Implication of School Culture on Students' Academic Performance in Public Boarding Secondary School in Kenya

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Abstract: Disparities in public boarding secondary schools are attributed to unique school's cultures adopted by each school that affects and guides behaviours of the entire school population positively or negatively. A culture helps members to understand the environment and determine how to respond to the values, beliefs, and norms of the organization manifested by artifacts, collegiality, norms, ceremonies, and rituals. The purpose of this study was to establish implication of school culture on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County. The study objectives were to; Establish implication of school cultural norms and Determine implication of ceremonies on students' academic performance. The study employed a structural-functionalist approach to Organizational Culture rooted by Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons, and Schein. Related literature was reviewed in line with the research objectives and guided by research questions. Concurrent Nested design employing Mixed Method Approach was adopted and utilized for this study. This study was conducted in Kisii Central Sub County in public boarding secondary schools. The target population was made up of 7 principals, 49 HODs, 80 class teachers, 164 student leaders, 7 BOM chairpersons and 7 PA chair persons. Saturated sampling was used to obtain a sample population constituting; 6 Principals, 42 HODs, 72 class teachers, 144 student leaders, 6 BOM chairpersons and 6 PA chair persons. Data collection instruments were Questionnaires, Interviews schedules, FGDs, Document analysis and Observation protocol. Reliability was addressed through piloting in 1 school which was randomly sampled from the target schools and test- retest was employed together with McMillan and Schumacher strategies to establish reliability and validity. Validity of instruments was further enhanced through expert vetting by two supervisors. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages was used to describe and summarize quantitative data in form of tables to show trends. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data and focused on the discussion of the themes and sub-themes as they emerged. The findings of the study may benefit researchers, principals, MOEST officers as it would be a source of knowledge on the implication of school culture on students' academic performance. The study establishes that school ceremonies should be vetted and those that work for the school's attainment or promotion of school's core function should be promoted while those that are retrogressive should be in consultation explained to the stakeholders and persuaded to embrace the decisions of avoiding them.. The study suggested further study on implication of school culture on students' academic performance in private schools or any other contexts and settings to establish if the findings of this study are robust for generalization and adoption.

Keywords: School culture, norms, ceremonies, public boarding school, artifacts, rituals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Deal (2005) identifies that school sub-cultures have been shown to have an effect on the scholastic tone of the school and subsequently on student behaviour and performance. Teachers' sub-cultures often dictate how teachers relate to one another and can undermine efforts to introduce innovations or influence expectations on the amount of time to be spent on instruction and thus influence student performance. The administrative sub-culture can often become pre-occupied with accountability, control and change, encouraging procedural conformity which can erode teacher motivation, inspirational creativity and thereby, the tone and performance of the school. Orientations of parent and community sub-cultures may also have impact through voiced expectations about school performance. These sub-cultures can have a tremendous effect on behaviour and through behaviour on performance, unless subgroups are held together by an overall cultural unity. Cultural elements influence the behaviour of administrators, teachers, parents, and students by projecting an overall image of what the school stands for. This in turn influences productivity, how well teachers teach and how much students learn.

Deal and Peterson (2009) observes that some schools the only stories of staff development depict boring, ill-defined failures. Positive experiences are attacked—they don't fit the cultural norms. In others school, teachers are socially ostracized for sharing their positive experiences at workshops or training programs. At school meetings, no one is allowed to share interesting or useful ideas learned in a workshop. Positive news about staff development opportunities goes underground for those who still value personal learning. In some schools, professional development is not valued, teachers do not believe they have anything new to learn, or they believe the only source for new ideas is trial-and-error in one's own classroom. Anyone who shares a new idea from a book, workshop, or article is laughed at. In these schools, positive views of professional learning are countercultural. Those who value learning are criticized. The positive individuals may either leave the school (reinforcing the culture) or become outcasts, seeking support with like-minded staff.

To maintain a positive school culture is not easy. Negative or entropic school cultures also do exist. Entropic organisational culture has been explained by Deal and Peterson (2009) as characterised by negativity, where conversations, interactions, planning and where the only stories recounted are failures. Mestry (2012) emphasise the view that entropy, is a sense of disorganisation or degradation, normlessness and disconnectedness, and that it epitomises an entropic school culture. Highlighting the issue of negativity, Mestry (2012) maintain that where the culture of a school is entropic, it tends to display a limited capacity for improvement, a poor sense of optimism, low teacher commitment, as well as a low level of certainty. Evidently, such a school culture is incongruent with effective schools.

Cheng (2003) performed a cross-sectional survey of Hong Kong secondary schools. In this study, Cheng compared the effectiveness of 'strong culture' schools with 'weak culture' schools. School culture was found to be related to perceived organizational effectiveness. In schools with strong cultures, school members expressed that their school was highly effective in terms of productivity, adaptability and flexibility. In order to relate this perceived effectiveness with the actual performance of schools, Cheng further analyzed the effect of cultural strength on the pass rates of final examinations. For this purpose, the pass rates for Chinese, English, and mathematics plus a composite measure based on these three rates, were taken into account. The analyses revealed a significant relationship between cultural strength and pass rates of students in English and on the composite pass percentage while, Chinese and mathematics, no significant relationship was found.

Kritek (2004) has reported a school improvement case study in which four relatively successful and four relatively unsuccessful primary schools participated. Kritek found higher ratings of school spirit, frequent student monitoring and evaluation and more frequent teacher discussions in the successful schools. The case study further revealed that teachers in all four 'more successful' schools gave staff cooperation, a high level of staff enthusiasm, uniformity of goals and agreement among staff with regard to program philosophy and policies as reasons for the success. However, Kritek's documentation of a relationship between culture and performance is rather weak, and relies to a large extent on data from a few respondents.

According to the District Education Officer of Makadara District a school culture affects the KCSE performance of a school. Most schools in the district do not have positive school culture. This according to her has led to the poor

performance of the District. The Mean of the District for 2011 and 2010 KCSE was 5.46 and 5.07 respectively. The Means are below average. The presence of non-performing private schools, non-formal schools not withstanding public schools has led to the dismal performance in the district as cited in Basemate, (2014). This study identified specific cultural elements within the sampled schools that provided information about the school's cultural identity and functioning. By creating an awareness of school culture, leaders, teachers, students and educators can better understand the meaning and influence of their day-to-day activities, decisions and how their school evolves and changes towards continuous improvement based on the established culture of the various schools. Thus, interpreting a school culture is to understand meaning attached to symbols, visions, missions, core values, artifacts, rituals, ceremonies, meetings and human contributions as they have been created by the members of the culture and their influence on students' academic achievement.

In Kisii Central Sub County, a few secondary schools have been perennially associated with good performance whereas majority are attributed to performances below the minimum requirements for entry to higher institutions such as tertiary colleges and universities whenever examination results are released. Perceptions hold that Public boarding secondary schools are the leaders in KCSE examinations though there are conformed disparities. This is characterized by blames on the ways things are done in the individual schools (school culture) which is occasionally marked by closure of schools, students' strikes/ riots or destruction of school property to demand for removal and or transfer of principals/ teachers who are perceived core in shaping and maintaining a school culture and institution's academic performance. These upheavals are indicators that there are concerns about what happens in these schools as each school is thought to have its own unique culture which explains how things are done to produce often the same status results indicative of maintained and conformed performances. Hence, the need for this study to establish unique school cultures adopted by these public boarding secondary schools that make them perform and maintain performing within the same margins as they do; though impressive results are attained their satisfaction is a point of worry.

1.1 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research was to establish implications of school culture on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County.

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

i. To establish implication of school cultural norms on students' academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County.

ii. To determine implication of school ceremonies on students' academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County.

1.3 Significance of the Study:

This study might be a pioneer educational investigation on school culture in less- resourced academic spheres in secondary schools and other higher learning institution hence pertinent source of knowledge. Teacher might acquire knowledge how to relate with the principals and others in establishing a working school culture that is acceptable and adaptable to all school stakeholders towards the provision of good student performance. Students might be able to accept, embrace a positive attitude, understand to adapt to an established school culture and participate in establishing school culture that facilitates positive students' academic performance. This study is hoped to be a revelation to parents when choosing schools to take their children as these establishment might be a measure of perceived and purported students' achievement. Substantive reason of engagement in academic affairs through resources mobilization and investment might be provided the political class. The findings are likely to stimulate potential education researchers to identify other empirical studies with a view to establish how they influence students' academic performance in addition to this study and their contribution to the welfare and performance of schools.

1.4 Conceptual Framework:
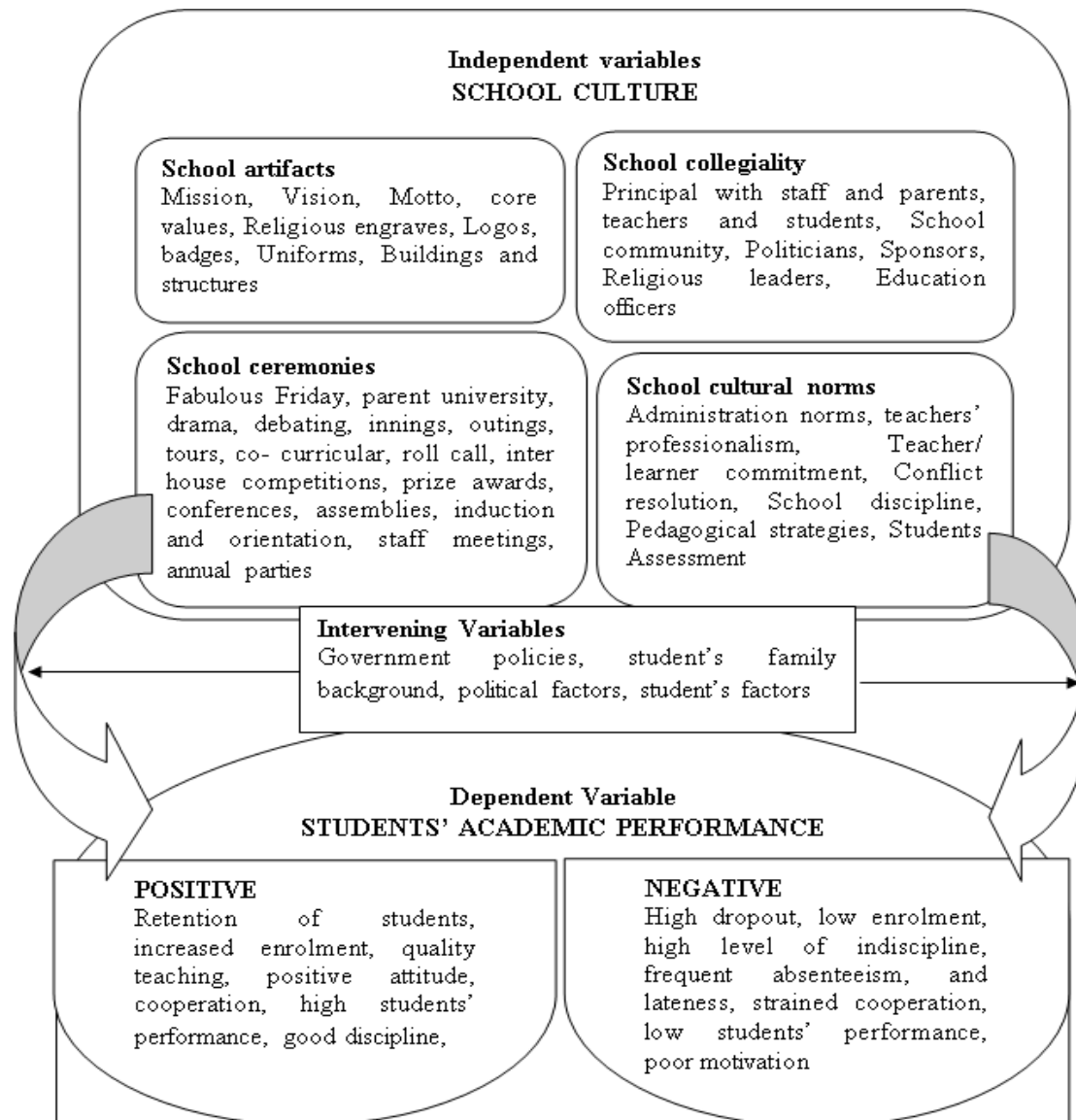
This conceptual framework tried to establish a relationship between independent variables in the study based on the school artifacts, staff collegial relationships, schools cultural norms as well as school rituals and ceremonies while identifying and illustrating their influences on school culture which eventually impacts on students' academic performance. It aims at identifying the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the study to determine the influence of each on students' performance dependent on school culture variables. School culture affects how people interact in an organization. This study established how the ways the different school stakeholders interact in the school activities and functions shape the school culture, which facilitates and directs participants towards attaining school goals and objectives; of which students' performance is core.

