.

Francis Agula, the commissioner for secondary education, said the preference for pamphlets is a manifestation of poor preparation among teachers who settle for outline answers

## **2.5 Student academic performance in Kenya**

The development of the education sector has been a long standing objective of the government of Kenya since independence in 1963 to date. Education is considered by various stakeholders and players as a basic need and a right. Performance ranks high on the national agenda with educators and policy makers focusing on testing, accountability, curriculum reform, teacher quality and head teachers' management practices. Wamukuru and Odebero (2006), Abaya (2011) carried out a study on how secondary principals build trust in Kenya secondary schools. The study based in western Kenya found out that principals had to among others sustain high levels of competence, professionalism as well as morals. The study however did not relate the trust thus created within and without the schools with the way students performed academically. This is a gap that this study wishes to address.

The education system in Kenya is largely examination oriented. The quality of education tends to be evaluated in terms of the number of students passing national examinations (Eshiwani, 1993). Educators and the general public have time and again expressed concern over factors that influence student performance in examinations. The most outstanding factor has to do with the organizational management of schools. Wekesa (1993) notes that to improve students' performance, head teachers are required to improve the management of the schools. This can be done by setting a clear vision for the schools and

communicate this vision to students, support its achievement by giving instructional leadership, provision of resources and being in control in every part of the institution. Lack of vision in the management of schools often leads to imbalance in the allocation and utilization of resources. Ayot quoted by Kessio (2014) points out that, poor results in education are related to the resources allocation. If this parameter is not recognized, it becomes hard to understand why a school continues to perform poorly in national examinations. In schools where parents are doing their best in providing school facilities, such as science equipment, textbooks and physical structures, the blame for poor performance is shifted to the school management and teachers.

## **2.6 The role of school administration in academic affairs**

### **2.6.1 The influence of head teachers' administrative practices on students' academic performance in national examinations**

Management is a process that involves planning, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. Effective head teachers usually concentrate on planning, coordinating and facilitating the work without neglecting interpersonal relations with the staff, students and the subordinates. More effective head teachers are likely to set high performance goals for their schools and act as linking pins with other group and with higher management. Edmonds (2001) in his study of exceptional urban elementary schools pointed out that the head teachers' management practices were crucial to school success because they influence the behavior of subordinates and leaders and initiate programs, set policies, obtain materials and fiscal resources and provide motivation.

Head teachers are responsible for introducing useful changes aimed at improving the quality of schools instructional programmes. Studies on exemplary schools have described effective head teachers as task oriented action oriented, well organized, skilled in work, and delegation in getting things done Edmonds (2001). Andrew's study as reported by Brandt (2007) found that high performing schools were characterized by high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress, a positive learning and goal clarity. Effective head teachers exert pressure on teachers and students for high academic achievement. Brookover (2009) in Michigan found that successful elementary head teachers frequently visited classroom, presented innovative programs and techniques to the staff to discuss books relating to school effectiveness. They met with small groups of teachers to discuss their students' achievement and organized teachers' effectiveness training programmes.

Brookover (2009) in his studies further noted that the highest level of school management specializes on students' achievement and their well being. Head teachers in high achieving schools use various means such as interpersonal relations, administrative and other managerial behavior that provide the central focus of other styles of leadership in order to achieve the schools' objectives. The head teachers' management practices are therefore a key player in establishing the school's wide instructional goals, practices and in developing the school's curriculum. One of the roles of the head teacher is to carry out internal supervision of curriculum implementation in his/her school. This involves physical observation of teachers' lessons in progress. Regular class supervision

promotes curriculum goals and failure to do so may lead to poor performance in national examinations Edmonds (2001).

The principals' management practices greatly contribute to the differences in performance. Boyan (2005) consistently reported that successful schools in examination performance, have the following characteristics: School climate conducive to learning, one free of disciplinary problems and vandalism; a school wide emphasis on basic skills on instructions; teachers who hold high expectations for all students to achieve; a system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing students' performance; and a school principal who is a strong programmatic leader and who sets high standards, observes classrooms frequently, maintains students' discipline, and creates incentives for learning.

### **2.6.2 Influence of head teachers' management practices of supervision on students' performance**

According studies conducted by Kent (1995) head teachers should supervise teaching and learning in the school by: ensuring that early lesson planning is always done, ensuring that lessons are structured with an interesting beginning, revision of previous lesson, teacher voice variations and summary of major points are done, that there is use of backups (teaching aids by teachers) properly and that there is good relationship between teachers, students and that teachers follow up curriculum strictly. Edmonds (2001) further noted that students' progress should be frequently monitored and that in high performing schools head teachers establish a system of evaluating the students frequently through tests and examinations. Those who perform unsatisfactory are forced to repeat the work by

teachers. It is communicated to class teachers by the head teachers that their students' progress is a concern for the whole school.

Orlosky (2004) noted that supervision is a major function that the school head must carry. It includes supervision of activities supportive of improving instruction that is curriculum and material development, evaluation of programmes and instructional planning. Usdan (2001) argues that, for there to be student learning, the principals must serve as leaders. Among the things they list as requirements to achieving this include: working with teachers to strengthen skills, knowledge of academic content and pedagogy, collect, analyze and use data, possess the leadership skills to fulfill the role and ability to rally all stakeholders to increase students performance. Teachers ought to be closely supervised for effective teaching in order for students to consistently do well in national examinations. For a school to perform well in national examinations there must be a teaching scheme for each subject on the curriculum. This is because the teaching schemes provide the school with organizational systems of content coverage for the full period of the course in each subject Mbiti (2007).

Further, Mbiti (2007) says that supervision concerns the tactics of efficient and proper management of personnel. The head teachers should frequently monitor the teaching and learning process in the school. The failure of any organization depends mainly on its personnel. There must be a proper system of supervision to ensure that the organizations goals are met. In schools which perform well, the head teachers give proper directions about what to do and as well spots the problem areas and rectifies them before things get worse.

### **2.6.3 Influence of head teachers' administrative practices of motivation on students' academic performance**

Motivation is the complex forces, incentives, needs, desires, tensions and other mechanisms which start and maintain voluntary activity by members of an organization such as a school, for purpose of attaining personal aims, organizational goals, targets, professional roles and status Hoy and Miskel (2009). Good student achievement will occur when we have a situation whereby teachers look at principals as facilitators, supporters and reinforces in accomplishing, the school's mission rather than as guiders, and leaders of their own private plan Mc Ewan (2003). He further asserts that schools should provide fringe benefits and exclusive privileges. For instance, school based Health Services for students, teachers and non teaching staff and the surrounding local community.

Hoy and Miskel (2009) observed that a school should have an outreach package for all community members. These could include clubs, retirement packages, competition prizes and rewards, certificates of services and recognition awards. Schools should develop an overall school based incentive systems. Hence, everything done; each member of the school community should try to improve to make a better product and give a better service with minimum of resource outlay. Robbins (1991) noted that motivation of human resources in any work place is associated with high productivity. Rewards may be used for motivation either financial on non-financial rewards. Many studies and reports have associated the productivity of human resources with how such resources are managed.

