



## Implementation of Work Plan by Principals and the Academic Performance of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya

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### Abstract

Head of institutions sign performance contract with employer Teachers Service Commission (TSC) every year. Before they sign the contract, they are expected to prepare Operational Work Plan (OWP) which they are evaluated against by the end of the year to access their effectiveness in the implementation of work plan and the performance of their schools. It is however noted that academic performance of learners has dwindled in secondary schools since 2019 despite principals signing performance contracts in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County in Kenya. This study therefore was analyzing the relation between the implementation of work plan by principals and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. The study was guided by the goal setting theory. The study adopted mixed methodology. Descriptive survey design was utilized where a census of all 33 principals of public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County was done. Data was collected using questionnaires. Qualitative data from open ended questions in the questionnaires was analysed using content analysis and presented in narrative form. Quantitative data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Simple linear regression model was utilized to determine whether there existed a relationship between implementation of work plan and academic performance of students. The study findings indicated implementation of operational work plan by principals had significant positive effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. The study recommends that Ministry of Education (MOE) in conjunction with Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should train both principals and Board of Managements (BOMs) on how to prepare operational and strategic plans and how to implement them effectively and on how they can manage school resources prudently to achieve success of the school.

**Keywords:** Principals, Work Plan, Operational Work Plan, Implementation of Work Plan, Academic Performance, Performance Contracting, Public Secondary Schools

### 1. Introduction

Performance Contracting (PC) has gained prominence in both public and private sector due to its unquestionable linkage with performance of firms and service delivery (Mbua & Sarisar, 2013; Perera, Zhou, Udeaja, Victoria & Chen, 2016) <sup>[20, 29]</sup>. PC is viewed as departure from old styled Carrot-and-Stick policies which were terminated due to irrelevance and rigidity (Barclays Africa, 2017) <sup>[2]</sup>. Ricker (2018) <sup>[30]</sup>, operationalize PC as a liberally negotiated performance agreement tool between government and management of its agencies in order to guarantee accountability, efficiency, improvement of competences among employees.

It stipulates the purpose, expectations, commitments and key responsibilities of the contracting parties, performance standards for each task and incentives for achieving the set targets whose end products us continuous improvement of organization over time (Perera *et al.*, 2016; Kumar & Wise, 2016) <sup>[29, 11]</sup>. Mbua and Sarisar (2013) <sup>[20]</sup>, conceptualize PC using the process lenses where they enumerated PC using four main phases which include: implementation of work plan, training for skill development, supervision which encompass monitoring and evaluation and motivation or rewarding of outstanding performance.

PC is rooted back in late 1960s in France, India, Pakistan and Korea (OECD, 2018). In African context, PC has been adopted by most countries to revitalize and improve performance in public sector which has suffered due to corruption, unaccountability and inadequate resource utilization (Kobia & Mohamed, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2016; Grapinet, Baloch, Jaiko & Jadel, 2019) <sup>[10, 9, 7]</sup>. The Government of Kenya (GOK) introduced PC after the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Wealth and Employment Creation of 2003-2007 which advocated for adoption of PC in order to improve efficiency in service delivery and performance of ministries and state-owned corporations (Republic of Kenya, 2007) <sup>[31]</sup>. The Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced PC in 2004 via legal notice No. 93 of 2004 where all Head of Institutions (HOI) were expected to sign PC and be accountable to performance of their schools (RoK, 2007).

Teachers Service Commission (TSC) launched PC in 2016 where principals are supposed to sign PC with employer at the start of each year with aimed at improving performance of their schools (TSC, 2016) <sup>[38]</sup>. PC revolves around setting targets which are enlisted in the Operational Work plan (OWP) and which TSC through its field officers monitor and supervise its implementations through out the year. The field officer also evaluates performance of the HOIs against the OWP they prepared and uploaded online (TSC, 2016) <sup>[38]</sup>. TSC Act of 2012 in section 11(f) elevates PC and Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) as part of broader public-sector reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in learning institutions thus improving performance where the mandate of monitoring conduct and performance of teachers is vested to the TSC (TSC, 2012) <sup>[37]</sup>. Preparation and implementation of work plans by principals is key to the performance of schools. Olsen (2012) <sup>[27]</sup> conceptualized work plan as a formalized road map that describes how institutions executes their chosen strategy. It outlines the future prospects of an institutions and strategies of reaching their anticipated goals. Work plan is extracted from the larger organizational strategic plan which Ong (2019) acts as yard stick for the accomplishment of an organization thus when a school have strategic plan, it can aid in monitoring the progress and evaluate if it is in the right track. Work plans are normally accompanied by parallel implementation plans which outline responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements and operational changes required in order to deliver on strategic plan activities. Implementation of workplan entails coming up with activities that will help achieve anticipated results by making choices and development of action plan to access the opportunities identified (Armstrong, 2006) <sup>[1]</sup>. The strategic plan offers heads of institutions and their staff guidelines and support so that they may implements its operational work plan uniquely based on school contexts, academic, social and emotional