School culture elements are visible or tangible that one can see, hear, or feel in the organizational experience- and often the first thing to notice about an institution. These are conceptualized as norms, standards and customs elements just like the more physical attributes of organizational life. Social conventions, for example celebration and forms of address of the organization are easy to observe but they can be difficult to decipher because the path back to value that prompted their innovation is not always direct or clear. If a culture is not hospitable to learning then student achievement can suffer. Hence, the need to establish how these elements can bring about a variety of school sub cultures by different stakeholders and how they work for or against the students' performances of the different schools based on how the cultural elements are manipulate in relation to the school cultural norms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 School Norms and Students' Performance:

According to Cialdini, R. D. (2003) in "*Crafting normative messages to protect the environment*, observed that norms are cultural products, including values, customs, and traditions, which represent individuals' basic knowledge of what others, do and think that they should do. Oxford Dictionary of Sociology describes norms as informal understandings that govern individuals' behavior in society. In other words, norms are regarded to exist as collective representations of acceptable group conduct as well as individual perceptions of particular group conduct.

Gerber, L. & Macionis, J. (2009) identifies that although not considered to be formal laws within society, norms still work to promote a great deal of social control. They are statements that regulate conduct. The cultural phenomenon that is the norm is the prescriber of acceptable behavior in specific instances. Ranging in variations depending on culture, race, religion, and geographical location, it is the foundation of the terms some know acceptable as not to injure others, the golden rule, and to keep promises that have been pledged. Without them, there would be a world without consensus, common ground, or restrictions.

Brady (2008) says that contemporary secondary school in Canada and the United States are complex institutions with complex arrays of rituals, ceremonies, norms as well as traditions and founded on a variety of basic norms. These unique entities have a profound effect on the individuals and groups who inhabit them. Secondary schools in Canada and the United States have evolved into complex mini-societies each replete with their own artifacts, espoused value systems and basic norms. The extent of success secondary schools attain within those institutions is linked with the degree to which they value school and the process of formal education norms. This made the researcher to investigate the link between school cultural norms and their implications on students' academic performance in Kisii Central Sub County public boarding secondary schools.

Schools continue to be complex organizations where institutional dynamics have a profound effect on the lives of the individuals who inhabit them (Brady, 2008). Salili, Chiu and Lai (2001) in their study assume that cultural values and practices influence student motivation and subsequent achievement. Therefore, this study intended to establish the influence of cultural norms connected to motivation of students and influence on students' academic achievement in Kisii Central Sub County public boarding secondary schools.

Finnan (2006) states that the change in school covers organization change, more importantly; it covers the exchange of employees within the organization. Each individual in the school has norms shaped by their values and behaviour and that shape norms. Bozkurt (2004) states that norms direct values, beliefs, and activities of organizational culture. These norms and the interaction of values and behaviors determine the responsibilities that person will take willingly to change the school. Participation to school reform efforts requires people to take on new responsibilities willingly and this participation is only possible if these new responsibilities are compatible with the values and established norms (Finnan, 2006).

Dillon (2010) identifies that school leaders from every level in the United States are key to shaping school culture. Principals communicate core values in their everyday work as teachers reinforce values in their actions and words and parents bolster spirit when they visit schools, participate in governance, and celebrate success. Huff et al. (2011) adds that in the strongest schools, leadership comes from many sources and school leaders do several important things when sculpting culture. First, they read the culture— its history and current condition. Leaders should know the deeper meanings embedded in the school before trying to reshape it. Second, leaders uncover and articulate core values, looking for those that buttress what is best for students and that support student-centered professionalism which this study was to assess the leaders' attributes and practices and their implications on the leaders choice on school culture in public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County with the aim of addressing the institution goals and objectives.

The power of beliefs and norms, that is tacit culture stems from the fact that they affect behaviors of the people although they are not aware. Schein (2009) states that norms form the basis of the organizational culture and successful change can't be realized if these norms are not addressed. The most significant reason that is invisible behind the failure of various change attempts is the disregard for the norms and beliefs which comprise the hidden culture of the schools and the subsequent inability to understand whether this culture is harmonious with reform attempts. In order for any kind of

change to be efficient, it is imperative that the norms of the reform model be compatible with the culture of the school and, by extension, with the elements, which shape and mould the school culture in every aspect.

Purkey and Smith (2008) suggests a model drawing on the research which integrated descriptive characteristics of effective schools norms, with what is known about policy formation, innovation implementation, organizational theory, and workplace reform. Staff participation in decision-making at the school level is identified as important in the research on implementation and change and also integral to the process of creating an effective school culture. In contrast to the teacher's relative autonomy in the classroom, staffs traditionally have not had the authority and opportunity to decide school wide policy on management issues. Cultural change requires teachers to learn new ways of thinking and behaving, and to acquire new skills and attitudes. This study was to establish which and how norms on decisions are arrived at meaningfully in selected public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County. The study further established influence of the decisions in school culture and students' academic performance if they are to be held accountable for the outcomes engendered by the decisions.

Saphier and King (2005) see school norms as emerging from the confluence of four elements: the strengthening of teacher's skills; the systematic renovation of curriculum; the improvement of the organization; and the involvement of parents and citizens in responsible school-community partnerships which all underlie a school culture that either energizes or undermines them. They contend that regardless of the focus of particular change efforts in revitalizing school culture, schools need to nurture and build on the cultural norms and norms that contribute to growth, if school improvement is to occur and have any lasting effects. The study advocate supporting those cultural norms and norms where they exist and building them where they do not exist, since the degree to which these norms are strong influences the ability of school improvement activities to have any effect. Building these norms depends equally on teachers' will and commitment, since good leadership alone cannot make them strong, but without such leadership, culture may not begin to grow or endure. The culture builders of the school need to bring an ever-present awareness of these norms and norms to everything they do in daily activity because this awareness and commitment to culture building is more important than any single activity or structure in the school organization. This study established how the school leadership norms influence students' academic performance in selected public boys boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County.

Cavanagh and Delhar (2001) agree that factors such as professional development, cooperation and leadership practices contribute to a school of quality. Studies emphasise that the unspoken set of values and aims that contribute to the quality of the daily school routine and motivates all to do their best, impacts on the establishment of a positive school culture. The aim of all the interactive elements of culture is to establish a school environment which promotes teaching and learning. This study is intended to establish the influence of cultural norms in shaping the school culture while addressing the essence of visible school elements which impact on school culture towards promoting students' academic performance in public secondary boarding schools in Kisii Central Sub County.

In Nigeria today, acts of delinquency and violence among secondary school students have become a major problem, which both the school system and the society at large are contending with. These problems appear in form of destruction of school and public properties, cheating in examinations, alcoholism, drug abuse and addiction, sexual offences, stealing, truancy, rudeness, fighting, bullying, verbal abuse, and defiance of constituted authorities, just to name a few. Consequently, effective disciplinary techniques are needed to curb such negative conducts and to maintain discipline in secondary schools. However, the major issue that parents and teachers should consider in relation to discipline is how the norms and measures used can contribute to a high level of positive socialisation and character development in children's performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County.

Scully (2009) says that values, beliefs, the way things should be done" as the second level of culture. These are testable in the physical. Deal and Peterson (2011) argues that values shape behavior, decision-making and attention, because people attend to what they consider important. Robbins (2002) in his study says that the appearance of the shared value of organizational culture becomes a powerful tool to guide and shape the behavior. The aim of all forms of discipline of children must be to develop good characters in the form of social conscience. The various disciplinary measures adopted by the schools are yet to achieve their aims in academic performance. Often, secondary school students are involved in Cases of violence and delinquencies, which are reported by the media. These disciplinary measures are deficient either

because they are not appropriate or in the techniques of their application and administration. Therefore, this study involved study of norms concerned with discipline in public boarding secondary school teachers on the effectiveness of physical punishment as a disciplinary measure and students' academic performance in Kisii Central Sub County.

Leaders cannot be the sole creators of organizational culture, or the sole force driving changes in the culture. Sergiovanni (2004) asserts that strong, functional cultures are nurtured and built by the school leadership and membership. Leaders can manage the culture through both formal, explicit means, and informal, implicit means to affect school improvement outcomes. Deal and Kennedy (2003) suggest three things educational leaders can do to help the leadership build a strong functional culture, which form part of the leadership norms. First, leaders must get to know their culture's content, as it specifies the commitments by which cultural actors operate. Secondly, leaders must determine whether the culture is encouraging or undermining educational performance. Third, leaders must plan for how staff will come to grips with cultural patterns that need to be re-examined or changed. Role modelling of behaviour which is consistent with desirable norms and values within the school culture is also an important leadership function (Sergiovanni, 2004). This study focused on leaders and leadership related norms and their implications on students' academic performance in Kisii Central Sub County public boarding secondary schools.

In order to understand the culture of organization, hidden elements of the culture, that is, hidden beliefs and norms must be uncovered. This hidden beliefs and norms shape cultural elements such as behaviors and visible organizational structures and processes and therefore affect results of the change in the organization (Hall, 2007). These norms are tacit understandings that are rarely brought to the fore in school cultures (Hinde, 2004). The key to successful organizational change is the unspoken beliefs and norms of the organizational members about the organization and the world, that is, tacit culture. According to Sathe (2003) emphasizes the importance of a leader's informal communication cultural norm which carries implicit messages about the culture through storytelling and the relating of anecdotes that also support desired cultural values. Therefore the need for study of the interpersonal and social skills of the leader in Kisii Central Sub County public secondary schools as relied upon to recognize how the schools' norms influence, change, commitment and thus, improvement.

Purkey and Smith (2008) identifies that an academically effective school is distinguished by its culture: a structure, process, and climate of values and norms that channel staff and students in the direction of successful teaching and learning. The logic of the cultural model is such that it points to increasing the organizational effectiveness of a school building. The linking of culture and organization brings attention to the subjective, interpretive aspects or organizational life, where culture is maintained or changed by virtue of its continual creation or reaction through members' interactions, shared interpretations, and the significance they attach to what occurs. School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the "persona" of the school. These unwritten expectations build up over time as teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together, solve problems, deal with challenges and, at times, cope with failures. For example, every school has a set of expectations about what can be discussed at staff meetings, what constitutes good teaching techniques, how willing the staff is to change, and the importance of staff development (Deal & Peterson, 2011).

Fullan (2006) observes that the values and beliefs that bring success and give meaning to education are developed over a long time by effective schools. Their special traditions and symbols eventually create a pathway to educational effectiveness. Culture comes to serve a variety of functions in schools. The functions relate to providing normative function in shaping behaviour which can solve problems; making meaning for individuals in the organization by shaping their perceptions and interpretation of reality and enhancing a bonding or integrative function that serves as an unconscious power or social energy to move the organization into action. Together these functions have implications on behaviour and productivity, that is, how teachers teach, how much students learn, and thus, how effective the school becomes as guided by the specific norms.

To improve complex organizations such a schools, with any degree of impact according to Kilmann et al. (2004), study identified that schools require an explicit management of culture along with all the other controllable variables in the organization: strategy, structure, rewards, skills, teams, and so on. Culture change requires teachers to learn new ways of thinking and behaving, and of acquiring new skills and attitudes at the same time as it seeks to develop organizational

changes which integrate the descriptive characteristics of effective schools. Since effective school's theory identifies the school building as the delivery level, with each school having a different school culture, school improvement consists of manipulating at the school level, the network norms of characteristics that influence an individual school's culture.

Leadership styles influenced decision-making, relationships, communications, and the teaching-learning situation. There were limited opportunities for shared decision-making and open communication, consensus building, and participatory problem-solving and decision-making, with a focus on academic matters and student achievement. Children's social needs were emphasized at the expense of academic learning with no existence of discussions of teaching and learning and staffs were left alone to meet academic learning needs. This study established the cultural norms, how they arise and the implications of the norms for establishment of a school culture which encompasses the school characteristics and conceptual model for study of their implications on students' academic performance in selected boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County.

Fuller and Izu (2005) share the feeling that cultural norms within a school exert considerable power. Unlike regulatory controls placed on teachers, cultural norms are created by unobtrusive socialization of the teacher. The importance of this kind of change is that it causes teachers to converge to some commonly held norms. They come to share a faith which shapes their sense of efficacy to boost student learning. Purkey and Smith (2003) support Fuller and Izu's (2005) contention that culture brings power. They point out that cultural models of school improvement assume that changing the school's culture requires "changing people, their behaviours and attitudes as well as the school organization and norms. It assumes that consensus among the staff of a school is more powerful than overt control, without ignoring the need for leadership.

Purkey and Smith (2008) argue that school is the focus of change and culture is the target. Norms according to Deal, (2005) consists of ways of thinking, behaviour, and artifacts that symbolize the workplace. Understanding these symbols and culture of a school is a prerequisite to making the school more effective, since meaning in schools comes from this culture - from the shared norms, values and beliefs, the heroes and heroines of the workplace, the rituals and ceremonies, the stories and from the informal activities of the cultural players (Deal and Kennedy, 2004). The norms that bring success are developed over a long time by effective schools to give meaning to education in that facility (Fullan, 2005). School improvement plans and projections can be viewed as symbolic activities which reshape the culture of schools.