Educational administrators have recommended rewards, which are individualized to reflect the differences, in what employees consider important. Robbins (1991) pointed out that rewards should be given on the basis of effort and performance of personnel. The way staff members and pupils are compensated determines their motivational levels. The staffs that are better enumerated are likely to be more motivated than poorly remunerated staff Mbiti (2007). He further noted that head teachers must realize that their major tasks include among other things seeing to it that necessary monetary resources are available for the school use and to motivate their staff to produce a lively school spirit as well as excellence in work performance. Motivation is necessary if schools objectives and overall school efficiency is to be achieved. It makes the teachers put utmost effort in their work and leads to school efficiency and better academic performance. (Armor, 2006) observed that motivation in the school should not only be through monetary rewards but it should also involve the proper use of verbal praise and other non-monetary rewards such as letters of appreciation and presentation of gifts. Head teachers should also recommend promotion of teachers who have shown excellent performance to boost their morale and productivity. Studies conducted by Ocham (2010) pointed out that the greater involvement of teachers in school decision making improve teacher motivation and commitment hence improves school performance. He argued that as managers, head teachers should work to maintain an environment that supports teachers' efforts in the classroom and minimize outside factors that can disrupt the learning process.

Storey (2002) argued that in high achieving schools head teachers encourage a spirit of cooperation between the staff, the administration and the entire student body in the school. Studies by Otieno (2008) on factors influencing performance of Gusii schools found out among others, inadequate teaching resources, poor syllabus coverage, poor administration leading to lack of motivation in teachers and poor infrastructure as common factors at poorly performing schools in national examinations. The survey concluded that in good performing schools, they maximized support from parents, high standards of discipline among teachers and students. Hayness (2011) is of the opinion that maintaining healthy employees relations is an essential pre-requisite for organizational success, hence principals should relate well with the teachers for improved academic performance. A school in which good morale prevails is likely to have less disciplinary problems amongst teachers and students. Head teachers have recognized the fact that high motivation contributes to academic success of students in national examinations rather than school facilities. It is clear that high academic achievement is observed in schools where both teachers and students are motivated by head teachers.

#### **2.6.4 Human resource management (teachers, support staff and students)**

Strongly linked to the school leader's instructional responsibilities is the professional growth of school personnel, including the school leader him/herself. It is the school leader's responsibility to develop people to enable teachers and other staff to do their jobs effectively, to offer intellectual support and stimulation to improve their work, and to provide models of practice and support (Leithwood

et al., 2004). Effective school leaders build these integrated communities of professional practice in the service of student academic and social learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). They provide staff induction and development opportunities that address emergent needs for teachers (Blase & Blase, 2000 in Leithwood et al., 2004).). Finally, they provide a common planning time for teachers to collaborate on ways of enhancing student achievement (Eaker & Dofour, 2006 in Leithwood et al., 2004).).

Ultimately, learning communities are intentional and characterized by their commitment to continuous improvement, and to continuous learning for adults in order to maintain school success (Eaker & DoFour, 2006). Professional collaboration yields positive school culture and instructional improvement (Zepeda, 2007). The literature on school leadership heavily emphasizes the head teacher`s role in establishing and maintaining a positive school culture that promotes learning and engagement for students and adults (Goldring et al., 2006; Habegger, 2008). A positive culture is aligned to goals and objectives consistent with the mission and vision of the school. Indeed, according to Hall (2002), effective head teachers are those who have high expectations for students, as this belief about students` ability to learn is critical to school improvement. High achieving schools are marked by a culture that empower and instill confidence in teaching, valued their students' and teachers, and sought the help of parents and community members to enhance the schools effectiveness, this creates a sense of belonging and providing a clear direction for all involved (Habegger, 2008).

Good head teachers understand that leadership involves influence; it requires interactions and relationships among people and achievement of goals via engagement, motivation, and collaboration (Murphy et al., 2007c). In order to manifest a positive school culture, head teachers need to be able to communicate his/her and the school's vision to others so as to engage them in the process of reshaping the organization and articulating essential beliefs regarding learning (Davies et al., 2005; Jenkins, 2009). Good communication skills help build consensus and buy in among staff and faculty for the policies, practices, and supporting systems designed to achieve goals (Leithwood et al., 2004). Effective head teachers recognize that collaborative networks among educators were essential for successful teaching and learning: they modeled teamwork, provided time for collaborative work, and actively advocated sharing and peer observation (Blase & Blase, 2000 in Leithwood et al., 2004). Additionally, leading a school with high expectations and academic achievement for all students requires robust connections to family and/or other people and institutions in the community that advance academic and social learning.

## **2.7 Influence of benchmarking on student academic performance**

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and engage in joint educational efforts with other students. The active and collaborative learning benchmark measures the extent to which students participate in class, interact with other students, and extend learning outside of the classroom. The results for active and collaborative learning suggest that this benchmark measures processes that are important for all of the outcomes measured in the validation studies. Active and collaborative learning was perhaps

the most consistent predictor of student success across studies and across measures, suggesting that the impact of active and collaborative learning is pervasive in the college experience. Active and collaborative learning is linked with higher grades and course completion measures as well as long-term persistence and degree completion.

The student effort benchmark measures time on task, preparation, and use of student services. Examining results across the three studies suggests that the student effort benchmark is predictably related to retention measures and moderately predictive of academic measures. Given these results, student effort appears to be most strongly associated with persistence, with some effect for academic performance. Because several of the activities measured in this benchmark require extra effort, such as rewriting papers and using tutoring services and skills labs, it may be that the extra effort is essentially compensatory; that is, the extra effort serves to bring students up to the level of their peers and thus enables them to persist.

## **2.8 Influence of teaching resources on students performance**

The adequacy and conditions of facilities and resources as well as other infrastructure are critical to a school performance. Variation in resources distribution may lead to inequality both in learning and in performance. Eshiwani (1993) observes that most of the schools, whose students performed poorly, spent less money on the purchase of teaching resources. Lack of adequate text books and teaching materials makes teaching difficult as students are unable to do their oral or written work during class lesson. Confirming this view Kombo (1988) affirmed that the availability and the use of teaching aids / resources in schools

are among the factors which explain why poor performance in examination is a characteristic of secondary schools. According to him schools with adequate resources such as laboratories textbooks and other instructional materials would stand a better chance of having better results than poorly equipped ones. The availability and the use of teaching and learning resources could contribute to high quality of education and performance of students. Supporting this view, Eshiwani (1993) stated that difference in school facilities such as libraries, laboratories, playing fields and electricity would seem to account for difference in achievements. He found that schools that performed consistently well possessed adequate facilities. Thus, the presence or absence of school facilities could determine high achieving and low achieving schools.

A report by the World Bank (2007) indicated that educational resources in most developing countries are inefficiently used and do not meet their quantitative and qualitative objectives. The ever increasing cost of education and the resultant financial strain on the government, parents and stakeholders call for efficient use of resources. Any given set of input once chosen should be combined in such a way as to produce the largest attainable output. In this context, the school should be able to maximize and improve the available resources so as to adequately meet its objectives. A school that utilizes its resources well is assured of good results both at local and national level. According to Maundu (1987) good performance demands that every school should be equipped with relevant textbooks. He further asserts that the instructional resources play an important role in explaining the

wide variation in academic performance among the students enrolled in different types of schools.

Kathuri (1991), research reveals that schools resources including textbook availability are not significantly related to performance in Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). However, he summarizes his work by saying that teaching resources may not be significant in totality but very critical in some situations and subjects.

## **2.9 Effect of coverage of syllabus on academic performance**

Syllabus coverage determines student's performance in examination because students are tested generally from any topic in the syllabus and if any school doesn't cover all the topics in the syllabus, its students will be disadvantaged. The daily nation of October 8th 2001 cited poor coverage syllabus, failure to understand questions and poor teaching method as some of the weaknesses noted in many school. Proper syllabus coverage will depend on time management in the school by head teacher, teachers and students. Comber and Keeves (2003) stated that within limits, the more hours allowed for instruction in subjects the higher the achievement. Similarly at the end of secondary school the more the home work given and corrected the better the student's performance in examination. This implies that good time management by the teachers would ensure effective syllabus coverage.