demands of their learners (Sore, Onyango & Nyagol, 2017) <sup>[35]</sup>.

Implementation of work plan by principals is critical component of performance contracting which has bearing on the academic performance of learners. George (2021) <sup>[6]</sup> accentuate that when institutions succinctly understands what, how and why they have strategic plans, it helps improve the public value. Preparation of school development plans and their implementation are best operationalized if the school structures that have systems that seamlessly allows when a single area is changed then the entire school structure also changes (Haynes *et al.*, 2006) <sup>[8]</sup>. Escobar (2019) underscore the paramount role of school improvement plan in improving quality of education in Barcelona, Spain. It was noted that when School Improvement Plan (SIP) is structured in a sustainable way and is able to identify what require instant attention by prioritizing what its most important, it leads to improved academic performance in schools. Mabubi, Nyakundi and Areba (2020) <sup>[19]</sup> elevated the conversation by noting that academic performance may be influence by myriads of factors not just performance contracting and implementation of work plan in schools. The conversation on whether PC and implementation of work plan has bearing on academic performance is not conclusively discussed. For instance, Kwedho (2015) <sup>[14]</sup> and Muraguri (2018) <sup>[22]</sup> contrast one another on whether PC has effects on academic performance of students in secondary schools.

Academic performance of students in Kenya is operationalized using grades in Kenya Certificate Secondary Education (KCSE) and is connected with quality of instruction of the teachers. Smith and Kubacka (2017) <sup>[34]</sup> acknowledges utilization of national examination results as the impartial metric in educator's assessment that can be used both locally in Kenya and internationally. The performance of most public secondary schools has dropped and students attaining entry grades to university also dropping between 2019 to 2024 in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County in Kenya (Unpublished Sub County Education Report–Kalama Sub County). The essence of signing performance contracts and implementing Operational Work Plan (OWP) by principals is to propel academic performance of students in public secondary schools which is questionable in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County prompting need for this study.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Principals of public secondary schools are expected to sign performance contracts with TSC at the start of each year. It involves developing an OWP where they set targets which is evaluated at end of each year. The implementation of OWP focus on improving quality of education and academic performance of learners in schools. However, despite principals signing performance contracting; the academic performance of students in most public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County has dwindled between 2019 to 2024. The number of learners attaining quality grades and transitioning to universities from public secondary schools have consistently dropped from 16.3% to 8.62% between the year 2019 to 2024. Out of 33 public secondary schools, only 3 schools have attained a mean of 5.0 in KCSE (Unpublished Sub County Education Report–Kalama Sub County). This indicates a controversy whether implementation of work plans after signing performance contracts has influence on the academic performance of

students in public secondary schools. The extant empirical studies have indicated a paradox and inconclusive results. Ochola (2019) <sup>[25]</sup> placed a doubt on whether performance contracting where implementation of work plan is key affected academic performance of learners in public secondary school. This creates a lacuna which this study investigated.

### 1.3. Research Objective

To examine the effects of implementation of workplan by principals on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya.

### 1.4. Research Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>: Implementation of work plan by principals has no significant effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1. Goal Setting Theory (GST)

This study was premised on the tenets of the Goal Setting Theory (GST) which was coined by Locke (1968) <sup>[16]</sup>. The theory accentuates that in order for any institution to improve on their performance there is need for institutions to set goals. The theory acknowledges that employees get more attached to their work when they set goals for them achieve. The theory claims that if employees set goals, it becomes less difficult to work round the challenges and achieve the set goals and it becomes easier when the value and value judgements trigger emotions to achieve set targets. The goal achievement is assessed by evaluating the performance of the employees., their actions or responses (Locke, Latham, & Erez, 1988) <sup>[18]</sup>.