Hinde (2004) note that, norms are the most critical cultural components in realizing a positive or negative change at schools. Norms must not be immutable or hinder progress. Changing the school culture depends on whether or not it is possible to alter the norms which govern and mould values, ways of thinking, styles of administration, paradigms, and approaches. If not, change will remain highly unlikely. Norms are very volatile things which change from situation to situation and therefore one cannot adopt any hard rules regarding them, as they are adopted through experience of life and often by making a great many mistakes. For instance, if people cling to the assumption that change has never benefited them (and will never do so in the future), it will not be possible to facilitate change successfully, even if all other obstacles are to be removed. School culture makes change easy or prevents it (Schweikers -Marra, 2005). For the realization of change, reform and norms of the school must be in the same direction with each other (Sarason, 2006).

Deal & Peterson (2009) observes that school culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the "persona" of the school. These unwritten expectations build up over time as teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together, solve problems, deal with challenges and at times, cope with failures. For example, every school has a set of expectations about what can be discussed at staff meetings, what constitutes good teaching techniques, how willing the staff is to change, and the importance of staff development. Norms are standards, rules, guides, and expectations for actual behavior that are specific guidelines. This study was concerned with the various components of the school that work in relation to others in an interrelated manner to enhance school culture and influence students' academic performance. The study unearth the various cultural norms established in schools based on leadership, students' assessment and promotion, school routine, decision making, discipline, rules and regulations, procedures in school activities (school routine), bench marking and networking implications in students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County. This was necessary to find out the implications of the norms established based on various school aspects on students' academic performance for generalization.

2.2   School Ceremonies on Students' Performance:

Maslowski (2001) defines school ritual as the social customs around a certain event that has meaning for the members of a particular group. Rituals take place around events that are infused with meaning in the eyes of the school members. Secondary schools function according to the dictates of deeply entrenched sets of basic norms. Administrators, teachers, and students alike all harbor predispositions as to how they expect their institutions to function and often find it incomprehensible that they could function in any other fashion (Brady, 2008). This prompted the researcher to investigate whether rituals and ceremonies influence students' performance in public boarding secondary schools' performance in Kisii Central Sub County.

Godwyll (2008) says that contemporary secondary school in Canada and the United States are complex institutions with complex arrays of rituals, ceremonies as well as traditions and founded on a variety of basic norms. These unique entities have a profound effect on the individuals and groups who inhabit them. Secondary schools in Canada and the United States have evolved into complex mini-societies each replete with their own artifacts, espoused value systems and basic norms. The extent of success secondary schools attain within those institutions is linked with the degree to which they value school and the process of formal education. Godwyll (2008) concludes that schools continue to be complex organizations where institutional dynamics have a profound effect on the lives of the individuals who inhabit them.

According to Robbins (2002) culture is an integrated pattern of shared human knowledge, beliefs, behavior, attitudes, goals, and practices. From the domestic level to that of large organizations, each particular culture produces its outcomes and every culture is different. The founders of an organization clearly define its vision, mission and reason for existence at the start. In order to bring this vision to life it is essential that the organization's members come to share a common culture. This study established the ceremonies and rituals held in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County.

Pepper (2010) study to establish school culture that leads to high level students' performance in UK observed that, it is important to identify which aspects of the culture are destructive and which are constructive. Finally, leaders work to fashion a positive context, reinforcing cultural elements that are positive and modifying those that are negative and dysfunctional. Positive school cultures are never monolithic or overly conforming, but core values and shared purpose should be pervasive and deep. In line with this study the researcher established the principals' personal attributes which shapes school culture positively and which ones are negative. This study also observed which of the attributes when embraced leads to satisfactory achievement of institutional goals when adapted in various public secondary schools.

According to Meier (2005) study in USA intermediary schools, suggests that school leaders shape school culture by the way they communicate core values in what they say and do, they honor and recognize those who have worked to serve the students and the purpose of the school, they observe rituals and traditions to support the school's heart and soul, they recognize heroes and heroines and the work they accomplish, as they eloquently speak of the deeper mission of the school, they celebrate the accomplishments of the staff, the students, and the community and they preserve the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement. Evidence by Snowden and Gorton (2002) in Malaysia concerning the importance of leadership in creating good schools and the relationships that shape the culture and climate of the school are strongly influenced by the school principal involvement in celebrating individuals' success. This study was intended to establish the celebrations that are held, how they are conducted, and how they influence students' performance in Kisii Central Sub County public boarding secondary schools.

Study by Deal (2005) of how effective schools evolve to create a more favourable environment of growth and development for people who work in them reveals that meaning in these schools comes from this culture. Meaning comes from the shared values and beliefs, the heroes and heroines of the workplace, the rituals and ceremonies, the stories, and from the informal activities of the cultural players. Therefore, understanding these ways of thinking, behaviours, and other elements of the culture of a school is a prerequisite to making the school more effective. Hence, this study intended to find out which school rituals and ceremonies held in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County and how they influence students' academic performance.

Deal and Peterson (2010) say ceremonies are complex culturally sanctioned events in which organizations celebrate success, communicate values, and recognize the special contributions, of employees. They add that schools can strengthen the cultural bonds through ceremonial occasion of their own design. They give four types of as opening-day ceremonies which rebind staff to the school and its mission. These kick-off events reinforce core values remind people of the hard yet

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rewarding year ahead, renew their commitment to the growth of young people. The other type is seasonal ceremonies which take advantage of cyclical merriment outside the school. Recognition ceremonies pay tribute to the special accomplishments of individuals and groups, thereby forging pride and respect. They add that successful cultures find ways to celebrate commemorate, salute the accomplishments of others.

Peterson (2002) shares ways in which principals and staff leaders can nurture the school culture's positive aspects as to celebrate successes in staff meetings and ceremonies, tell stories of accomplishment and collaboration whenever there is an opportunity. Ouma, (2011) recommends that School Management Committee should encourage parents to get involved in the school rituals and ceremonies in order to increase reward ceremonies and rituals that involve the teachers in order to improve their motivation. This study was to establish the various rituals and ceremonies that are carried out in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County and how they influence students' performance.

According to Deal and Peterson (2011) say ceremonies are times to come together to connect to deeper values and purposes. Through ceremonies a school celebrates successes, communities its values and recognizes special contributions of staff, parents and students. Celebrations are opportunities to recognize the accomplishments of individuals groups. They demonstrate possible possibilities for success and build up a sense of pride in a school performance. Schools, according to research by Akyeampong (2007) initiate and encourage a participatory decision making process through regular staff meetings, consultation with implementation committees and heads of department and a dialogue with students. Unlike the academic teaching-staff meetings, where not only academic issues are discussed, the regular staff meetings catered for all issues, ranging from teachers' welfare, students' discipline, parents' support, teaching and learning and academic performance to sports, recreational activities and socio-cultural issues.

According to Deal and Peterson (2010) there are five types of rituals. Firstly are greetings rituals which are value-embedded ways of connecting people. Secondly are transition rituals, which shore up symbolic ties to bridge changes in people, practices, or procedures. Thirdly, is battle preparation rituals which gird people with the armor and pluck needed to face threatening challenges. Fourthly are initiation rituals, which connect newcomers to a school community. Fifthly are school improvement rituals, which signal the importance of collegiality and change. Lastly are rites of passage rituals, which furnish needed support and compassion when things end. This study established implications of presence or absence of rituals on school culture and eventually students' academic performance.

According to Deal and Peterson (2011) rituals are processes or daily routines that are infused with deep meaning. They are more than just technical actions. Rituals help transform common experience into uncommon events. When these routine events can be connected to a school mission and values they summon spirit and reinforce cultural ties. Many of the nuances of secondary school life such as the lock-step movement of students to a system of bells or buzzers, the congregating in front of lockers, homeroom, and the clustering of classrooms by subject area have become something of cultural icons deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of a significant portion of the public (Hoffman, 2002). Contemporary secondary schools have developed into complex social organizations. These institutions have a definitive impact on the way in which their community members negotiate the terms of their existence within their walls and directly affect students' engagement with the institutions they attend, as well as with the process of formal education. Robbins (2002) in his study says that the customs, traditions and general doing of things in an organization was heavily dependent on the success achieved leading to organizational culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design:

Concurrent Nested Design employing Mixed Methods Approach was adopted and utilized for this study. This method according to Creswell (2011) is easy to describe and to report. It is useful when unexpected results arise from a prior study. Mixed method approach helps generalize to a degree, qualitative data and helpful in designing and validating an instrument as it positions research in a transformative framework. Concurrent Nested design gives priority to one of the methods and guides the project, while the other is "nested." The purpose of the nested method is to address a different question than the dominant or to seek information from different levels. The research design makes it possible for the researcher other than manipulating the independent valuable to look at what has already occurred (Oso and Onen 2008). It is meant to determine what others are doing with similar problems or situations and benefit from their experiences in planning for the future as well as decision making. The design is ideally suitable since the researcher intends to look at the problem that had already occurred to establish causes, relationships or associations and implications.

3.2 Location of the Study:

This study was conducted in Kisii Sub County. Kisii Sub County has nine sub counties but this study will be conducted only in Kisii Central Sub County. The schools in the County are made up of boarding schools, Day schools, Day and Boarding public and private schools totaling to 69 secondary schools. This study targeted 7 public boarding secondary schools only. The ideal setting for research is one that is related to the researcher's interest, identified unique aspects that require reason, easily accessible and which allows the development of relationships. Oso and Onen (2008), adds that a topic of one's interest provides the researcher with an opportunity to do independent work in a problem area hence the choice for this research.

3.3 Target Population:

The target population was made up of 7 principals, 49 Heads of Departments, 80 class teachers, 164 student leaders, 7 Board of Management chairpersons and 7 Parents Association chair persons

3.4 Sample Size, Sample and Sampling techniques:

Participants were selected through saturated sampling for principals, BOMs, HODs, PAs, class teachers and student leaders. The sample population constituted 6 principals, 42 Heads of Departments, 72 class teachers, 144 student leaders, 6 Board of Management chairpersons and 6 Parents and Teachers Association chair persons obtained after 1 target school was randomly selected for piloting. This sample was ideal as one school was used for carrying out piloting to test research instruments' reliability and validity.

3.5 Research instruments:

This research employed questionnaires, interview schedules, observation protocol and documents analysis guide. The questionnaire involved closed ended items accompanied by an appropriate list of options from which respondents selected the answers that they perceive appropriate and open-ended questions which gave respondents an opportunity to provide their own unrestricted views and opinions hence the researcher was able to obtain more information on other research problems. Semi structured items in the questionnaire enabled the researcher to balance the quality and quantity of data to be collected for further explanation of the phenomenon of school culture on students' performance. Interviews gave each of the intended participants the opportunity to tell their stories in a way that conveyed meaning of their own experiences. In-depth interviews helped elicit the views, events, experiences, and observations of these participants (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). FGDs helped to produce qualitative data that provide an insight into attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the participants (Patton, 2008). Open- ended questions prompted the focus groups to generate information and opinions on the experiences of respondents. Observations enabled the researcher to observe school events and activities such as students' engagement in class and in school, the rapport between the principal and staff, staff meetings, school modes of discipline, the principal's interaction with teachers, teachers' class control and styles of teaching and parents' engagement with school. School artifacts and other visible symbols like school uniforms, responses to the bells / calls, school logo, motto, vision and mission engravings, school motivation systems, school routines / time tabling, students performances displays in classes, printed school core values and Honour rolls, trophies displays were also observed. The study obtained data from documents in school and observed that all schools had and used documents such as; Admission Register, Staff Register, Rules and Regulations, Discipline Log book, Time Table, Performance Targets, visitors' book and school log book.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments:

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), validity and reliability are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm. That can be achieved by eliminating bias and increasing the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon using triangulation. Qualitative researchers (dominant in this study) use combination of strategies from the list of following ten recommended by McMillan and Schumacher (2006)

Table 3.1 Strategies to Increase Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research Paradigm

	Strategy	Description
1	Prolonged and persistent field work	Allow interim data analysis and corroboration to ensure match between findings and participants

2	Multi- method strategies	Allows triangulation in data collection and data analysis
3	Participants' language	Verbatim accounts obtain literal statements of participants and quotations from documents
4	Low- inference descriptors	Record precise, almost literal and detailed description of people and situation
5	Multiple researchers	Agreement on the descriptive data collected by the researcher team
6	Mechanically recorded data	Use of tape recorders, photographs and video-tapes
7	Participant researcher	Use of participants recorded perceptions in diaries or anecdotal records for corroboration
8	Member checking	Check informally with participants for accuracy during data collection frequently done in participant observation studies
9	Participant review	Ask participants to review researcher's synthesis of interviews with person for accuracy of representation frequently done in interview studies
10	Negate or discrepant data	Actively search for record, analyse and report negative or discrepant data that are an exception to patterns or that modify patterns found in data

Source: McMillan and Schumacher, (2006)

3.7 Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis:

The respondents were visited on researchers' schedules or the agreed dates, and were required to participate in filling questionnaires or participate in interviews or focus group discussions which between 35- 50 minutes for each schedule. The whole process lasted one month. In every questionnaire or interview schedule there was an assurance to the respondent to the effect that the information given will be treated with high level of confidentiality and anonymity by giving assurance that the information obtained from them will only be used for the purpose of the study and none other reason**.**

Tables involving frequencies and percentages were analysed to show trends of quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data and focus on the discussion of the themes. The analysis emphasized on organization of data that was rich in descriptive data set. It further created themes. Thematic analysis is the most used form in qualitative analysis.