Learning time can be maximized when classroom time is used effectively i.e. when teachers waste less time by starting and ending instructional activities as planned, select curriculum materials which are appropriate to the students and when teachers spend more time preparing for lessons, these will raise the quality

of instruction and coverage of syllabus within specified time and improves students achievement. Supporting this view, Campbell (1999) observes that effective and efficient management of curriculum and instruction in educational institution is basic pre requisite for stability and improvement of academic performance.

Eshiwani (1993) affirms the importance and usefulness of providing extra coaching to pupils who are preparing for major national examinations. Frequent exposure of students to test can improve examination performance, promptness in giving and marking home work assists in identifying area of weakness to be improved. When there is low teacher absenteeism and high level of group involvement in planning for curriculum and instruction, this can enhance the syllabus coverage.

### **2.10 Regularity of standardized examinations**

The use of standardized benchmarks to differentiate instruction for students is receiving renewed attention (Bennett 2002; Public Agenda 2008; Russo 2002). Effective differentiation based on readiness, interests, and learning profiles requires a valid descriptive data set at the classroom level (Decker 2003). While teachers may use their own student-level assessments (tests, quizzes, homework, problem sets) to monitor learning, it is challenging to use performance on classroom measures to assess likely performance on external measures such as statewide tests or nationally formed standardized tests. School practitioners view benchmark measures reflective of such external tests as potentially more valid in

making differentiated instruction decisions that can lead to student learning gains, higher scores on state standardized tests, and improvements in school wide achievement (Baenen et al. 2006; Baker and Linn 2003).

### **2.11 Research findings of earlier studies on the influence of administrative practices on performance**

Olembo (1997) indicates how a head teacher who is frustrated may gamble the energy generated by his/her legal authority in an attempt to crush those in school opposed to his practices. If such a thing happens, then the teachers' efficiency in teaching maybe affected. A close examination of those schools, which have consistently posted good results in national examinations have revealed that strong and efficient leadership, is necessary. A study carried by Eshiwani (1983), found that schools, which performed consistently well, tended to have sound and efficient leadership. Efficient head teachers are able to organize the learning process for their pupils, mobilize, and motivate the staff.

Kathuri (1984), points out that, large schools attract better head teachers who in turn appoint better assistant teachers who delegate proper and conducive administration, which leads to high academic attainment. Here he failed to realize that not all large schools attain high academic performance. Consequently, Eshiwani (1993) attributes poor results of students to the armchair head teachers who do not know what goes on in the classroom. He further asserts that head teachers are instrumental in performance as they monitor closely all the activities in their schools.

Ogawa and Hart (2005), in a study to determine the extent to which head teachers influence the instructional performance of schools found that the head teacher variable accounted for between two and eight percent of the variance in task. They concluded that the head teacher has a significant influence on the instructional performance of pupils. Kibowen (1985) asserts that the basic reason why some schools performed better than others in examinations was that while some head teachers organized the learning process for their pupils, others leave it to chance. Kathuri (1984) examined the correlation between the school and administration and pupils' performance. He looked at aspects of administration such as staff meetings, amount of time the head teacher allocated to various aspects of his responsibilities and the head teacher's opinion on matters that related the school discipline and qualities of a good teacher. He found that a strong correlation existed between quality of administration in a particular school and performance of that school in national examinations. He further found that the morale among teachers and students was influenced by effective administration. A school in which morale prevails is likely to have less disciplinary problems among teachers and consequently among students. Teachers in such a school are likely to be more committed.

Muchira (2008), in a study of leadership effectiveness in primary teacher colleges in Kenya found that the head teacher's leadership styles correlated significantly to student achievement. He further found that the leadership styles were significantly correlated to the head teacher's level of education. He found that the head teacher with masters had a higher leader performance score than those a bachelor's

degree. Perhaps an indication that the more education one has the more the tendency to be relations oriented than task oriented. Poor organizational and administrative structures of many of the public ordinary secondary schools could influence the student's poor performance in the KCSE examinations. Schools where students are a high aptitude have highly qualified teachers and required school facilities, good organizational and administrative structures are still invaluable inputs in the learning process because these factors could determine largely the way in which resources are allocated and how time is shared among students.

### **2.12 Summary of the literature review**

In this chapter, many factors affecting student's performance in public examination in Kenya and other countries have been discussed. The factors discussed included administrative factors like motivation, human resource management, supervision and provision of teaching and learning resource. Other aspects of school administration and performance have also been reviewed. It is true research on most of these administrative factors and their influence on student performance in KCSE examinations have been conducted in other regions but not in Thika West sub-county, thus rendering this study significant.

### **2.13 Theoretical framework**

This study was guided by the input output systems theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1940. Systems theory provides an analytical framework for viewing an organization in general. It recognizes interdependence of personnel, impact of environment on organizational structure and function, effect of outside stakeholders on the organization, focuses on environment and how changes can

impact the organization. It also seeks to explain "synergy" & "interdependence" and broadens the theoretical lens for viewing organizational behavior. However, the theory doesn't focus on specific task functions and doesn't directly explore the impact of interpersonal relationships and loyalty on productivity. Also, the theory doesn't provide for detailed focus and changes in environment directly affect the structure and function of the organization.

A system is composed of interacting parts that operate together to achieve some objective or purpose. It is intended to "absorb" inputs, process them in some way and produce outputs. Outputs are defined by goals, objectives or common purposes. In order to understand the relationship between inputs, outputs and processes, you need to understand the environment in which all of this occurs. The environment represents everything that is important to understanding the functioning of the system, but it is not part of the system. The environment is that part of the world that can be ignored in the analysis except for its interaction with the system. It includes people, technology, capital, raw materials, data, regulation and opportunities.

The underlying assumption in input output systems theory is that all organizations are like living organisms, constantly moving, changing, and interacting and a change in any one element affects the organization as a whole. Systems theory has a long history in the realm of human knowledge.

Some scholars trace the development of systems theory back to Aristotle. Most scholars attribute the idea of holism, central to systems thinking, to the German philosopher Hegel who stated that the whole was greater than the sum of its part.

This idea that systems consist of a number of interrelated and interconnected parts, that once put together, make the behavior of the whole different and distinct than the behavior of its individual parts. Management control systems consist of all organization structures, processes and subsystems designed to elicit behavior that achieves the strategic objectives of an organization at the highest level of performance with the least amount of unintended consequences and risk to the organization.