Locke and Latham (2006) <sup>[17]</sup> appreciates the individual's efforts in achieving the sets targets. The scholar notes that when individuals are positive and with requisite capacity plus commitment may make them achieve set goal with little efforts. The achievement of success is elevated when there is zero conflict of interest in order to achieve set goal. The signing of performance contract involves first principals coming up with Operational Work Plan (OWP) where all targets to be achieved annually are highlighted. The OWP contains all targets which are evaluated level of achievement by the end of the year. One of the leading parameters evaluated is academic performance of KCSE in public secondary schools. Therefore, this theory sufficiently informed both independent variable (implementation of work plan by principals) and the dependent variable that is academic performance of public secondary schools.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

Lesilwa and Nihuka (2024) <sup>[15]</sup> conducted a study on influence of school development plan implementation on students' academic performance in Dodoma city secondary schools, Tanzania. The study operationalized the independent variable in terms how School Development Plan is implemented, perception of schools on SDP and how academic performance is influenced by implementation of SDP in schools. The study adopted mixed research methodology using convergent parallel research design. The study established that school development plans had great

influence on students' academic performance in secondary school in Dodoma city secondary schools, Tanzania. Mugambi and Kirimi (2024) <sup>[21]</sup> conducted a study on influence of strategic planning on student's academic performance in public secondary schools in the Tigania East Sub County of Kenya. The study was anchored on Kurt Lewin's Theory of Change and Havelock's Theory. The study employed mixed methodology involving concurrent triangulation with descriptive survey designs. The sample size was 250 teachers, 25 managers and 200 student leaders from the 25 participating universities who were sampled using purposively sampled. The results from multiple linear regression analysis indicated that around 66.6% of the variation in the student's academic performance was caused by strategic plans.

Odette and Andala (2022) <sup>[26]</sup> conducted a research on the relationship between school strategic planning and students' academic performance of secondary schools in Rusizi district in Rwanda. The study operationalized strategic planning using dimension like stakeholders' involvement and communication of vision. The study employed correlational research design. The study population was 988 from whom simple random sampling and convenient sampling was used to sample 91 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaire. Data analysis was done using regression model. The study findings indicated that strategic planning had effect on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Rwanda.

Kwaslema and Onyango (2021) <sup>[13]</sup> investigated the schools' effectiveness in the development of the strategic plan and the perception of teachers on the implementation of the strategic plan and how it affects the academic performance among the public secondary schools in Babati District, Tanzania. The study employed mixed research where convergent parallel design was used. The target population was 2844 stakeholders from 5 schools which were randomly sampled. Purposive, stratified and random sampling was used to sample 185 respondents who included one district education officer, four ward education officers, five school heads, eighty teachers, and ninety-five students. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics in terms of frequencies, percentages and means. Study findings indicated that effectiveness of strategic plan development and its implementation had positive impact on academic performance of secondary schools in Babati district in Tanzania.

Seje, Ombati and Maithya (2021) <sup>[33]</sup>, evaluated the implementation of strategic planning as a tool for improving performance management practices by principals of public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study explored how strategic plan are prepared, implemented and challenges in implementation and how it is linked to performance in schools. The study was anchored on quantitative management theory. The study utilized descriptive survey which involved principals, deputy principals and HODs who were sampled using purposive and simple random sampling. Questionnaires was used to data which was analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that despite most schools having clear strategy implementation design and structure, the implementation levels were low and weak which affected improvement in performance management practices.

Nugraha, Reftyawati and Sari (2020) <sup>[23]</sup> investigated how effectively school strategic plan can be implemented and the

best practices to improve schools among state of junior high school in Islam Cendekia Cianjur, Indonesia. The study utilized qualitative research methods. The study finding indicated that SMP Islam Cendekia Cianjur achieved maximum result in implementing annual work plan.

### 2.3 Gaps Emanating from the Empirical Literature

Based on the literature review, there exist variance in the operationalization of the variables under investigation. The review noted that there were methodological gaps emanating from reviewed studies. Some studies utilized convenient or purposive sampling which is non-representative of population and may be biased limiting generalization of the study findings. Some studies were limited on the choice of the research design for instance some studies chose case study which limited generalization of the study finding. Some

study also had methodological gaps in that they utilized only descriptive statistics or qualitative data analysis which limited making inferences on the relationship between the study variable. The study further had contextual gaps as some studies were not done in Kenya which has different regulatory framework and cultural background thus limiting generalization of study finding in Kenyan context.

### 2.4 Conceptual Framework

Literature reviewed formed basis on to which conceptual framework was developed. The conceptual framework highlighted the relation between the implementation of work plan by principals (Independent variable) and academic performance (Dependent variable) of students in public secondary schools.