Table 3.2: Phases of thematic analysis

Phases	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing with data	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data noting down initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting feature of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if theme work in relation to coded extracts and the entire data set generating a thematic map of the analysis
5. Defining and naming the themes	Ongoing analysis refine the specifies of each theme ,and overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis, selection of vivid, extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Brain and Clarke, (2006)

In summary, the treatment of data passed through the following stages. After transcribing the audio-recorded data and documenting data records, reading and re-reading of all transcripts and documents carried out. This helped to identify salient aspects of data and to describe emerging themes and select quotations to illustrate themes. The key findings, which

represented the core emergent ideas from a series of narrations of a respondent, informed the cross analyses from which assertions generated. These insights, themes, and conclusions were instrumental in arriving at recommendations and suggestions based on implications of schools' culture elements' artifacts, school collegiality, school cultural norms, and school ceremonies on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSIONS

4.1 Cultural Norms and students' academic performance:

The research question responded to in line with the objective to establish implication of school cultural norms on students' academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County was; "What school areas have implications on schools' cultural norms on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County?" Six principals responded to it and 36 HODs, 42 respondents participated. The respondents identified the following presented in Table 4.1 as areas is school where culture norms have been established common in secondary;

Table 4.1: Areas of School Norms

School Norms Areas	SA	A	N	D	SD
Administration norms	12(28.57%)	16(38.09%)	8(19.05%)	4(9.52%)	2(4.76%)
Teachers' professionalism	16(38.10%)	18(42.86%)	2(4.76%)	4(9.52%)	2(4.76%)
Teacher/ learner commitment	16(38.10%)	10(23.81%)	2(4.76%)	12(28.57%)	2(4.76%)
Conflict resolution	11(26.19%)	8(19.05%)	1(2.38%)	13(30.95%)	9(21.43%)
School discipline	20(47.62%)	14(33.33%)	0(0%)	6(14.28%)	2(4.76%)
Pedagogical strategies	8(19.05%)	15(35.71%)	3(7.14%)	6(14.28%)	10(23.8%)
Students Assessment	16(38.10%)	8(19.05%)	2(4.76%)	10(23.81%)	4(9.52%)

Source: Principals and HODS Responses

Respondents to the question to identify school cultural norms areas identified that all the above norms areas present in the schools. Respondents also observed that the norms were distributed in school areas at different levels. Majority of respondents 20(47.62%) strongly agreed that school discipline is important in school culture with also 14(33.33%) agreeing. School financial resource followed by 19(45.24%) strongly agreeing and 12(28.57%) agreeing that it is a factor influencing school culture. This was followed by administration norms 18(42.86%), teachers' professionalism 16(38.10%) strongly agreeing. 18(42.86%) agreed to teacher professionalism. 19 (46.28%) agreed that conflict resolution mechanism norms are necessary with 24(57%) supporting the idea that when conflicts exist unsolved in the institution negate the efforts put on performance. The study established that the modes used in assessments of students' attainment vary from one school to the next with 24 (57%) affirming to the need for systematic and planned assessment modes. This was in consonance with Finnan (2006) that each individual school has norms shaped by their values and behaviour and what shapes them and supported by Bozkurt (2004) that norms direct values, beliefs and norms of organizational culture. These norms and the interactions of values and behaviors determine the responsibilities that a person will take willingly to change the school. These norms are what adults (Managers, teachers, workers and parents) hold for students, norms about leadership and decision-making, norms about roles and responsibilities of adults, norms about best practices and structures for educating students and norms about the value of change.

4.1.1 Schools' Administrative Norms:

School 1 Principal observed that his understanding norms and their existence in the school had contributed to the achievements of the school. The principal observed that there are various norm areas observed in the school. The principal observed that though each department was tasked in establish and monitoring observance of the norms all was linked and connected to the overall attainment of students' performance. Schein, (2006), harbors these sentiments that there are two distinct ways to establish norms. The first is by observing and writing down the norms that already are in use, example how the school established the set of norms it has. The school board meets for two days twice a year, each time with a lengthy agenda of material addressed. The norms grow out of a board discussion about how it operated and how it wanted

to operate. School 1 principal was tasked to observe the board's implicit norms during one meeting and draft a set of norms. "*Essentially, I wrote down what I saw in operation,''* school 1 principal said. "My first draft was edited and refined by staff and other board members. That set of initial norms has been largely unchanged over the years. The second way is to have HODs and department members suggest ideal behaviors for the respective department, eventually refining those suggested behaviors into a set of norms. Each group took caution that norms must fit the department/ group and school. Not every group would feel comfortable with the same set of rules, which is why each group must create its own rules, she said.

A young and energetic principal, who at the time of the study had more than ten years of teaching experience, led school 1. He had been the Principal for the past six years. Prior to his appointment to be the principal of the school, he headed a county public secondary school. He graduated in late 1990s with a bachelor's degree in education from a local university. While heading school 1, he completed part-time studies to obtain master's Degree of Education administration in 2005. *"I am proud to be serving as principal of this school,"* said the school 1 principal.

Teachers and students of school 1 remarked, "*Our principal is a person of dialogue, who also showed a lot of sympathy and concern for students and staff alike."* A teacher expressed this concerning the principal and said, "*He will consult, make sure that he put it before the staff and he will wait and then, I mean to receive suggestions from each and every one."* One student also remarked, *"I have seen the principal calling the students together and trying to explain in fact, what they gain, at the end of the day if they study hard"* School 1 principal mentioned that he had helped teachers who had welfare problems. Teachers confirmed this also. One school 1 teacher said, *"He tries to find out our problem… he tries to find out the problem and to make sure that it is solved."*

In identifying administrative norms in School 1, the principal observed that the school has developed a culture of developing leaders. For one to be principal of school 1, first consideration was based on the teachers who have served in the school for a period not less than five years. Whenever there was need for a Principal or Deputy or HODs- staff and management consensus was of necessity that avoided wrangles related to transition. Priority was given also to Alumni of the school during recruitment and placement as this was perceived to create consistence of school culture above the universal TSC regulations of recruitments. "*School principals should embrace dialogue; delegate and interactive spirit remarked*," one teacher during HOD meeting. "*A principal has to have a listening eye,"* observed another.

School 4 principal had taught in a nearby day secondary for a number of years before he was promoted to be the principal of that school for three years before coming to school as a principal. He completed a bachelor degree of a local university. Prior to his appointment to the position of principal, he had no experience as Head of a school. Both teachers and students portrayed the principal as a man who developed good human relationships with both students and teachers. School 4 during this study observed that the outstanding norm for consideration as a principal one had to subscribe to the Catholic Church faith to head the school and deviation received a lot of resistance from other stakeholders.

At the time of the research school 2 Principal was qualified as a graduate from a local public university where she obtained her bachelor degree in education. The principal taught in the school as a trained teacher before being promote to be deputy principal and then to be the current principal in 2007. She later studied part-time at a public university and acquired a master degree in Education administration. She originated from one of the clans in the regions of Kisii with an inclination to Roman Catholic Church that has remained the sponsor for a long time that favourably worked positive for her. The principal acknowledged that her experience as principal was limited, as she had only served in the position for barely five years. She indicated that she continued to learn from the advice of her teachers; parents, students and the community elders.

School 2 as well as School 4 though was elevated to National status the principal's appointment was in consideration of observation of the Catholic Church faith. This was a perceived influence of the stakeholders and the entire school community. A team player is considered for headship. One has to be ready to work with the school stakeholders cohesively, mindful of staff welfare with a strong attachment to students' affairs. High above religious and professional experience and development, one hoped to embrace instructional leadership style.

Teachers also saw their Principal as a person who always tried to bring the teachers together, to help resolve their differences and to encourage team spirit among them. One teacher school 5 said:

They (the teachers) were not just united. But when the Head came, he was able to make sure that he brought all of us together, so that we purported to work as a team" These personal and professional attributes however, were not enough to help the school to improve teaching and learning in schools. Some of the teachers and parents believed that the Principal was not doing enough to help improve teaching and learning and to raise the falling standards (School 5 HOD FGD)

Another teacher added that, "Also if maybe, the Head too can do better so that he could also get more materials, like the text books through PA help."

A teacher was blunt when he said:

The principal is not performing to his best ... even if what he is doing is not big (enough), people would see the little that he is doing and say, this person is trying to do this but because of lack of this and that he is not able to do much (School 5 HODs FGD)

Furthermore, a teacher explained that;

The Principal ensured that the teachers were always present in the School to teach and coach them so that they performed well in their examinations and not just present to be marked present as is the case in other school. The principal rebuked those who absented themselves without formal permission and gave warnings to those chronic (School 6 HODs FGD)

It was observed by the principal that;

Teachers sometimes, absented themselves from school with or without permission in order to pursue other economic activities that might earn extra income to supplement their 'inadequate' wages given by the TSC go through the month carrying a donkey's burden (School 6 Principal)

Planning with teachers and supervision had become important tasks that Principals regularly performed as a means of achieving their vision for the school. These tasks helped the teachers evaluate teaching and learning strategies in order to improve the performance of students. School 1 teacher explained that;

The commitment and perseverance of the principal, his sense of sympathy for students and teachers, dialogue and consultation with teachers, students and parents had been attested by his collaborators. However, none of the participants demonstrated how these attributes actually helped the School in engaging them to promote effective teaching and learning and to improve students' achievement (School 1 HODs FGD)

In School 1 principal instructional leadership was demonstrated through supervision and coordination of teachers' work, the principal's personal coaching of teachers, as well as by his development and sustenance of a series of teaching and learning enhancing strategies. School 2 teacher highlighted this when he said that;

Assuring the punctuality and presence of both teachers and principals in school on a daily basis can be very challenging. Teachers sometimes sacrificed their presence at school by going elsewhere to do other jobs such as gardening and petty trading to supplement their salaries (School 2 HODs FGD)

There was not a single day when the Researcher visited the school, in the course of the research data collection, when the School 1Principal was absent. The School visited in the mornings and in the afternoons. While some of visits were planned, others were unannounced. Yet, each time the Researcher entered the School he found the Principal either in a classroom talking to students or having a conversation with the teacher. Sometimes, the Principal was found in his office, reading lesson notes of teachers, which he corrected with annotations written in red or green. This agrees to Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) report that successful leaders knows how to balance meeting human aspirations of the personnel and achieving set strategic goals of the institution.

Teachers of School 1 attested to this active involvement in lesson preparation as captured in the following statement by a teacher who said;

The principal normally helps us in lesson preparation, especially in selecting some key books that are useful in understanding the topic. He always gives assistance even in the classroom and teaches when a teacher is absent and whenever he's capable of doing so" (School 1 HODS FGD)

4.1.2 Teacher professionalism:

This study established that norms are very volatile things which change from situation to situation and therefore one group or institution cannot adopt any hard rules regarding them, as they are adopted through experience of life and often by making a great many mistakes. The study further identifies the need to evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals; include teamwork as an important value while ensuring the school is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance. Members' ability in contributing to norm establishment makes sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person. Norms make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals and create a culture where people bring problems to the group, especially staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities

The study further unearth that in some schools, professional development is not valued, and teachers do not believe they have anything new to learn, or they believe the only source for new ideas is trial-and-error in one's own classroom. Anyone who shares a new idea from a book, workshop, or article is laughed at. These schools display performance conformity. In other schools involved in this study, the preparation of lesson notes by teachers was a standard practice. The Principals ensured that all teachers complied. The principals' individually collected and corrected each teacher's schemes of work and lesson notes at specified times. Sometimes they suggested some books and resources that they believed would enhance the teacher's understanding of a topic and improve the lesson notes. All the teachers who participated in the focus group discussions in school 1 were unanimous in their appreciation of this instructional help offered by the Principals, as demonstrated by their positive comments on how their input facilitated their teaching. Teachers took seriously the preparation of their lesson notes, which some viewed as an occasion to update their knowledge in the topics they were teaching. At the beginning of each term every teacher received a number of sizeable note books that were to be used for writing lesson notes. Teacher noted that "*The Principals sometimes discreetly admonished teachers who failed to submit their lesson notes on time or make the corrections requested in earlier ones*"

In addition to his managerial and supervisory leadership functions, School 1 principal also sometimes taught students, mainly when a teacher was absent and the lesson to be taught was one that he was familiar with. Thus, he had shared the experience of teacher frustration in managing students. This had made it easier for him to discuss these issues with teachers and students unlike other principals who referred such similar conditions to departmental heads who at times are overwhelmed by other duties and may not be in a position to keep their colleagues on course.