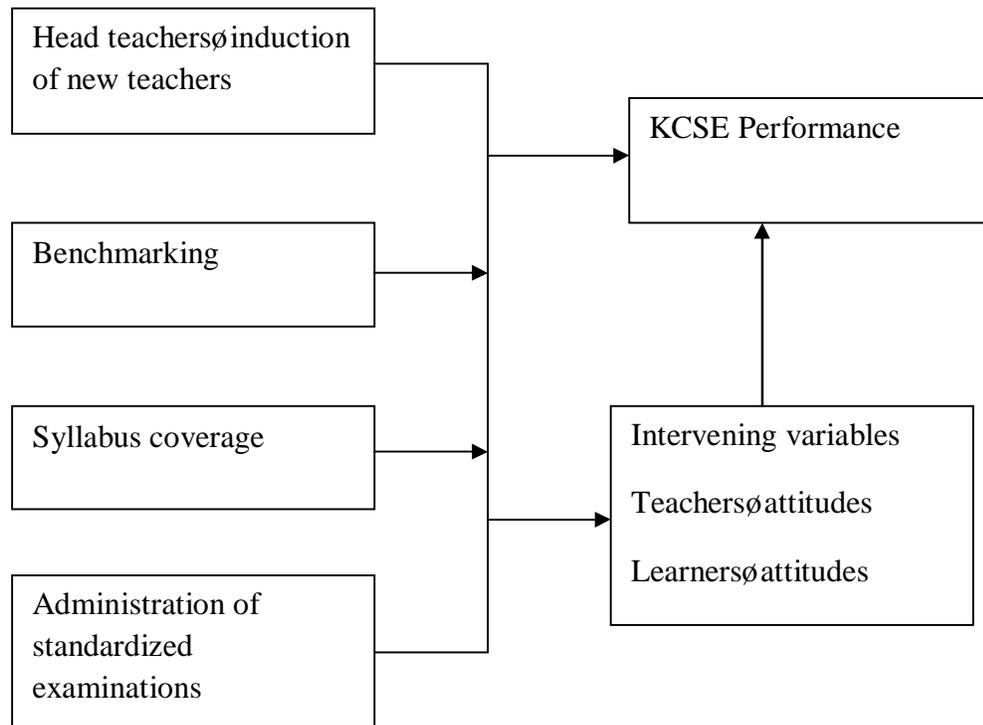
The key ideas in this definition are as follows. Control is about achieving strategic objectives. The objectives must be achieved at a superior level of performance while minimizing any chance of unintended consequences. Structure refers to the formal task, authority and responsibility assignments in an organization. Processes are the activities through which control is accomplished. Subsystems support the structures and processes by providing the right incentives to shape behavior (Hooper, 2001). Education is a system because it has a set of inputs (administrative factors, money, children, teachers, infrastructure etc) which are subject to a process, in order to attain certain objectives which appear as outputs (educated children). It is further argued that education can be viewed as a system because of self-adjusting combination of interacting people and things designed by human to accomplish some predetermined purpose.

The input output theory was appropriate to this study the inputs are the school administrative practices as depicted by the head teachers while output is the student performance in the KCSE examinations. Both of these variables interact in the school environment which is a social system to enhance student academic

performance in KCSE examinations. The ability of the head teachers to properly manage the teachers including induction of new teachers influences the performance of the school. Also, a school being a social system encourages exchange of ideas with students and teachers from other well performing schools. In this case therefore, the extent to which the head teacher allows other schools in the school or allows students to visit other schools has a direct impact on performance. Schools that benchmark with other schools tend to perform better in KCSE compared to schools that operate in isolation. The head teachers also need to work together with the teachers and other stakeholders to ensure that the syllabus is covered in good time so as not to disadvantage the students. Schools that are able to cover the syllabus in good time and administers standardized examinations prepares their students for better performance in KCSE examinations unlike those that just brush through the syllabus at the last minute. The performance (output) in the latter schools is always discouraging both to the students, parents and even the teachers.

## 2.14 Conceptual framework

Input \_\_\_\_ teaching and learning Process \_\_\_\_ Output



**Figure 2.1 Administrative factors and KCSE performance.**

The conceptual framework in this study is derived from the theoretical framework which shows the relationship between inputs and outputs of education. The inputs comprises of teachers induction of new teachers, bench marking of students, syllabus coverage and standardization of examinations. The output is indicated by performance in KCSE examinations. The head teachers' induction, benchmarking, syllabus coverage and regularity of standardized examinations have a direct influence on the performance in KCSE. For instance, new teachers

who are properly inducted are always motivated and are likely to offer their best during the teaching process in the classroom, hence, translating to good performance in KCSE. Consequently, regular administration of standardized examinations to students sharpens the ability of students to answer questions. These students are able to handle the questions in KCSE examinations without much difficulty because they have been well prepared. In the same way, early syllabus coverage and benchmarking enhances good performance in the KCSE examinations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology of the study under the following headings; research design, target population; sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity of research instruments, reliability of research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research design**

According to Borg and Gall (1989), a research design is the process of creating an empirical test to support or refute a knowledge claim. They assert that it is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance. This study adopted ex-post facto research design. According to Orodho (2009), ex-post facto research design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they cannot be manipulated since they occur in a natural setting. It allows the researcher to show the relationship between the variables in his study and state the extent to which one variable affects the other. This research design enabled the researcher to bring out the relationship between administrative practices and student performance in KCSE examinations in public secondary schools in Thika West District without altering anything.

### **3.3 Target population**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) defined population as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The target population of this study comprised of 38 secondary schools, 38 head teachers and 760 teachers.

### **3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure**

Bryman and Bell (2003) define a sample as a section of a population that is selected for investigation. The researcher used purposive sampling to select the 14 public day schools. Thika West sub-county happens to have only 14 public day secondary schools, and the researcher purposively went for them. The head teachers of the 14 sampled schools automatically became part of the sample. The sample also constituted 56 teachers who were purposively selected. The researcher was interested in teachers who had recently joined the school, possibly two years ago.

### **3.5 Research instruments**

In this research, questionnaires for teachers and head teachers were used to collect data. The researcher used the questionnaire to obtain factual data and opinions in a structured framework from the respondents. Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that a questionnaire is a research tool that can be used to collect data over a large group of subjects within a very short time. It also allows the researcher to collect large amounts of data in a relatively short amount of time (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 1999). The questionnaires enabled the researcher to collect data on the influence

of administrative factors on student performance in KCSE examinations in Thika West sub-county.

### **3.6 Validity of the research instruments**

Validity means ascertaining the accuracy of the instruments by establishing whether the instruments focus on the information they are intended to collect. In order to ascertain face validity, the researcher presented the instruments constructed to his supervisors who are senior researchers in the Department of Educational Administration and Planning in University of Nairobi for constructive criticisms. Thereafter, they were revised according to the supervisors' comments. The researcher also constructed the questionnaires in line with the researcher objectives to ensure content validity.

### **3.7 Reliability of the research instruments**

Reliability refers to the consistency of the instruments in gathering information from more than one respondent (Orodho, 2009). Through a pilot study which was conducted in two secondary schools that were not part of the sample, the researcher established the reliability of the instruments. The results obtained were correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formulae. The more the correlation coefficient was closer to 1.00 the more reliable the instrument was. A test-retest method was used to determine reliability of the interview schedule. Test-retest involves administering the instrument twice to a group with similar characteristics to the subjects or research setting. Then the instrument items were improved depending on the extent to which the items were

suitable to gather the required information when instruments are administered in the main study (Mulusa, 1990).

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

After obtaining a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) headquarters, the researcher reported to the DEO's office in Thika West sub-county from where the researcher proceeded to the field to collect data. The researcher first visited the secondary schools to seek permission from the administration, create rapport and set dates and time when the respondents would fill the questionnaires and also conduct the interview. On the agreed dates, the researcher issued the questionnaires to the respondents for the purpose of data collection. The respondents were given enough time to respond to the items in the questionnaires that were to be collected by the researcher later. The questionnaires were collected soonest to control the possibility of the respondents discussing amongst themselves.

### **3.9 Data analysis techniques**

The first step in data analysis involved checking the responses to the items in the questionnaires. To analyze the collected data, the researcher used descriptive statistics. The research instruments were used to generate both qualitative and quantitative data. The responses were coded and categorized according to the specific objectives of the study. Then the researcher used the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 16 in the data analysis. The results of data analysis were presented by use of frequency distribution tables and percentages..