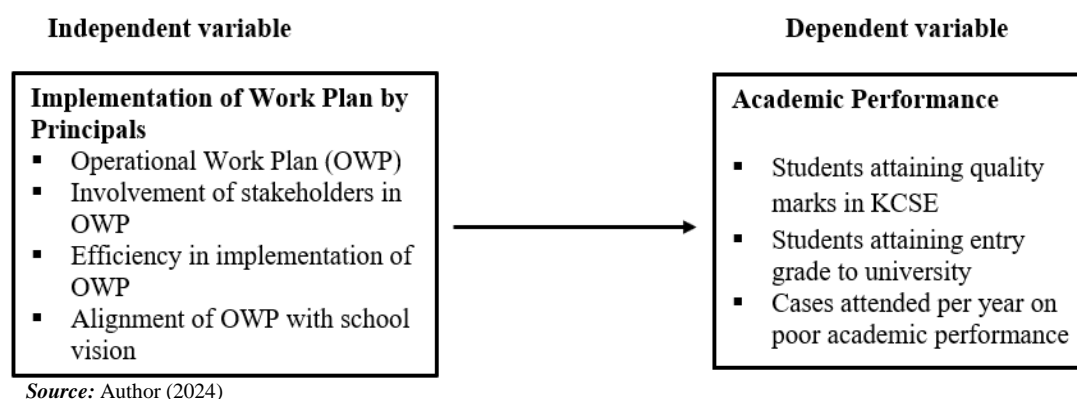


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

Frankel and Wallen (2019) <sup>[5]</sup>, defines research design as the guideline on how a study would be conducted from the formulation of the study to the conclusion. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The research design chosen has enjoyed wide application in management-related research (Nzomo, Kinyua and Mwasiagi, 2023) <sup>[24]</sup>. Descriptive survey revolves around gathering data on the prevailing circumstances of a situation or a population by seeking correct profile of people or events in order to offer a broader scope of concept being studied (Kumar & Deshmukh, 2017) <sup>[12]</sup>. Descriptive survey was chosen as it aids in understanding population attributes comprehensively. It allows collection of data over a large sample over short time in a cost-effective way and can allow generalization of findings on the topic under investigations.

### 3.2. Target Population

Creswell and Creswell (2023) <sup>[4]</sup>, defines target population as the total number of individuals or entities which research desire to investigate. The study was conducted in all 33 public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. The research conducted a census of all 33 principals of public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County. Principals were purposively sampled because they are only people in schools who sign performance contracts hence having focused information on the area of the study.

### 3.3. Data Collection

The study collected data using semi-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires allowed the respondents

to be anonymous as they give their responses which gave them freedom to give candid responses. Before collection of data, pilot study was conducted in public secondary schools in the neighboring Machakos Sub County involving five principals to test validity and reliability of the instruments. Validity of the instruments was tested using face and content validity of the research instruments. It involved seeking guidance from the expert in the area of study. Reliability of instruments was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient where the instruments were tried twice to the same respondents. The overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the 18 items for the variables under investigation was 0.804 which was concluded to be reliable. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) <sup>[36]</sup> recommends that if Cronbach's alpha coefficient for items is above 0.7 then the items of the research instruments should be considered as reliable.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed to elicit both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics analysed and presented using percentage, mean and standard deviation to give insights on attributes of the respondents and variables. Inferential statistics utilized simple linear regression analysis model to measure the relationship between the study variables. Hypotheses were tested at 95% level of confidence. To determine to what extent academic performance of students in public secondary schools was explained by implementation of work plan by principals; adjusted coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was utilized at 0.05 significance level. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test if the regression model is statistically significant. Qualitative data from open ended questions in the

questionnaires was analysed using content analysis. Content analysis entails using common themes to draw conclusions from the patterns of the themes where the findings were presented in a narrative form as recommended by Cooper and Schindler (2014) [3].

#### 4. Findings and Discussions

The respondents who filled questionnaires were 31 out of 33 principals of public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. This represents 93.3% of all respondents who filled the questionnaires.

#### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The study utilized mean and standard deviation to offer insights into responses made by respondents on various attributes of the variables under investigation. The analysis was made on 31 respondents who filled questionnaires on the 12 items adopted to measure state of implementation of work plan by principals in Kalama Sub County in Machakos County. The results of the descriptive analysis are presented in table 1.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics on Implementation of Work Plan by Principals

<b>Implementation of Work Plan by Principals</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Operational Work Plan (OWP)		
There is operational work plan in this school	4.65	.486
Operational work plan is uploaded online in this school	4.56	.467
Operationalization of OWP is linked to school performance	3.81	1.167
Aggregate Scores for operational work plan	4.34	.707
Involvement of stakeholders in OWP		
School stakeholders are involved in preparation of OWP in this school	3.71	.902
School stakeholders are involved in implementation of OWP	3.84	.583
Stakeholders' engagement is associated with improved performance	4.06	.512
Aggregate Scores for Involvement of stakeholders in OWP	3.87	.666
Effectiveness in implementation of OWP		
I implement the OWP in our school effectively	3.71	.583
I meet timelines set in the OWP in this school	3.71	.902
Proper implementation of OWP is linked to school performance	3.77	.990
Aggregate Scores for Effectiveness in implementation of OWP	3.73	.825
Alignment of OWP with school vision		
The OWP is aligned to vision of this school	3.81	.749
I articulate vision of school well during implementation of OWP	4.03	.605
Aligning OWP and school vision is linked to the academic performance of the school	3.84	.583
Aggregate Scores for Alignment of OWP with school vision	3.89	.659
Aggregate Scores for Implementation of Work Plan by Principals	3.96	.714

Results in Table 1 indicated that the combined mean responses for all items on implementation of workplan by principals was 3.96 and standard deviation of 0.714 which tends towards 4.0 (Agree) on the 5-point Likert scale. This implies that principals were implementing work plan as key component of performance contracting in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County in Kenya. The results revealed that most principals had prepared operational work plan which was uploaded online. The results further indicated that stakeholders were involved in preparation and

implementation of operational work plan. Implementation of OWP was effectively implemented and principals were able to meet timelines. It was further noted that OWP was aligned to the school vision and principals were able to articulate school vision and that was linked to academic performance in public primary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. The study further analyzed the responses of respondents relating to the state of academic performance of students in public secondary school. The statistics of the academic performance of students were presented in table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics on Academic Performance of Students

<b>Academic performance in secondary schools</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Students attaining quality marks in KCSE		
Most of learners attain mean grade above C+	2.35	.486
Most of learners have attained quality marks since introduction of PC for principals	2.77	.717
Aggregate Scores for Students attaining quality marks in KCSE	2.56	.602
Students attaining entry grade to university		
Most students who did their KCSE in 2023 gained entry to university	2.55	.506
The number of students attaining entry grade to university has improved after introduction of PC for principals	3.26	.773
Aggregate Scores for Students attaining entry grade to university	2.91	.426
Cases attended per term on poor academic performance		
The school cases per term related to school performance have reduced in 2023	3.35	.661
When cases related to performance reduce it leads to improved school performance	3.90	.700
Aggregate Scores for Cases attended per term on poor academic performance	3.63	.681
Aggregate Scores for Academic performance of Students in Secondary Schools	3.03	.570

Table 2 indicated that overall mean response for all items on academic performance of learners in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County to be 3.03 and standard deviation of 0.570. This tends towards 3.0 (not sure) on the 5-point Likert scale implying there was a doubt on whether there was good academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County in Machakos County. It was further noted that most respondents were of the opinion that learners did not attain quality grades in KCSE that is C+ even after introduction of performance contracting. It was further realized that most learners did not attain entry grades to university and cases related to school performance have reduced in 2023 and by cases reducing it has led to improved academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County in Kenya.

#### 4.2. Inferential Statistics

To empirically test the hypothesis, the study used linear

regression analysis model as applied by Nzomo, Kinyua and Mwasiagi (2023) <sup>[24]</sup>. The null hypothesis of the study was *Ho: Implementation of work plan by principals has no significant effect on the academic performance*. The hypothesis was tested at 95% confidence level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in order to draw conclusions based on the inferences. The research investigated level at which implementation of work plan by principals explained variation on the academic performance using adjusted  $R^2$ . The study conducted Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to examine whether the relationship between the study variables was significant. It involved computing F statistics and its corresponding P-values. Significance value was set at 0.05 where when P-value less than 0.05, the conclusion would be that the model was significant. The coefficient of predictor values regressed against the dependent values were also evaluated. The regression analysis for implementation of work plan by principals and academic performance was summarized in table 3.