School 1 teachers interviewed stated that;

> *Our Principal is ready to visit our class and teach a particular subject topic or concept in his area of expertise whenever we invited him to do so. This flexibility of the Principal to help teach the students whenever the need arose is a motivation for us to accept additional tasks that the Principal sometimes requested of us. Moreover, in the absence of adequate teaching and learning materials, our principal put at the disposal of teachers some of his personal teaching resources like text books, personal computer and past lesson notes on subjects that he had taught as a classroom teacher. Thus, the principal cleverly combined, from time to time, classroom teaching with her normal leadership role* (School 1 HODS FGD)

A key aspect of school 2 Principal instructional support was the fact that both observed classroom teaching and sometimes helped to teach a class when a teacher was absent. One teacher had this to say during a HOD FGD Meeting;

> *The principal randomly checked students' assignments and work books when he made her rounds in the classrooms. When she notices that a teacher is absent or late for a lesson, she would enter that classroom and discuss with the students what they have been taught the previous day* (School 2 HOD FGD)

A student also declared; "Some teachers, would voluntarily invite the Principal to their class to help explain and teach a particular concept or a topic for which she has expertise." (Students Leaders) School 2 Principal, in the course of an interview confirmed this and identified:

> *I visit the teachers in their classrooms, to encourage them and also to see how they are doing their work with the students. Sometimes, some of my teachers seek help in their teaching by coming to me or going to their colleagues* (School 2 Principal*)*

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According to one school 2 teacher;

> *The principal ensures that the academic performance of the students is always a target; it's always a point that is discussed at all meetings with the teachers. So, for that matter the teachers are bound, you know, to put up their best* (School 2 HODs FGD)

Another useful practice that helped the teachers to enrich their content knowledge and vary their teaching methods to suit their students and the subject content was the participation of teachers in school and outside professional development workshops and seminars. These were organised by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Religious organizations, NGOs, and the School sponsors. Although they were not conducted on a regular basis, teachers for the wealth of knowledge they provided, and the refreshments that accompanied them appreciated these workshops.

It is clear from the foregoing that the Principals give regular instructional guidance to their teachers through academic staff meetings, correction of teachers' lesson notes and instructional advice. The provision of appropriate reference books and resources to teachers, random check of students' assignments, conducting of professional development programs on syllabus and teaching, and ensuring that teachers are not regularly absent from school are other means of enforcing their instructional leadership style.

According to those interviewed, frequent training of teachers facilitated refreshment of pedagogical aspects among the teachers. The school 1 principal facilitates participation in workshops and seminars which are relevant to school objectives. This the principal attains by sending relevant teachers to attend. After attendance the participant will be given forum to execute the same to the rest of the department members. Unlike a school where teachers complained that even the seminars or workshops to be attended were perceived as personal and received least support from school administration. One teacher stated that;

> *I was given one thousand shillings to attend a three day workshop in Kisumu, this was a discouragement and I went for personal commitments instead as I knew there has never been follow up in such past meetings* (School 6 HOD FGD)

4.1.3 Teachers and Students Commitment:

Show of concern and hard work, commitment and perseverance were values, which characterised students, teachers, and principal. The Principals, for example, taught sometimes in addition to his tasks as the Head of the School. In an interview, school 5 principal declared that:

> *I'm the head teacher, at the same time a subject teacher. Despite the challenges, I find joy in doing my work as head and teacher, especially as my teachers cooperate well. They are hard working and show concern for the students. The hard work and dedication of the teachers and the students is very important* (School 5 Principal)

The majority of the teachers interviewed also mentioned the significance of dedication or commitment and perseverance in their work as teachers. In spite of some challenges to their work as teachers they still enjoyed teaching. One teacher expressed this clearly when he said:

> *I enjoy teaching. It's just that, there are a few complications or problems that we do encounter sometimes, like lack of text books for students, lack of science equipment for science lessons... otherwise it is fine, that is good, I like my work (*School 3 HOD FGD)

Many teachers, students, parents, and community leaders in talking about school 1 principal acknowledged that;

> *He was an effective leader because of his positive personality and conduct. His friendliness, love for school, warm human interpersonal skills and accessibility to students, teachers and parents was applauded by all* (School 1 HOD FGD)

One school 1teachers during a FGD Meeting clearly remarked that:

> *As an old boy in the school and now as a teacher I had seen a lot of changes. When I was a student I only occasionally saw the staff seated together with the head and discussing issues. This time I see the staff and the head always together and talking. You cannot actually make a difference between the teachers and the principal* (School 1 HOD FGD)

Teachers and students also acknowledged the commitment and perseverance of School stakeholder. Some parents also testified that the Head was committed and showed interest in helping the students who left school due to fees related issues to return. A teacher explained;

> *Actually the Head is doing his best with regards to trying to control students, to learn the problems of the teachers and to help the school, even to the extent of organising a committee to tell him, to advise him of how they would try to bring the children back to school course whenever they tend to fall out. This has been instrumental in redirecting school activities and energies towards the performance that now everybody talks about proudly* (School 2 HOD FGD)

Another teacher recounted how he borrowed a computer keyboard, a mouse and a printer from friends in town in order to use them to teach computer hardware in an ICT lesson. According to the teachers, some of them who taught ICT, often drew the CPU, the monitor and other computer accessories on the blackboard and tried to explain these as best as they could while following the instructions given in ICT textbooks provided by the government. These teachers remarked that;

> *It was their personal commitment and perseverance to sustaining school's success that motivated them to innovate and seek practical solutions to the mounting challenging issues of ICT lessons* (School 3 HOD FGD)

Not all students in school were unmotivated and undisciplined. Some were serious about their studies and took personal initiatives to be abreast with the requirements of the KCSE syllabus, irrespective of the inability of their teachers to complete the syllabus prior to the KCSE. Such responsible students borrowed note books from past senior students who had passed the KCSE. Others also borrowed text books from students in nearby schools that were performing well. Students also looked for recommended textbooks for the KCSE and checked how much their teachers had taught them and how much of the syllabus was still left to be covered.

Research by Loeb, Kalogrides and Horng (2010) shows that stable staffing at a school has a positive impact on a school's performance. Unfortunately, low performing schools serving disadvantaged students have the least stable teaching staff. Some teachers demonstrated their dedication and perseverance in teaching by bringing to accePAble standard students who were promoted to the next class without having attained the requisite standard due to age or other factors. All the teachers who took part in the research expressed a unanimous opinion of the difficulty and sacrifice involved while teaching such students to steadily catch up with their colleagues.

> *It has now become the teacher's burden to work very hard so that the student who was promoted without attaining the required standard performs like the others... It brings more work to that teacher and a very difficult task but often we handle that as part of our work* (School HOD FGD)

Students also commented on dedication to their studies and their perseverance to regularly attend school and participate in all the extra-tutorials, class tests and practice examinations, while still keeping up with their usually demanding routine chores. Students who were interviewed while observing in school 3 hinted that;

> *We commit ourselves to study hard despite the sacrifices we had to make because we also wanted to pass the KCSE and do further studies and to become professionals one day. We students always complain about the frequency of extra-tutorials, supervised class tests, quizzes and practice examinations in the School. They are too many. At times what we have not been taught. But we remember others passed by doing them. Why not we? We should do more* (School 3 Student leader)

However, they also accepted that these were meant to help them pass their final examinations, since the normal school contact hours and lessons were insufficient for the teachers to teach them all that the examination syllabus required. According to the interviewed students, the Principal and their teachers often spoke to them about the importance of discipline, dedication, commitment, and perseverance in their efforts to pass their KCSE with flying colours.

Similarly, School 2 PA chairperson explained the desire of parents and guardians to see their children learn seriously and gain admission into higher institution. So those who observed their children's low performance at school, refused to allow the child to be promoted to the next class even though the School wanted to. He said: *"A student who is not performing well and was supposed to even go to the next class has to made to sit back to repeat and learn more while others move on or are in recess"*

Final year student remarked that;

> *I acknowledge the fact that we belonged to a school whose students regularly recorded the best KCSE grades in Kisii County. So, this is a motivation for us to persevere and work harder in order to perform better than our predecessors and to maintain the good achievement record of our School. In order to keep the standard, and thus make our teachers and the School proud we cooperated with our teachers by studying hard. We believed that the good results are possible because of discipline, dedication and perseverance in our part as students* (School 1 Students leader)

Commitment and perseverance in school was demonstrated through conscious exemplary dedication, sacrifice and hard work of the Principal and teachers as well as through the individual efforts of students who studied hard in and outside normal school contact hours and cooperated with their teachers towards passing KCSE with good grades and thus, maintain the school as a top-achieving school. In fact, some teachers had invariably admitted their part in the numerous problems such as teacher absenteeism that were affecting academic work in the School. For example, in a school 4 a casual chat with a teacher who lived in a distant neighbouring town of Kisii, this teacher declared: *"I am not even living here in the school or near; I live about 30 kilometres from here. So, I cannot always be in school but each time I'm in school, I teach the students well"*. Another teacher who explained that there were other factors, which prevented teachers from being regular in school, corroborated this.

In fact, during the research, the Researcher personally experienced this irregular school attendance by teachers in school 4. A focus group meeting planned in accordance with participants' availability and convenience was postponed as a result. It was displeasure and disappointment by the Researcher for the meeting to have been postponed to take place more than ones. It seemed that each time one teacher was present for the meeting, another invariably was absent with plausible excuses and this led to the delay in collecting data from HODs contrary to the prior anticipated membership of Focus Group Discussions. However, the Researcher noticed that the teachers of school 3 were invariably aware of their part in improving the learning environment of the School.

According to School 5 PA Chair person during interview identified that;

> *Low performing schools were characterized by lack of teacher professionalism and teacher support services. Teacher absenteeism, irregular and less rigorous lesson preparation by teachers, absence of regular teacher supervision, scarce or irregular staff meetings, and inadequate supervision of students' learning were evident. There was also a lack of teacher support systems and teacher motivation programs, and lack of unity and team spirit among teachers* (School 5 PA Chair person)

Furthermore, some students of school 1 explained that;

> *The Principal ensured that our teachers were always present in the School to teach and coach students so that we performed well in our examinations. The principal rebukes those who absented themselves without formal permission* (School 1 Student leaders)

It was noted that in public schools in Kisii, teachers sometimes, absented themselves from school with or without permission in order to pursue other economic activities that might earn extra income to supplement their perceived inadequate wages. Planning with teachers and supervision had become important tasks that Principals regularly performed as a means of achieving a vision for the school. These tasks helped the teachers evaluate teaching and learning strategies in order to improve the performance of students.

School 1 principal explained that;

> *I have plans for this year though in the year 2014, their performance somehow was not very, very good this led to the institution not ranked but many of the students whose results were not cancelled and were released made it to various universities. So this year we are anticipating the best results ever which will be the basis of the school targets this year and the future I have to meet the whole staff to talk to them, and ask for their plans for helping the children to pass this year with higher grades despite the challenges. How this should be done, what each one has to do, what they should do is what we shall discuss in their next staff meeting* (School 1 Principal)

A Mathematics HOD teacher who was responsible for health issues in one School explained that;

> *My colleagues and I, in addition to educating the students on sanitation, also checked the personal hygiene of each student on a regular basis through general inspection of students' clothing and hair. This was to promote healthy and fit students who would study well* (School 1 HOD FGD)

At times, students also refused to cooperate with their teachers towards their own learning. School 6 deplored the bad habit of students who regularly refused to do class assignments which he had emphasised as crucial to students' learning. He explained that;

> *There is need to use corporal punishment as a last resort to pressurize students to do their class assignments. They observed that some teachers always experience problems where students refuse to do homework or assignments and have to use force before they will do anything* (School 6 Principal)

Students' self-help efforts to study and pass the KCSE were also attested by parents of a school whose children performed well at the KCSE. They said that;

> *Our success was the result of our ability to organise our own private study groups, we assigned ourselves areas to present to our colleagues, our best subject and topic, which were sometimes joined by our teachers who willingly explained concepts that us, students, did not fully understand (*School 4 Student Leader)

Every day attendance of school is essential norm established in all the schools to enhance child's academic growth and development. Institutions have an established norm in addressing absence or lateness. In some of the schools, the parent has to accompany late or those who are absent especially during reporting days. In other a parent or guardian can inform administration by calling a given number or send a note on the following day so that one can be excuse the absence or lateness. This mode was meant to monitor the learners' behavior and habits to keep them in school and avoid losing learning time.