After the data analysis was done, results, conclusions and recommendations were made based on the findings.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

The researcher obtained a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation to facilitate conducting the research in Thika West District, Thika sub-county in Kiambu County. He observed all ethical concerns in the 14 schools that he visited and kept schools government documents that he obtained in a confidential manner. He ensured that he acknowledged all the sources that he cited in this work.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis on administrative factors affecting students' performance in Kenya Certificate Secondary Education (KCSE) in Public Day Secondary Schools in Thika West sub-county with regard to benchmarking, syllabus coverage, induction of new teachers and regularity of administration of standardized examinations. The researcher collected data and analyzed the administrative factors and their influence on performance in KCSE. This involved the use of frequencies, percentages and mean. Data was also presented by use of tables and line graphs.

#### 4.2. Response rate

All the 14 questionnaires that were given to the head teachers were returned by heads of schools. This gave one hundred percent return rate. Consequently, of the 56 teachers' questionnaires, 54 of them (96%) were returned the questionnaires. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a fifty percent response rate is adequate, sixty percent good and above seventy five percent rated very good. Basing on this assertion; the response rate of 100 percent and 96 percent in this case was very good. This commendable response rate was due to extra efforts that were made via personal face to face interviews with the head teachers with aid of the designed questionnaire. The return rate was also high because the researcher collected the questionnaire immediately they were filled. All the forms returned questions were useful for the study.

### **4.3 Distribution of head teachers by age**

In order to achieve the main purpose of this study, the researcher found it paramount to find out the demographic information of the respondents. The demographic information of the heads of schools included: gender, age, location and highest professional position and number of years in their current positions.

#### **4.3.1 Demographic information of Head teachers,**

##### **Gender of the head teachers**

There were 10 (71.4%) male head teachers and 4 (28.60%) females. The data shows there were more male teachers than females in the schools. Dorsy (1989) concluded that the reason for poor representation is simply because women have generally lower qualification than men. When promotion is done on merit, more men than women qualify. This variable verified how experience helped in administration.

##### **Location of the head teachers**

Regarding respondents location, the study finding shows that majority 11 (78.6%) of the head teachers of schools hailed and lived in urban centers. Thika and Juja are municipality and township respectively. As this study concentrated on schools urban centers or peri-urban centers apart from a few from coffee plantations it was therefore a realization of exposed head teachers of schools that have lots of professional training to contain all the teachers and students in their allocated institutions.

### Age of the head teachers

The distribution of the head teachers by age is shown in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of head teachers by age**

<b>Age in years</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
31-35 years	2	14.3
36-40 years	2	14.3
41-50 years	7	50.0
Above 50 years	3	21.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

The head teachers were asked to indicate their age bracket. The study findings are illustrated in Table 4.1. This implies that head teachers are dominated by a mature adult population. Information in table 4.1 reveals that, most of the head teachers were in the age bracket of 41 and 50 years (50%). The data implies that majority of the head teachers were relatively young and hence active in the management of schools. The head teachers were further asked to indicate their highest academic qualification. This variable verified how experience helped in administration.

## Duration of the head teacher in their current school

**Table 4.2: Head teacher's duration of service**

<b>Duration in years</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 5 years	9	64.3
6 to 10 years	3	21.4
11 to 15 years	2	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of years of service with the current school and the findings presented in table 4.3 above. According to the findings, highest proportion of the head teachers 9 (64.3%) had worked in their current schools for less than 5 years. Majority of the head teachers had been transferred to the school recently. This frequent movement from school to school could have adverse effects on KCSE performance in Thika West, District. Those who had worked in their institution for a longer period (14.3%) appeared to have had stable results though the difference is not so much significant in relation to the general performance of the district schools as they had gained experience on the factors affecting student's performance.

## Highest level of Education of the head teachers

**Table 4.3: Highest level of education of the head teachers**

<b>Highest level of education</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Certificate and below	3	21.4
Diploma	3	21.4
Bachelors degree	6	42.9
Masters degree	2	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

The study sought to establish the highest level of education for the head teachers. The results are as tabulated in the table 4.3. From the findings, 3 (21.4%) of the respondents had diploma in education as their highest level of education, 3 (21.4%) had diploma as their highest level of education, 6 (42.9%) had bachelors degree as their highest level of education, and only 2 (14.2%) had masters degree. This shows that most of these head teachers had attained college education and thus degree as their highest education level.

## Head teachers' experience in the teaching career

**Table 4.4: Year of teaching Experience of head teachers**

<b>Experience in teaching</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
6-10 years	2	14.3
11-15 years	3	21.4
16-20 years	6	42.9
21-25 years	2	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

To establish the teachers' experience, the study relied on the results in table 4.4. From the findings, 2 (14.3%) of the respondents had 6-10 years of experience, 3 (21.4%) had 11-15 years of teaching experience, 6(42.9%) had 16-20 years of teaching experience and 2 (14.3%) had 21-25 years of experience as teachers. This shows that most of these head teachers had high levels of experience with their work and had the ability to enhance academic performance in KCSE in their schools.

### **4.3.2 Demographic information of teachers**

To find out the demographic information of the teachers, they were asked to show their gender, age, and highest academic qualifications. Their responses are presented in the following section.

### **Gender of the teachers**

To establish the gender of the teachers, they were asked to indicate their gender. Out of the 54 teachers who responded to the questionnaires, 30 (55.6%) of the teachers were females against 24 (44.4%) who were males. The data shows that more males than females were involved in teaching in the public schools sampled especially being in the urban areas of Thika and its outskirts.

### **Age distribution of the teachers**

The teachers were further asked to indicate their age. This helped in determining ability to induct teachers. Their age distribution is summarized in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Distribution of teachers by age**

<b>Age in years</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
31-35 years	27	50.0
36-40 years	8	14.3
41-50 years	11	21.4
Above 50 years	8	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>

Data in table shows that majority 27(50%) of the teachers were in the age bracket of 31 to 35 years. This only shows that they were still young and energetic and had the ability to deal with the academic challenges facing their students since they are not much older than the students.

### **Academic qualifications of the teachers**

The researcher was also interested in identifying the academic qualifications of the teachers.

**Table 4.6: Academic qualifications of the teachers**

<b>Highest level of education</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Certificate and below	0	0
Diploma	11	21.4
Bachelors degree	35	64.3
Masters degree	8	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings indicate that majority 35(64.3%) of the teachers had a bachelors degree in education. This implies that they had the pedagogical skills necessary to adequately execute the curriculum in their subjects and promoting excellence of their schools in the KCSE examinations.

#### **4.4 Performance of public day secondary schools**

This variable focused on head teachers. The responses were analyzed descriptively and each of the items interpreted independently. In regard to this variable, most of the interviewed head teachers said that they attended classes and supervised their minors frequently to confirm effective learning and teaching processes. Majority of the heads of schools agreed on teachers' supervision and learning processes in the schools through the use of teaching aids and checking

the used teaching methods by the teachers. Others said that they check teachers' schemes of work on how they programme themselves in delivering the required services to the students.