**Table 3:** Regression Results for Implementation of Work Plan by Principals and Academic Performance

Model summary					
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Standard error of estimate	
1	.638 <sup>a</sup>	.407	.386	.310	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.916	1	1.916	19.894	0.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	2.793	29	.096		
Total	4.708	30			
A. Predictors: (Constant) Implementation of work plan					
B. Dependent Variable: Academic performance of students in public secondary schools					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient (beta)	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std error			
Constant	0.826	.678		1.219	.034
Implementation of work plan	.053	.118	.070	.445	.006
Dependent Variable: Academic performance of students in public secondary schools					

Results in table 3 indicate that the adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.386. This implies that implementation of work plan by principals explained 38.6% of the changes on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County. The F statistics was F (1, 29) = 19.894 with a P-value of 0.000. This means that the regression model was statistically significant as the level of significance was less than 0.05 threshold. The estimated regression model for direct relation was:

$$\text{Academic Performance} = 0.826 + 0.053$$

Implementation of work plan

#### Model 1

The regression model indicated that holding principal's implementation of work plan constant at zero, the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County was at 0.826. The results revealed that implementation of workplan by principals had significant effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools at  $\beta=0.053$ ;  $t = 0.445$ ;  $p = 0.006$  since the p value was less than 0.05. The analysis implies that a unit change in implementation of workplan by principals would result to an increase of 0.053 on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. Based on the results, the null hypothesis should be rejected and therefore be concluded that

implementation of workplan by principals had significant effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. The results are consistent with previous results by Lesilwa and Nihuka (2024) <sup>[15]</sup>, Mugambi and Kirimi (2024) <sup>[21]</sup>, Odette and Andala (2022) <sup>[26]</sup>, Kwaslema and Onyango (2021) <sup>[13]</sup>, Seje, Ombati and Maithya (2021) <sup>[33]</sup> and Nugraha, Reftyawati and Sari (2020) <sup>[23]</sup> which asserted that strategic and work plan implementation had effect on the performance of learning institutions.

#### 4.3. Qualitative Analysis

The opinion of most respondents who filled open ended questions in the questionnaires indicated that most principals prepared Operational Work Plan (OWP) at the start of each year and effectively implemented the work plan. The respondents opined that most head of institutions involved various stakeholders while preparing the operational work plan and during implementations of the work plan. The study dug out and there was conformity of responses that the operational work plan in most schools was connected to school vision and school strategic plans in Kalama Sub County in Machakos County. The respondents concurred that proper implementation of work plan by principals was linked to academic performance in most institutions in the area of the study. To quote one principal opined 'performance of learners improves if the operational work plan is

implemented well in schools". These qualitative findings married well with quantitative data analysis which observed that there were significant positive effects of implementation of workplan by principals on the academic performance the academic performance of students in secondary schools, in Kalama Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. These findings validate study by Lesilwa and Nihuka (2024) <sup>[15]</sup>, Mugambi and Kirimi (2024) <sup>[21]</sup> and Odette and Andala (2022) <sup>[26]</sup> which indicated that there was positive effect of implementation of work plan by principals on the academic performance the academic performance of students in secondary schools.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

The study findings indicated that in Kalama Sub County in Machakos County most principals were preparing and implementation of work plan by principals in public secondary schools as dictated by performance contracting requirements. The results confirmed that implementation of work plan by principals had significant positive effect on the academic performance of learners in public secondary schools. It is therefore logical to conclude that implementation of work plan by principals had effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools and need to encouraged in schools.

### 5.2. Policy and Practical Recommendation

This study recommends to the administrators (Principals) should ensure their school annual budgets and operational work plan aligns with school vision and ensure they followed properly during their implementation and involve all stakeholders during preparation and implementation of the schools' plans. The study further recommends to the Ministry of Education through its agencies like Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) should ensure they train Heads of Institutions (HOIs) together with the Board of Management (BOM) on how to prepare and implement school strategic and operational plans. TSC and MOE should ensure HOIs and BOMs are regularly trained on policy issues and on proper management of all school resources and on initiation of school programs that will lead to improved school performance.

### 5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study was limited to public secondary schools. This suffers limitation of generalization of findings to all level of education calling for need to replicate the same study in other level of education like primary schools and colleges using the same study variables and bringing in moderating variable like school environment in the study. The study did not capture trends of performance contracting over a period of time as it was a cross sectional in nature. Further studies need to be conducted using longitudinal approach for 10 years to capture such trends and also capture moderating variable like school environment which is not captured in this study.

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