4.1.4 Conflicts Resolution:

Simply writing norms does not guarantee that the group will remember and respect them. Groups need to remind continually themselves about the norms they have identified. At a minimum, the norms should be posted in the group's meeting room, remarked School 2 principal "*Post them and celebrate them,*'' she said. Negative norms and values, hostile relations, and pessimistic stories deplete the culture. School 1 principal made personal efforts to establish good relations and mutual trust with all teachers. This he identified that;

> *Teachers would feel at ease to share their hurts and opinions in confidence whenever one had to help resolve conflicts. The teachers belonged to different ethnic groups with varying traditions and cultural affinities and these differences sometimes resulted in misinterpretations and misunderstandings among themselves* (School 1 principal)

In all circumstances of arbitration, school 1 principal ensured that there was fairness and mutual respect for the dignity and honour of one another. He expressed the desire to respect the dignity of both parties so that no one would leave arbitration feeling humiliated. Employing a local traditional method of conflict resolution and peace-building, the Principal would ask the offending party to pay for some drink and all who had participated in the arbitration, including the offender's victim, would be invited to share that drink to renew the tainted friendly bonds. *"The drink served as the 'means' to the 'end' of halting all misunderstandings and disagreements."* His skills in using local traditional norms and practices in resolving misunderstandings were developed through his friendship and partnership with the leaders and people of the local community.

In School 2 the principal developed a collegial working relationship with her teachers and students through participatory decision making processes that focused on regular teaching-staff meetings, consultation with implementation committees and Heads of Departments and regular dialogue with students. School 2 principal devised personal means of rapidly identifying and resolving misunderstandings and conflicts among her staff as a way of establishing a friendly school atmosphere, as an asset for effective teaching and learning; In line with this she said that;

> *I make enormous efforts to resolve any squabble among teachers as soon as practical. I would try to settle such misunderstandings within the same week that I might have learnt of them. I did this by observing teachers as I interacted with them on a daily basis in the staff common room, during school assembly and across the school. So,*

once I notice that some teachers were no longer enthusiastically exchanging greetings and pleasantries, which were local traditional ways of salutations, I took the initiative to approach one of those teachers and sought candid confidential information from the teacher about what might be amiss. I did likewise with the other teacher. Even though the teachers were free not to disclose what was happening, often they openly explained the issues and proposed solutions. In this way, I intervened regularly to resolve misunderstandings before they developed into conflicts (School 2 Principal)

School 1 Principal had this to say on settlement of disputes;

I make myself a scapegoat, giving the impression that the remote cause of the teachers' misunderstandings might have been my mistake or inability to provide a particular piece of information at the appropriate time and so on. Other times, I made an appeal to the teachers' love for the students and encouraged them to accept mutual arbitration and settlement of the quarrel. I made clear that continuous bickering between two teachers would have adverse effects on their fellow teachers and students. In extreme cases I would make an appeal to the PA chairperson to intervene and help reconcile their differences (School 1 Principal)

Principal 1's readiness to teach when necessary and making available to teachers his personal teaching resources as well as his enthusiasm for speedy arbitration of conflicts among staff were other essential aspects of his collegial leadership. School 1 principal also settles misunderstandings between teachers and sometimes between parents and some teachers so, the parents like him. As one parent put it *"The Principal is very responsible and shows concern for all, he meets and he speaks with stakeholders freely and advises students to study hard and pass exams"*. This is confirmed by a student *"Sometimes he asks opinions"* .The Principal himself reiterated this when he said that;

Any time I see that there's going to be a problem I quickly find a way of solving it. Sometimes I have to behave as if I was the cause, this made the two parties to feel that I caused it and I will take the blame and they are free (School 1 Principal)

Positive personal attributes, drive and exemplary conduct are key characteristics of the personality of high performing principal. Thus, the Principal encouraged the teachers to exchange among themselves the challenges they face with their lessons. Teachers did this quite naturally during their usual social interactions in the staff room and classrooms. This has been attested by a number of teachers who stated that they volunteered to help resolve some of the concerns of their colleagues regarding the teaching of a particular lesson topic or student disciplinary issues. School members accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal. Once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken over an issue, all members are to honor that decision and see what the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen. Members work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve problem-solving approach. Looking for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then, name it when working with communities from a different culture, one has to be clear that some learning to do the communities' ways of doing. Never assume that you or your school or department knows what is best for the school community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community.

This study further established that as much as it is normal for conflicts to arise, it was mandatory to the concern to seek for ways of addressing the amicably and quickly. It was revealed that performing schools have established hierarchical address of conflicts. No skipping of authority level is expected unless guaranteed by extreme circumstances. There is delegation and the principal only stamps or amends on resolutions at a personal capacity. Confidentiality was taken virtuously in all resolutions within those involved. Individuals who persistently remained in conflict, were helped to reconstruct their relationship before consideration to change designation, work station or even need for transfer for school harmony.

4.1.5 School Discipline:

In school 1 establishing school norms related to discipline, each school member was asked to illustrate norms during norm development and the others tried to identify the norms based on those illustrations. Those illustrations were then taped to the meeting room's walls as visual reminders to be vigilant about the norms. Another time, members were asked to write down as many norms as they could recall from memory. Having all group members take responsibility for enforcing the norm is key remarked a school 1 HOD meeting. Enforcing the norms should not be just the job of the group's leader. Each member should be encouraged to identify the group's areas of strength as well as its areas of weakness, but not to

single out violator. Indicate to the group that effective groups generally have a set of norms that governs individual behavior, facilitates the work of the group, and enables the group to accomplish its task.

"*In education there can be no success without discipline.*" remarked school 1 principal. School 1 has a disciplinary board chaired by the second deputy principal and which comprises one senior teacher and house masters. This team consisting of committed teachers act as a link between the school and parents on discipline issues. The school also has guidance and counseling department which is a key department for alternative discipline and preferred department in fostering the school's goals and mandate as illustrated in the school main motto; '*strive for excellence*' which all school members work towards embracing and promoting it while treasuring their own individual visions. Ultimately, all members of the group should have a voice in deciding whether the group needs to spell out norms and then in working to identify what they should be.

School 2 principal concurred with one-class teachers and identified that;

> *The standard of discipline in the School was a major contributor to performance of students which we discuss within our staff and the students and together agree on how to promote it and raise the standard of discipline in our School. We believe that good discipline among teachers and students like a clean school environment was essential for improving teaching and learning* (School 2 Principal)

The school 4 principal said,

> *I defined my mission and that of the School as "Improving the improved" standard of academic work in the school, achieving better KCSE results and improving upon sports and sanitation condition, in the school in order to promote good health among students* (School 4 Principal)

Although, law bans corporal punishment, the practical banning of corporal punishment in classrooms, with the introduction of alternatives, has not been easy for some teachers who still indulge in it. According to School 1 principal corporal punishment in schools affects children's access to high quality education and a safe and supportive learning atmosphere. School 4 Principal feels, despite the many problems associated with the paddling of students, corporal punishment is a 'legal form' of fast school discipline in many secondary schools.

School 2 principal believes that schools and teachers should not be solely responsible for discipline because home discipline also plays a role. Furthermore, certain parents feel that they themselves received corporal punishment and therefore schools should continue with this style of discipline. In School 6 teachers are concerned about behavior both in and out of the classroom and feel that corporal punishment is able to address the issue of bad behavior.

One teacher observed that Parents and community leaders cooperate to maintain student discipline. In addition to recruiting resources for the School, the School PA also assisted the Principal in instilling discipline in the school. The PA Chairperson affirmed to this as he remarked that:

> *I and other members of the executive board regularly intervened in settling misunderstandings between a parent and a teacher regarding a student or students. Sometimes, the PA executive board members supported the Principal by insisting on the need to carry out a punishment or a disciplinary measure prescribed for a recalcitrant student in spite of pleas from the student's parents* (School 5 PA Chairperson)

In a society such as Kisii where the maintenance of good human relations with parents and society is an essential investment for effective partnership, neither the Principal nor the teachers would like to hurt the feelings of parents and the community, even if they were carrying out their legitimate responsibilities as school authorities. Consequently, the Principal alone or a teacher could not impose a disciplinary measure on a student if there was a prior opposition from the student's parents. The PA executive board played a key role therefore in sustaining school discipline through their support for disciplinary measures taken by the School against undisciplined and truant students.

To sustain the cooperation between the School and the parents and the community, School 1 principal had advised his teachers not to take any exceptional decisions in respect of students without first informing him, and through him, the parents. The teachers and the Principal believed that negotiating the settlement of student disciplinary issues with parents had helped some parents better appreciate the working of the School and brought them closer to the School (School 1 principal). Finally, the Principal acknowledged the significance of the continuous education of parents and the community

on the School's expectations, vision and mission. This according to him has helped the School in gaining a high level of cooperation from parents and the community.

According to School 2 PA Chairperson, discipline and punctuality reigned supreme in high performing schools. Discipline is a conscious self-control and self-motivation to keep to school order and regulations, to be punctual for school and school activities, to obey school authorities, to conscientiously carry out one's assignment and duty. It also included showing respect to school staff and students, keeping the school environment clean and orderly and demonstrating willingness to accept admonitions in case of misconduct. Further, discipline was understood as "*The readiness to cooperate with others in all instances for the good of the school''* (School 2 PA Chair person).

Discipline and punctuality were therefore seen as key elements of success in schools. School 4 principal stated this quite clearly:

> *The students are disciplined; they cooperate well with the teachers. They take what the teachers tell them seriously. This is shown in the classrooms. They do not make noise when their teachers are absent. This discipline is good for academic work. Most of them are always on time for lessons even for the extra-tutorials* (School 4 Principal)

Teachers commended school 3 principal for her efforts to keep the School running better than her predecessor. They saw her as a disciplined and hardworking leader who had love and interest for students and for the school. This was in contrast to the former Principal whom some teachers described as lacking interest for the School. A teacher explained that;

> *The principal is very… much disciplined unlike the former principal outside, because she was not serious. She doesn't come to school to know whether the students are in the school or outside... she doesn't sit with the masters (teachers), to talk about how to strengthen teaching and learning activities… It will have collapsed. The school will have collapsed if the TSC has not taken the initiative to act Secondly, the school wanted to enforce discipline among teachers and students. The principal emphasised that she would take steps to advise teachers to reduce lateness to school, and prolonged absenteeism without permission. Thirdly, she would lobby the TSC to recruit more competent trained teachers to teach the core subjects of Mathematics, Biology, and physics (*School 3 HOD FGD*)*

This finding was in agreement to school 4 HODs that;

> *Student indiscipline and absence of a challenging academic and healthy environment over absenteeism, failure to do class assignments, disrespect for authority and truancy were evident. There was also a lack of extra-tutorials, debates and quizzes as well as poor sanitation and lack of regular physical education and sports participation by the students* (School 4 HODS FGD).

Most of the class teachers also spoke highly of the school culture role played by discipline and punctuality in the academic performance of the school. According to them, they have observed that the real factor of the high achievement of students of schools was the fact that there "*Was a kind of discipline that the children themselves had imposed on themselves to be punctual and learn.*" The Principal's own punctuality in arriving at school every day, according to teachers and students interviewed served as a model and motivation for them also to be punctual at school and at school activities and gatherings.

School 1 principal was not only regularly punctual and present at school; but he also ensured that the teachers were always present. Students alluded to this when they said that;

> *Our Principal sometimes would visit the classrooms to find out from class prefects the whereabouts of a teacher who might have reported to school earlier on, yet was not present in class during the Principal's rounds (*School 1 Student Leader*)*

According to one teacher during a school 1 HOD FGD;

> *We were always required to sign the book of attendance at the end of a lesson. The class prefect kept the record and presented it to the Principal fortnightly. This seemed to have obligated teachers to avoid missing classes and also to uphold their own dignity and respect vis-à-vis the students* (School 1 HODs FGD)

In one School punctuality seemed to be sacrosanct. Discipline and punctuality permeated every aspect of life as one of the teachers testified. *"I don't miss my lessons and that is just the very task I have given to myself and it is my idea to do that and I am always in school"* (School 2 Class Teachers). In most schools, teachers helped their Principal in instilling discipline in students not only by coming to school on time and regularly, but also by guiding, advising, and disciplining students when they misbehaved. This was clearly explained by a student who said:

> *The teachers do a lot of things to ensure discipline and you know with discipline one can do a lot of things, even if you are not capable of doing them. So, because of the discipline in the School, the students normally cooperate with our teachers and study well and that brings the good results (*School 2 Student leader)

School 2 principal believed that good sanitation, clean environment and sports were essential in keeping students healthy and fit for serious learning. She explained that through her efforts, the PA had provides funding for an additional facilities. This school 2 principal, aided by some of her teachers, made concerted efforts to resolve if not all, some of the academic and disciplinary hurdles the school was facing when she assumed office as Principal. This according to School 2 principal believed that the good reputation of a school would be only restored through continuous improvement of students' academic achievement. Consistent to this belief, together with teachers three major strategies for improvement and maintaining good performance were to promote teacher professionalism and establish a teacher support program; enhance student discipline and develop an academically challenging and healthy environment for students (which included the promotion of students' health through sanitation and sports); revamp school resourcing initiatives through an improved school, parent and community partnership.

To implement the three priority-decisions, the principal devised and implemented a number of short-term and long-term programs and strategies. These varied action-oriented policies and measures are meant to lift their specific School to a renewed and sustained better performing school. These were the means deployed to improve schools' reputation as high-achievers. These also helped to promote sanitation-conscious and fit students who would work harder to obtain best grades.