In order to establish the influence of benchmarking on students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District, it was necessary to study the 7-years trend of performance in KCSE for the listed schools. The trend analysis was as shown in Table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7: KCSE performance in public day secondary schools**

Public day schools	Mean standard score				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
KCSE performance					
High performance	4.2	5.2	5.53	5.439	4.758
Low performance	2.5	2.3	1.6	2.208	1.897

The results of table 4.7 above indicate that there has been inconsistency in KCSE performance by public day secondary schools in Thika West District. Schools whose performances have indicated good performance trends 4.2, 5.2, 5.5, 5.4 and 4.7 and poor performance indicate 2.5, 2.3, 1.6, 2.2 and 1.8 respectively out of the possible 12 optimal points.

#### **4.5 Influence of head teacher’s induction of new teachers on students’ KCSE performance in public day secondary schools**

The head teachers were required by the study to indicate how they conducted their inductions of new teachers to train them to handle KCSE performance issue in public day secondary schools in Thika West District. Table 4.8 shows the findings of the study.

From the findings majority of the head teachers have made an effort of attending refresher courses that are conducted by Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association (KSSHA) where their experienced colleagues share their experience with the relatively new heads more so those of District schools and those from public day secondary schools.

**Table 4.8: Induction of new teachers influences students’ KCSE performance in day secondary schools**

##### **Extent of involving teachers in academic induction**

Induction of new teachers	Mean standard score				
KCSE performance	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
New teachers induction	5.1	4.8	4.929	4.691	4.667
No induction of new teachers	3.2	3.0	2.984	2.789	2.475

The study findings in table 4.8 above shows that head teachers have taken several steps in inducting new teachers in public secondary schools in Thika West District. These induction methods include: consulting their teachers before making decisions pertaining to academic progress. Where the induction of new teachers is done KCSE performance trends are 5.1, 4.8, 4.9, 4.6 and 4.6. Where induction is not done it is 3.2, 3.0, 2.9, 2.7 and 2.4. The head teachers reported that they embraced these induction practices so as to help them fit into the school system. Through such forums, the teachers are made aware of the vision, mission and core values of the school. They are introduced to the policies of the school and the performance targets of the school and therefore, they are set to work towards these targets.

#### **4.6 Importance of benchmarking on students' performance**

Another key objective of the study was to determine influence of benchmarking students' performance based on any of the methods stated above. The results are as shown in table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.9: Importance of benchmarking on students' performance**

Importance of Benchmarking	Mean standard score				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
KCSE performance					
Benchmarking done in schools	4.9	3.7	3.79	4.231	4.393
No Benchmarking done in schools	2.0	2.7	2.25	2.143	2.350

The study findings in table 4.9 shows that in schools where benchmarking was done the trends are 4.9,3.7, 3.79, 4.231 and 4.393 while no benchmarking was not done in schools, the trends are 2.0,2.7,2.25,2.143 and 2.350 respectively.

#### 4.7 Timely syllabus coverage and performance in KCSE

The study aimed at determining the influence of early syllabus coverage on students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools in Thika West District. A 3-Point Likert scale was used to evaluate the head teachers' opinions on the same. The results are shown in figure 4.2 below.

**Table 4.10 Trends in early syllabus coverage on students' KCSE performance**

Early syllabus coverage	Mean standard score				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Early syllabus coverage done	2.1	2.1	3.057	4.0	4.051
No early syllabus coverage done	2.0	2.7	2.25	2.143	2.350

The study findings in Figure 4.10 above shows that majority in schools where there is early syllabus coverage the trends are 2.1,2.1,3.057, 4.0 and 4.051 while those not practicing early syllabus coverage the trends are 2.0,2.7,2.25, 2.143 and 2.350 respectively. 42 (62.5%) of the teachers and head teachers strongly agreed with the fact that early syllabus coverage improves students' KCSE performance. In responding to this item in the questionnaire, the teachers and head teachers

agreed that syllabus coverage gives students enough time to prepare for their examinations. It gives students enough time to psychologically prepare themselves for their examinations. The results agree with Comber and Keeves (1973) in Ndiritu (1999) where it was observed that within limits, the more hours allowed in instruction in a subject, the higher the achievement. This accounts for the improper time management and usage by teachers particularly in public day secondary schools.

Studied by Kerlinger (2006) Syllabus coverage determines student's performance in examination because students are tested generally from any topic in the syllabus and if any school doesn't cover all the topics in the syllabus, its students will be disadvantaged. The daily nation of October 8th 2001 cited poor coverage syllabus, failure to understand questions and poor teaching method as some of the weaknesses noted in many school. In view of this, the teacher respondents were asked whether they covered the required KCSE examination syllabus before the commencement of the KCSE examination. It is quite unfortunate to note that majority 45 (66%) of the respondents explained that in majority of the schools the syllabus is not completed before the commencement of the KCSE examinations. They noted that that this was mainly due to wastage of time especially during the opening of schools as students reported late to school and that usually teaching commenced a week after the official school opening date. Thus, the research findings point to the fact that the KCSE syllabus is not adequately covered in most of the schools in Thika West sub County and this might have resulted to the poor performance earlier noted.

#### **4.8 Adequacy of Teaching and learning resources and performance in KCSE**

The data indicate that majority 10 (71.4%) of head teachers numbering said that the laboratory chemicals and equipments and library text books were very inadequate while 14 (100%) also said that computers were very inadequate. The findings further indicate that 23 (42.9%) of the teachers said that the students' text books were inadequate while 31 (57.1%) stated that charts and wall maps were inadequate. All the teachers also reported that reference books were inadequate.

According to Eshiwani (1993) most of the schools, whose students performed poorly, spent less money on the purchase of teaching resources. Lack of adequate text books and teaching materials makes teaching difficult as students are unable to do their oral or written work during class lesson. In addition, a study carried out by SACMEQ (1999) indicated that shortage of physical facilities, text books and other equipment affected students learning and their subsequent performance. Supporting this view, Eshiwani (1993) stated that difference in school facilities such as libraries, laboratories, playing fields and electricity seemed to account for difference in achievements. He found that schools that performed consistently well possessed adequate facilities. Thus, the presence or absence of school facilities could determine high achieving and low achieving schools. In view of this, it can reasonably be concluded that lack of adequate facilities and enough teaching and learning resources is one of the factors that are affecting KCSE performance in Thika West sub County.

#### **4.9 Standardized examinations and students KCSE performance**

The study inquired from the head teachers and teachers to establish the influence of regularity of administering standardized examinations on students KCSE

performance in public day secondary schools in the study area. The responses were rated on a dichotomous (yes-no) responses. Table 4.11 below shows the findings of the study.

**Table 4.11 Standardization of examinations on students performance**

Importance of standardization	Mean standard score				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
KCSE performance					
Standardization in schools	4.4	4.4	3.79	4.231	4.393
Non-standardization in schools	3.4	3.0	2.24	2.25	2.754

According to the findings in table 4.11 above, the schools practicing standardization of examinations indicate this trend: 4.4, 4.4, 3.79, 4.231 and 4.393. The schools not practicing standardization of exams show 3.4, 3.0, 2.24, 2.25 and 2.754 respectively.

#### 4.10 Head teachers instructional supervisory practices and students academic performance

**Table 4.12 Instructional supervisory practices and students' KCSE performance**

Instructional supervisory practices	Mean standard score				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
KCSE Performance					
Schools with standardized practices	5.1	4.8	4.9	4.6	4.6
Schools without standardized practices	3.6	3.1	3.8	3.5	3.6

Instructional supervision improves the relationship between the head teacher, teachers and students. As Table 4.12 shows, in schools that have standardization practices the trends are 5.1, 4.8, 4.9, 4.6 and 4.6. Those schools without standardization of examinations indicate a poor trend: 3.6, 3.1, 3.8, 3.5 and 3.6 in that order. When head teachers were asked if they conduct instruction supervision, 79 percent of them indicated that they supervised teachers while in class to streamline teaching, thereby improving performance. The three remaining head teachers argued that they did not supervise as most teachers felt uneasy and the policy of instructional supervision had not been fully effected in their schools. When teachers were asked if the head teachers supervise them in class only 25 percent confirmed having been supervised in class, while the remaining did not. The findings imply that majority of the head teachers are enforcing the TSC code

of regulations for teachers as elaborated by Opiyo (2004) that instructional supervision is a basic component of administration. During supervision, the head teachers indicated that when they supervised, they observed a number of teaching resources.

The head teachers also said that they inspected the work twice a term while 2 (14.3%) said they inspected once a week and the same number said that they inspected once a term. The findings in the above table are evidence that the head teachers frequency of inspection is inadequate which may have led to poor KCSE performance. Duigan (1986) identifies school leadership as a crucial factor in success. A head teacher is expected to execute administrative functions as well as instructional supervision.

#### **4.11 Other measures to improve KCSE performance**

The study sought the views of the head teachers regarding way of improving or maintaining KCSE performance in Thika West sub County. The data indicated that all the head teachers observed that in order to improve performance the government should employ more teachers and the schools should be provided with enough facilities and teaching resources. Moreover, 6(42.9%) of the head teachers stated that leaders should take an active role in the management of schools and the same number said that. In addition, 11(78.1%) of the head teachers also suggested that the government should offer more help to schools in the arid areas. Majority of the respondents recommended that all stakeholders to be involved in solving social economic limitations embrace team work and promote students discipline. Furthermore, aspects of good school management,

employment of enough teachers and provision of learning facilities need to be looked into. The findings indicated that support of the government was needed in terms of teacher employment and provision of educational facilities. The head teachers should also strive to constantly supervise the work of teachers to ensure quality teaching.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents objectives of the study, summary of the main findings, conclusion and recommendations.

#### **5.2 Summary of study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors influencing students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in public day secondary schools with key concern on benchmarking, induction of new teachers, syllabus coverage and regularity of administering standardized examinations. The research design which was used in this study was descriptive ex-post facto design. The study sampled 39% of the target population of 38 which made a sample size of 14 head teachers and 56 teachers. The study involved the use of questionnaires for the 14 head teachers and 56 teachers from 14 public day secondary schools in Thika West District, Kiambu County. Thereafter the SPSS Version 16 statistical software was used to analyze the data. Literature review was also factored in.

#### **5.3 Summary of the research findings**

The analysis of data collected from the 14 public day secondary school head teachers and 56 teachers from Thika West District shows that performance in national exams were influenced by head teachers' induction of new teachers, benchmarking of KCSE performance, early syllabus coverage and regularity of standardization of examinations

#### **5.4 Discussion of findings**

The findings are about headteachers induction of new teachers, benchmarking and students' performance, early and timely syllabus coverage and regularization of standardized examination on KCSE performance.

##### **5.4.1 Headteachers induction of new teachers and students performance**

The study found out that head teachers induct new teachers to be able to collectively converge in their presence to properly consult before making decisions on academic progress and this was so often used in the area of study. The study also revealed that the induction style to new teachers is helpful for them to apply varying leadership styles depending on the environment.

##### **5.4.2 Benchmarking and students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools.**

From the study findings, it was established that benchmarking students' performance is helpful in identifying students who may need additional support or remediation. Similarly, the study established that most head teachers in the study area administer tests that cover the content standards as the most widely used benchmarking style. This therefore identifies strengths, weaknesses and gaps in curriculum and institutions.

##### **5.4.3 Timely syllabus coverage and students' KCSE performance in public day secondary schools**

The study further agreed that failure to prepare schemes of work, inadequate teaching and learning materials, low teachers' morale and inadequate teachers are some of the factors influencing syllabus coverage in public day schools in Thika

West District This implies that head teachers are put to the task of steering adequate teacher morale and having them prepare schemes of work alongside provision of teaching and learning materials in order to realize significant performance rise in the near future.

#### **5.4.4 Influence of regularity of standardization examinations on students KCSE performance in public day secondary schools**

The study revealed that that standardizing examinations on the students performance improves diagnosis of the students strengths and weaknesses. This depicts that upon understanding the strengths and weaknesses of students, teaching becomes an easy task for teachers. This therefore means that tracking problems encountered during the teaching process then becomes easy and fast. The study further revealed that that standardization improves prediction and selection for gifted students for scholarships and awards. This infers that the to be fair on awards, then exams need to be standardized so that rightfully qualified students get the best out of their work.

#### **5.5 Conclusions**

The study concluded that in order to get the best performance, well-motivated and educated teachers need to be recruited in order to impact good performance to students. There is also need for new teachers who join the school to be inducted to fit into the school system and be briefed on the set performance targets in the school.

The study also concluded that students' performance needs to be benchmarked in order to realize any weakness in the system either on the students or teachers/administration.

The study also concluded that teachers need to adopt early syllabus coverage, proper preparation in terms of time and resources (scheme of work) and boost their morale in order to realize good performance in KCSE.

The study finally concluded that standardizing students' examinations improves diagnosis of students' strength and weaknesses thus improves prediction and selection for gifted students for scholarships and awards.

### **5.6 Recommendations**

Based on the findings the researcher made the following recommendations:

Head teachers need to attend several management courses and seminars. This would increase their competitiveness in technical problems especially those touching on teachers. Similarly, they need to devise ways of improving teachers' morale in order to motivate them to work tirelessly and passionately.

Public day secondary schools need to be well supported with available learning and teaching facilities and materials. This would help both the students and teachers realize their passion for education which is a paradigm shift in thinking and action.

The public day secondary schools in Thika West District should benchmark their performance against the national schools scores. This would help in added hard

work on both the students' side and the teachers' side which would translate to improved performance in KCSE (national exams).

The study recommends that standardization of examinations becomes the most important step that the surveyed public day secondary schools need to adopt. This would ensure that quality students are obtained because they will be used to standard methods of tackling problems in real life situations.

The head teachers should also ensure that the teachers prepare the requisite professional documents and they should frequently supervise them to ensure that there is quality teaching.

The head teachers should organize to have incentives for teachers and pupils in the schools through recognition of individual efforts. For instance, consistently performing teachers should be recommended for promotion.

Motivation and incentives to teachers should be embraced in terms of provision of better remuneration, promotions on merit and appreciation of exemplary performance through certification and commendation letters. In addition, adequate teaching and learning resources should be availed by head teachers and boards of management.

Retraining, in-servicing and conducting seminars and workshops for teachers should be frequent, at least once in a term to keep the teachers abreast with the appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

### **5.7 Suggestions for further study**

Since this study explored the administrative factors influencing students' performance in KCSE in public day secondary schools, the study recommends that a similar study should be done for students, parents and school authority (including The Board of Management (BOM) factors so as to compare the results with what is observed in the current study.

The study was also carried out in one district (sub County) in Kiambu County. There is need for a similar study to be conducted in the other sub counties and other parts of the country where educational performance is worrying.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Letter of introduction**

Department of Educational  
Administration and Planning,  
University of Nairobi.