Data collected from Schools showed that indiscipline in school 4 has been influenced by the principals' inability to involve other school departments when addressing discipline related issues. The Deputy of School 4 suspends a student without consultations with other school organs even to minor issues which could be well addressed by the guidance and counseling department. This negatively works against the school performance. Most of the schools for the study have a disciplinary committee whose mandate is usurped by the principal or deputy principal and therefore the committee members in some of the school have withdrawn and left it to the deputy as they felt neglected.

School 1 principal and his teachers implemented strategies to restore student discipline, create an academically challenging and healthy environment that sustains learning as a short-term plan. They instilled strict discipline among students through deterrence measures (punishments) and through positive means (rewards) such as awards for hard work, academic excellence and good conduct, and encouraged cleanliness and healthy lifestyles. These measures resulted in four positive transformations. First, teachers recommitted themselves to teaching effectively, and students responded positively to disciplinary measures and showed renewed enthusiasm for studies. Second, disciplinary measures dissuaded and reduced absenteeism and lateness to school. Third, students not only became sanitation and health conscious, but also took their studies more seriously and actively participated in all academic activities. Fourth, academic work and students' achievement improved. As a long-term strategy, the principal advocated partnership with parents and teacher cooperation to enhance student discipline, cleanliness and healthy lifestyles that sustain learning.

This study opined that school administrators, teachers, and other staff can have a profound influence on school culture through their interactions with students in school discipline and student support. This research identified that a strict but fair enforcement of discipline and a supportive and respectful engagement with students create the basis for students to respond to academic expectations and demands with greater engagement and investment in learning. The study recognizes, students who feel that they are disciplined unfairly for misbehavior could become disengaged and less motivated, they could lose instructional time (if suspended from school), and their academic performance would suffer. At the same time, their academic difficulties may generate frustration and further misbehavior, leading to a cycle of disciplinary problems and declining engagement and academic performance. The study further revealed that the strongest and most consistent school discipline culture findings were that student engagement was highest in schools with high disciplinary structure and student support hence high academic achievement.

Everyday there are new rules put in place, as well as old rules that structured whether it be for a group or an individual. Humans not only do make rules, they strive on finding the rules that come eye to eye about how they work. These rules, once accepted by an individual or a group after trial and error, then become a norm. Groups internalize norms by accepting them as reasonable and proper standards for behaviour within the group. Once firmly established, a norm becomes a part of the school's or department's operational structure and hence more difficult to change. While possible for newcomers to a group to change its norms, it is much more likely that the new individual will adopt the institution's norms, values, and perspectives, rather than the other way around.

Nonconformity to a set of norms that are accepted by a significant number of people in the school community or department is deviancy. Group members who do not follow a norm, they become labeled as a deviant. This is negated by negative reinforcement instituted through punishment. This can be corporal, heavy manure labour like mopping the sleeping or eating halls, slashing and or cleaning the school compound. Withdrawals from leisure activities participation, suspension, or expulsions are considered options. Positively observing norms is rewarded through compliments to students spotted exemplifying school norms. For example, being responsible in the hallway requires that students politely walk open doors and maintain a quiet tone. Being rigourous asks that students to have fun and challenge themselves while staying safe. In being responsible means following the accepted directions by department or school members. A responsible student in the cafeteria will enjoy lunch, relax, eat the food, clean up, and recycle. Positive rewards are given to enhance keeping of norms and to encourage others to keep the norms for the good of the school and the individual students.

In these study schools common norms are also observed as non negotiable rules. These are stated and action on deviancy attached to each such as;

- All students are expected to arrive to school each day properly dressed in their correct school uniform for a school setting.

- Electronic devices including cell phones, music players, virtual pets, and electronic games are not allowed in school. They must be out of sight and turned off when students are in school premises as the offense will result in a parent or guardian coming to the school to retrieve the device and student punished.

- All food, unless specific permission is granted, must be consumed in the cafeteria. The schools do not allow students buying food from outside worse of all over the fence. All food brought in by visitors will be communally shared at the time and place it is given whereas those who purchase it over the fences will be sent home and re admitted after buying a complete roll of barbed wire.

- Physical violence of any kind, including hurting or threatening to hurt another person will not be tolerated and may result in suspension.

- Bullying, sexual or verbal harassment including using ethnic slurs, profanity or obscene language will not be tolerated and may result in suspension.

- Leaving school premises or absconding classes without official certified exit is not allowed and may result in suspension.

- Disrupting school or classroom activity will not be tolerated and may result in suspension.

- Damaging or stealing school or other students' private property will not be tolerated and may result in suspension.

- Bringing a weapon or controlled injurious substances will result in suspension and possible expulsion.

- No drugs medicinal or otherwise are allowed in school without the knowledge and permission of the boarding patron or school clinician/ nurse.

All these rules and other shared norms are a means to creating harmony and uniformity in schools. These help in ensuring the creation of a conducive learning environment and climate. The norms are in many times in these schools established in consultation with the students. The study established that students own the norms and keep them, as they are their own making. The study further established that when all stakeholders are involved in establishing department or school, norms there is little disregard and implementation is quickly facilitated.

Students who break a rule in the Code of Conduct may be suspended or even expelled. A *s*uspension means the student is not to attend school for a number of days like up to three days or weeks. In some cases, student can be suspended for up to ten days or be asked to transfer to another school for serious offenses. This is after the student, parent/ guardian have presented their case before a school disciplinary committee whose resolutions are verified, validated by school board before ratification by the parties. Before an administrator can suspend, he or she must first hold a hearing at the school and invite the student and student's parent or guardian to the hearing. The teacher leader hears the evidence and decides whether the student should be suspended. A parent or guardian can appeal the decision to the BOM within specified timelines if decision of suspension is unsatisfactory.

4.1.6 Pedagogical strategies:

School principals proved their instructional leadership through salient teaching and learning enhancing strategies. These were strategies employed by the Schools in preparing all students to be confident and ready when they sit their KCSE. School 1 Principal identified these strategies included '*extra-tutorials, group studies, regular class tests, debates and quizzes, expert tutors and teachers, multiple practice examinations and teacher improvisation for text books, Science and ICT equipment.*'

In School 1 Extra-tutorials which were started initially with the accord of parents but without their financial support, extra-tutorials took place regularly at 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm, at 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm during normal school days. Extra-tutorials became a standard practice in the school. In another school start classes as early as 6.00 am. During the weekends and school holidays tutorials were conducted from 6:00 am to 9:00am (Class Teachers). These tutorials supplemented lessons taught during normal school hours and enabled teachers as well as students to cover all that must be learnt according to the approved subject syllabuses. Above all, according to one teacher, these extra-tutorials were geared towards adequate drilling and preparation of students for the KCSE.

According to majority of respondents, those extra-tutorials just like other learning enhancing programs were initiated when the results of the schools were not the best and the principals and teachers wanted to change the situation for the better. In the beginning, in School 1, teachers who participated in the extra-tutorials received no extra remuneration or incentive. They freely participated and taught the students. However, later on all the teachers who took part in the extra-tutorials were rewarded with school farm produce and at other times were offered some small remuneration from the school's self-generated welfare fund, principally developed from sale of school farm produce, teachers' contributions and students' hand-work and craft. In all schools it was a common practice that parents who wanted to motivate their teachers engaged the PA to settle on an amount that each parent gave.

School 4 principal agreed to this and said "*This was the situation until the time parents, through the PA, freely opted to levy themselves to support extra-tutorials and other academic activities*" Students responses were unanimous about the benefits of extra-tutorials in their individual preparations towards the KCSE when they said that it has been a pillar in their performance. One student remarked that; "*These remedial works miracles, in fact almost all of us are now able to work out the sums with ease and read well. We can be best and we pray it continues*"

According to the students, during extra-tutorials their teachers explained certain concepts in more details. They demonstrated how to solve some KCSE questions and gave them the opportunity to ask more questions than they would during normal school lessons. A student explained: "*If you don't know Mathematics, it is difficult to learn it on your own. Only the teachers can help you to make it hence the importance of spending more time with the teacher through extra classes.*" A number of teachers explained that they enjoyed teaching during extra-tutorials most especially because of the disposition of the students. A teacher explained this in these words:

> *Before you get there, they have arrived, they are already sitting waiting for you, and whatever your state, when you look at them, it will change you, it will encourage you, you have the zeal to teach, to deliver, you will be happy to teach and teach well. That's because if they didn't need our help they would not have come. So that's what we normally teach even after class hours* (School 5 HODS FGD)

In School 6 there is "*over teaching*" mentioned one teacher when she said;

> *Instead of the remedial teaching and guidance of students during the extra tutorial lesson, some continue teaching to cover the syllabus, which does not promote performance. Lesson which is meant for physical education is used*

*in teaching examinable subjects. The students' overloads contribute in the negative in students' performance (*School 6 HOD FGD)

Another important learning enhancing strategy used by high performing schools to boost children's confidence in learning was the use of study groups formed voluntarily by final year students themselves. These groups normally comprised of a maximum of six members who felt at ease with one another and were willing to study together as a group. The members would usually meet either in the evenings of weekdays or early in the mornings and evenings of weekends on the self selected venues within the school, mainly on days when there were no formal extra-tutorials.

According to one students' who identified that study groups have contribute much to individual student's performance and school as a whole. The student said that:

*Each member of the group is tasked ahead of the group's meeting to choose a particular topic with which he was most familiar. The student would then share his knowledge with other students of the study group when they met. Students often might choose a Mathematics problem, an English comprehension passage or grammar and punctuation, a Science subject concept, an English essay topic, a topic in geography and so on to prepare and present in their study groups. Once all members have chosen their topics, the group settled on which day and time it would meet and how many among them would give a presentation on topics selected. Once that was settled, each member had to read all the notes taken in class on the topic and when necessary, sought help from a subject teacher or another student while preparing the presentation (*School 2 Student Leader)

As expressed succinctly by a student there is a further agreement with school 3 who remarked that;

*These study groups help students to share what they knew about a particular topic or examination question. If a student presented an answer that was considered by other colleagues in the group as insufficient or incorrect, the missing links or additional content information were provided by others in the group. In this way, a study group provided a vital learning forum for students who felt shy to ask questions during normal lessons with their teachers. Questions or issues that appeared to defy the knowledge and academic competence of all members were taken note of and presented either during or after the usual lessons at school to the respective subject teacher for his or her assistance. (*School 3 Student Leader)

During the course of this research, all the teachers and students interviewed commented unanimously on the huge challenges that principals faced in recruitment and retention of qualified and capable full-time teachers, most especially in English, Mathematics, Science, ICT and French language. One School, in its bid to ease this challenge, engaged the services of 'expert tutors and teachers' These expert tutors were mainly professionals who worked in Kisii as administrators, accountants, government statisticians, nutritionists, medical practitioners as well as full-time tutors/ lecturers in nearby technical institute or universities. In some Cases expert tutors were invited from among regular high performing school especially national schools in the country.

School 1 principal observed that;

Our Old students' Association networks the school's alumni community as well as help identifying expert tutors who they organize in consultation with the principal to get opportunity to meet the students, more so, candidates. The expert teacher, who had distinguished himself or herself as an accomplished teacher in a specific subject or subject area but might not be teaching the final examination class was instrumentally used in providing necessary tips to handling examinations especially KCSE (School 1 Principal)

According to school 3 principal, it was clear that team work was at and a great contributor to performance when he said;

We, in addition to the guest speakers use our own expert teachers who above his or her normal teaching load the expert teacher would accept to teach the KCSE examination candidates in his or her specific subject area of expertise outside the regular class contact hours (School 3 Principal)

The expert tutor/teacher is one who had demonstrated through the record of his or her previous achievements an exceptional ability or knowledge in a particular subject or subject area. Expert tutors and teachers, once identified by the Principal and his close associates, were approached and encouraged to volunteer to teach and help prepare students towards the KCSE. Although some did decline any remuneration, the Principal would normally give a token incentive to most volunteering expert tutors and teachers.

Extra-tutorials were the main opportunities for expert teachers and tutors to teach both final year and other students. This explains why a good percentage of extra-tutorials took place in the evenings, early mornings, and weekends and during school holidays in the schools. This arrangement enabled expert tutors and teachers to use their free time to assist the students. They assisted the students to understand and master concepts and other difficult subject topics that some of their own teachers in those areas might not have mastered well enough or might have failed to adequately teach. These expert tutors/ former models and teachers were those who normally worked with the examination committee as setters, vetters or examiners. This agrees with Huddle (2004) who identified that bringing in outstanding speaker's for the National Honor Society meetings, placing names of special education students on the honor roll, Publishing an annual report of academic achievement and mailing it to parents, Displaying academic awards and trophies in the school trophy case promote individual's achievement and enthusiasm.