Dear Respondent

### **Re: Request for research data**

I am a post graduate student at University of Nairobi. I am conducting research on "Administrative factors influencing students' performance in KCSE in public day secondary schools in Thika West District, Thika Sub county, Kiambu county in Kenya." You have been selected to participate in this study. Kindly assist by responding to all the items in the questionnaire. You are assured that the information you give will be for research purpose only and your identity will be treated with confidentiality.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

**Mwangi Peter Muhoro**

## APPENDIX II: Head teachers questionnaire

This questionnaire is for the purpose of gathering information on administrative factors influencing students' performance in KCSE in public day secondary schools in Thika west district, Thika district, Kiambu County in Kenya. You are kindly requested to fill in the questionnaire and your honest responses will be highly esteemed.

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please indicate your gender by use of a tick (ç)

Male     female

2. Age

21-25 years  26-30years  31-35years  36-40years

41-50years     above 50years

3. Experience as a teacher (Indicate with a tick (ç))

0-5 years     6-10years     11-15years  16-20years

21-25years     above 25years

4. How many years have you been in your current school?

0-5 years     6-10years     11-15years  16-20years

21-25years     above 25years

5. Please indicate your highest academic qualification (Indicate with a tick

(ç)

Elementary (EACE/KCSE): (Certificate level and below)

Intermediate (Dip Ed): (College diploma level) ( )

Bachelors degree (BEd): (University degree) ( )

Masters degree (MEd):(Masters degree ) ( )

6. Please indicate whether teachers in your school prepare the following professional documents. Tick as many as appropriate.

a) Scheme of Work ( ) b) Lessons plan ( )

c) Records of Work ( ) d) Student progress record ( )

7. How often do you inspect the work of your teachers to ensure quality performance?

i) Once a month ( ) ii) Twice a month ( ) iii) Once a term ( )

iv) Twice a term ( ) v) Any other (specify í í í í í ..

8. How do you generally rate the K.C.S.E performance in your school for the last 5 years (2006- 2010). i) Excellent ( ) ii) Good ( ) iii) Average ( ) iv) Poor ( ) v) Very poor( )

If poor, what could be the major causes of the poor performance?

9. Are teachers in your school motivated once inducted in the school system?

Indicate with a tick (ç)

Yes ( ) No ( )

10. In what ways do you ensure that teachers in your school are motivated?

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

11. In what ways do you ensure that students in your school are motivated by your strategies for the teaching and learning process?

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

12. In your opinion,

a) What do you think are the reasons contributing to poor performance in KCSE (please list the reasons below)

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

b) What do you think are the reasons contributing to good performance (please list the reasons below)

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

13. How often do you attend seminars within a term? (Indicate with a tick (ç)  
None ( ) once ( ) twice ( ) thrice ( ) more than thrice ( )
14. As the head of the school, do you have induction and orientation sessions for new teachers that join your school?
15. In your opinion, does benchmarking have any impact on the performance of students in examinations?
16. How does early coverage of the syllabus affect performance in national examinations? Explain your answer.
17. Do you offer standardized examinations to your students? Yes ( ) No ( ).
18. In your opinion, what other measures can be used to improve KCSE performance in Thika West District Sub County?

**Thank you**

### APPENDIX III: Teachers' questionnaire

This questionnaire is divided into two Section A and B. Please complete each section honestly according to the instructions given. Do not write your name and the name of your school to ensure complete confidentiality. Please respond to all questions.

#### SECTION A

1. Gender Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age bracket
  - a) Below 25 years ( ) b) 25 Years to 35 years ( )
  - c) 36 to 45 years ( ) d) 46 years and above ( )
3. Highest academic qualification
  - a) Master degree ( ) b) B.Ed ( ) c) Certificate and below ( )
  - d) Diploma ( ) e) Any other (specify) í í í .
4. a) Are you satisfied with your current teaching load?  
Yes ( ) No ( )
- b) If No, how heavy is the teaching load?
  - a) Very heavy ( ) b) Heavy ( ) c) Not heavy ( )
5. For how long have you been in the teaching profession?
  - a) 1-5 years ( ) b) 6 years ( ) c) 11-15 years ( )
  - d) 16-20 years ( ) e) Over 20 years ( )

## Section B

**Instruction:** Please respond to each question by putting a tick ( ) next to the appropriate response.

6. Please indicate whether you prepare the following professional document.

Tick as many as appropriate.

a) Schemes of work ( ) b) Lessons plan ( )

c) Record of work ( ) d) Student progress ( )

7. How many times are you inspected by your head teacher?

a) Once a month ( ) b) Twice in a month ( ) c) Once a term ( )

d) Twice a year ( ) e) Never ( ) f) If any specify) í ..

8. i) Do you cover the required KCSE examination syllabus before the commencement of the KCSE examination?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( ) N/A ( )

ii) If No, to what extent do you cover the KCSE syllabus?

a) Very great extent ( ) b) great extent ( ) c) Undecided ( )

d) Little extent ( ) e) Very little extent ( )

c) Please explain your response in b) above.

9. i) How do you rate the KCSE exam performance your school?

a) Excellent ( ) b) Good ( ) c) Undecided ( )

d) Poor ( ) e) Very poor

ii) If the answer to 15 (i) is (d) or (e) list the possible causes.

10. Please indicate with a tick the adequacy of the list of items below using the alternative choices given.



Effective ( )

Satisfactory ( )

Ineffective ( ). Explain your answer.

18. On your day of arrival to the school, were you briefed about the vision, mission, objectives, core values, culture, history and policies of the school?

Yes ( ) No ( )

19. Were you formally introduced to the students, teachers, and heads of department, subject teachers and the non-teaching staff?

20. When you joined the school, were you briefed of the expectations in terms of academic performance of the school?

21. In your opinion, does benchmarking have any impact on the performance of students in examinations?

22. How does early coverage of the syllabus affect performance in national examinations? Explain your answer.

23. Do you offer standardized examinations to your students? Yes ( ) No ( ).  
If Yes, what is their impact on performance in KCSE examinations?

**Thank you**

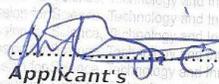
#### **APPENDIX IV: List of sampled schools**

1. Thika Garrison
2. Broadway Secondary
3. Juja Farm
4. Kimuchu
5. Kenyatta Girls
6. Gachororo
7. Juja Secondary
8. Karibaribi
9. Thika Secondary F. Blind
10. THEOS
11. St.Xavier
12. Queen of Rosary
13. St Mark Gatuanyaga
14. Thika girls

## APPENDIX IV: Research Permit

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**MR. PETER MUHORO MWANGI**  
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 30197-100  
Nairobi, has been permitted to conduct  
**research in Kiambu County**  
on the topic: **ADMINISTRATIVE  
FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS  
PERFORMANCE IN KENYA CERTIFICATE  
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC  
DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THIKA  
WEST DISTRICT KENYA**  
for the period ending:  
**30th October, 2015**

**Permit No. : NACOSTI/P/15/9271/4766**  
**Date Of Issue : 21st May, 2015**  
**Fee Received :Ksh 1,000**

  
Applicant's  
Signature

  
**Director General**  
National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation

## APPENDIX V: Application for Permit



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke  
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Utalii House  
Uhuru Highway  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

21<sup>st</sup> May, 2015

NACOSTI/P/15/9271/4766

Peter Muhoro Mwangi  
University of Nairobi  
P.O. Box 30197-00100  
NAIROBI.

#### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Administrative factors influencing students performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in public day secondary schools in Thika West District Kenya*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu County** for a period ending **30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kiambu County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are required to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

  
SAID HUSSEIN  
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Kiambu County.

The County Director of Education  
Kiambu County.

*National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001: 2008 Certified*