4.1.7 Students Assessment:

Regular supervised class tests in all the schools were culturally important for students and schools for two reasons. First, they helped students and teachers to assess the level of learning that was taking place with regards to each student and secondly, they served as a means of checking and keeping track of students who regularly attended classes and had been participating in all class assignments and tests. These tests were written in the students' usual class assignment exercise books. A teacher, in the course of a discussion, remarked that supervised tests and class exercises were useful means of keeping track of a student's progress. A teacher might not have access to a student's notebooks to verify whether or not he had up to-date notes on topics taught, but he could regularly check a student's class exercise books to ascertain how many tests and assignments he had completed.

School 2 Principal usually and randomly checked such corrected supervised tests during his classroom rounds, especially at the times when the class or subject teacher was absent. Supervised class tests were conducted at least twice in the course of a term. The class or subject teacher determined which day and time the supervised class test would occur. Often, the questions set for these class tests were based on the subject content the teacher had previously taught. Teachers had the freedom to either inform the students about the impending supervised class test in advance or not. These tests were corrected on the spot by the teacher. After a thorough teacher-student discussion of all the test questions, correct answers were written on the chalkboard with detailed explanations on each question and its corresponding answer. Students who might have scored low marks in such class tests were encouraged during those discussions to ask questions for clarification and comprehension.

Another salient contribution of supervised class tests to improving students' learning was the fact that students were encouraged to effectively study at all times as they did not know the exact time a supervised class test might take place. It should be remarked that in high performing schools; '*The continuous assessment grading of students had become an integral part of the final scores awarded at the end of each term and year*'

In School 1 as well as School 2, the uncertainties of sitting a supervised class test at a time when one might least expect it was a crucial inducement to students to be studious and ever prepared. This uncertainty about the time of writing another class test had become a distinct motivation for learning and regular school attendance, according to all the students interviewed. Regular school attendance and participation in supervised class tests were actions which boosted a student's grades in continuous assessment and consequently, in the final external examinations.

Quizzes were equally an integral learning strategy used in schools prompt students to study on their own and to help them have a better grasp of the course content of their respective subjects. Quizzes were conducted on two levels. Firstly, they were conducted in the classrooms by the subject or class teacher for only those students in that particular class. Class quizzes were generally not announced in advance to the students. They were meant to be a class activity with an element of surprise. Secondly, quizzes were conducted for all students in the School on their student grouping level (form) or among students of a senior class and those of a junior class. Quizzes that had been organised for all students or for two competing classes were always announced at least one week prior to the quiz. This was to enable all students to study and revise the topics that would be covered during the quiz. Generally, the quizzes were discussed with students on the spot by the teacher or any designated teacher who conducted them. This enabled the students to ask questions on the quiz and the teacher to explain further not only the questions of the quiz but equally the concepts and topics that were covered in the quiz. Class teachers, subject teachers and the Principal at various times, conducted these periodic quizzes.

Quizzes organised among competing students from different classes drew a lot of following and interest as each class wanted to demonstrate that it was the best. Both levels of quizzes had set in motion an intense rivalry among the students as each student endeavoured to score higher in order to receive the corresponding awards for top performance. Like the debates, prizes in the form of text books, notebooks and other stationery were awarded to students who performed highly in quizzes and these prizes were a motivation for students to study. A teacher explained that;

> *The one-week preparation towards the quiz helped students, including the less serious students, to intensively learn again for a full week. Accordingly, the pre-quiz revision became an important moment for students to update and study their notes* (School 4 HOD FGD)

According to school 1 principal when asked on opinion on quizzes said that;

> *It should be noted that quizzes generally served three purposes. Firstly, they were used by subject and class teachers to ascertain the level of learning that was taking place in a particular class at a particular time. Secondly, they served as appropriate opportunities for teachers to sample possible KCSE questions that teachers believed their students had not yet encountered in any other test or examination. Thirdly and finally, quizzes served as occasion for revision of specific lessons taught in class* (School 1 Principal)

Even though it is quite an expensive school activity in a poorly funded and less resourced school, practice examinations were held to test the level of preparedness and exam confidence of students. The practice examinations were modelled on past KCSE questions and were set and corrected by a panel of teacher experts from within and outside the schools. These practice examinations were conducted at least twice preceding the actual writing of the KCSE by students. The Parent Association played a crucial role in the organisation of practice examinations (HODs FGD). Parents willingly and regularly levied themselves to support to pay for the cost of organising these practice examinations. The levies paid by parents enabled the School to pay for printing of the examination question papers and to give a token cash gift to teachers who set the questions and corrected the exam papers.

According to the students, sometimes these practice examinations were conducted more than three times provided the parents were willing to pay the appropriate levies and teachers and students demonstrated the need for them. Students seemed to appreciate the benefits of multiple practice examinations as they encouraged their parents to pay the appropriate levies. Furthermore, some students believed that their teachers conscientiously explained to them all the questions they failed to correctly answer during the practice examinations. Since students normally burnt the midnight oil in order to study and prepare for these practice examinations, they had become another useful strategy not only for improving learning in but for training final-examination confident and ready students.

From the foregoing one may conclude that the employment of specific learning enhancing strategies such as the organisation of multiple practice examinations, extra-tutorials, student group studies, regular supervised class tests, debates and quizzes as well as the use of expert tutors and teachers served high performing schools in improving the level of scholarship of students and academic preparedness of final year students. Despite these important instructional initiatives, students in some schools complained that;

> *Our teachers did not always discuss with us the corrected practice examination scripts as was done in other schools. Sometimes, the practice examinations were not corrected and we did not get any feedback on our scripts before we sat the KCSE. May be some of the teachers had little mastery of some concepts that featured in the practice examinations and thus, were unable to correct those questions* (School 4 Student leader)

Some students complained about the difficulty of learning from their mistakes if they never saw their corrected scripts. A student remarked that;

> "*After they have finished marking the answer scripts the teachers should give the paper to us. I don't know why the students are not receiving their papers (scripts).*" And they said that; "*Most of the teachers, those who are supposed to mark them, they are not able to finish marking them in time.*" (School 5 Student leader)

It was also identified that the examination timing was also a negative influence. A student mentioned that when examinations begin at 3.00 P.M it means they have to remain revising even during teaching of other lessons so as to better their performance to evade being asked to repeat or sent away due to poor performance . This worked against future performance.

Further, some teachers remarked that;

> *The delay in correcting the practice examination questions came about because the external experienced teachers, who were supposed to correct the examination scripts, were also busy preparing their own students for the KCSE and as a result, did not have enough time to correct those of other students* (School 4 HOD FGD)

School 3 teachers remarked during FGD that;

> *The purpose of practice examinations was to enhance students learning and preparedness towards the KCSE. However, in school, the failure of extern teachers to correct the exam scripts on time, prevented students from receiving crucial feedback on their learning and helping them to be prepared for the KCSE (*School 3 HOD FGD*)*

Students in school 5 complained about the difficulties they had in Sciences as the School principal no longer had enough time to teach them due to her administrative work. The new Science teacher was unable to teach all the concepts despite the coaching he had received from the principal though he also engaged some of his experienced teachers from other schools to 'coach the student'. She observed that some teachers were very poor in methodology and some of them in content as well. She had sent away some teachers on transfer for non-performance. Despite efforts to coach some of her teachers, and also organise an internal professional development session once every term, the majority of the teachers felt that was insufficient. In fact, some newly trained teachers and others who were still developing their teaching competence, most especially those who taught Mathematics and Sciences, sometimes approached their colleagues in other schools and sought personal instructional help.

In order to sustain a regular line of communication and feedback with teachers, School 2 principal as well as School 1 Principal consulted on a regular basis not only the formal departmental heads of Mathematics, English and Language Studies, Science, technical and ICT, Arts and Humanities, Business and Economics, hospitality and Home Economics but also the conveners of other staff committees that are established. These were the English Committee, which was responsible for organising quizzes in English spelling across all the classes and ensuring adoption and use of English at all times by students; the Academic Committee, which managed time tabling, provided counsel on suitable teachers for various subjects, organised and supervised the setting and correction of all examinations across the School. The Examinations Committee was tasked with the logistical preparation of all important internal examinations, including the end of term examinations and practice examinations, while the Welfare Committee oversaw all welfare issues concerning teachers and socials. These committees would contact the School Prefect or other students for their input when that was deemed appropriate.

Another parent exclaimed and said that; *"We are currently trying to talk to teachers to do their best because most of them are not serious."* Parents' complaint about lack of commitment on the part of teachers found an echo in what some teachers remarked concerning the conduct of quizzes and debates in schools. Teachers who were formally charged to organise quizzes and debates claimed and said that; *"We could not conduct any for a while because the school could not provide prizes."* Thus, although quizzes and debates took place in some schools, they were mostly organised in preparation for an inter-school competition, or as an ad hoc act to occupy students when the weather was not conducive for students to play outside, rather than as a specific strategy to improve learning. Friday afternoons had been scheduled for outdoor sports and whenever it was too hot for playing or raining, the students were given a quiz.

The absence of modern Science laboratory on the some School premises and inadequacy of Science equipment and consumables made teaching of Science a real challenge in some of these secondary schools. In order to make up for this serious inadequacy in teaching and learning, principals and teachers devised a number of locally manufactured models which were used as teaching aids in Science. The teaching of Biology and Agricultural Science in one school was enhanced with the cultivation of selected plants and trees on school premises and in the nearby school farm. Students, during Biology and Agricultural Science lessons, would go out with their teachers to study some of the plants on their premises. Sometimes, branches, leaves and suckers were cut and sent to the classroom for further examination.

Teachers who were highly experienced in drawing would also draw, on cardboards and other posters, whole dissections of animals or plants as teaching aids in Science classes. Sometimes, the entire class with their teachers would travel to a neighbouring senior institution like technical institute or university in order to use that institution's Science laboratory to conduct science lessons and experiments. However, those visits to the laboratory were infrequent in certain schools (Class

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Teachers). The teaching of lessons in Information Communication Technology (ICT) in another school the Principals brought to the school their own personal or borrowed desktop computer and requested other teachers who had personal computers to lend to the school for a while which were used once in a while by the teachers in ICT lessons though the students of high performing schools were advantaged with computer labs though with inadequacies. It was not unusual to spot about 10 to 15 students in a secondary school massing around one computer with their teacher explaining and demonstrating how to use Microsoft Word. Generally, the teaching of ICT was mainly based on use of models and sketches and drawings in ICT textbooks in low performing secondary schools.

In an environment of inadequate school resourcing, appropriate strategies for improving teaching and learning developed through the instructional leadership provided by School principals. Extra-tutorials, student study groups, regular supervised class tests, debates and quizzes, instruction by expert tutors and teachers as well as multiple practice examinations were enhanced norms. Teacher improvisation in Science and ICT employed as standard practices for improving teaching and learning and preparing students to be KCSE confident and ready in schools identified almost by all respondents as influencing students' performances.

According to school 1 principal students background influence students academic performance and argues that "The background of students more than anything else determines their overall school achievement, both academic and socio-effective. It is difficult to measure the influence of teachers, principals and schools "... on a child's achievement". The principal identified that;

> *Schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his/her background and general social context; and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their homes, neighbourhood and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they will confront school life* (School 1 Principal)

This contrasts to study by Goldstein (2008) that affirmed that: "The attainment of children when they first enter the school is the single most important determinant of subsequent achievement." According to school 3 principal on Students' backgrounds in addition to this influence the achievement of students; however, alone does not solely determine the achievement levels of students, since the input of the school on achievement is immense. The principal believes that "*Students' achievement is achieved through consolidation of the many school independent factors of leadership, teachers, and the students themselves.*" He observes that parent roles least influences boarding students. School 4 principal boasts of a diverse background of students from able families, to orphans and vulnerable children in society that have been successfully integrated and educated. This has been the case every year, "*Our students have always come out successful irrespective of their home background.*"

To encourage teachers to be committed and effectively teach their students, school 1 principal introduced a benchmarking scheme for teaching in the School. At their academic staff meetings at the end of each term's examination period, teachers and Principal examined the average achievement level of students by subject and by class. The teacher whose students scored best grades would be formally congratulated. Also, the performances of students in each of the KCSE subjects were benchmarked with well relating high performing schools. Teachers whose students recorded better scores than those from neighbouring schools were also congratulated and sometimes rewarded. The teachers explained that this benchmarking had pushed some of them to become more serious with their teaching and preparation of the final year students. They felt embarrassed when their colleague teachers were congratulated publicly and they were left out. This became a motivation for the teachers to work harder so that their students would perform better next time round and thus, brings them honour as teachers.

Throughout the course of the research data collection in the various schools, the Researcher had the impression that not everything was smooth sailing in the Schools. On one occasion the researcher caught up with some students who clustered around two desks in their classroom and asked what they were doing that early morning. They informed him that one of the students had brought past KCSE questions on French language and a French teacher from the neighbouring institution was coaching them on solving the French examination questions.

Schools 3 offering foreign language as subjects lacked professionally trained teachers. For example, the school had no permanent French teacher and relied on the services of French teachers of other neighbouring institutions to teach French language in the School. This was just one of the many challenges that the school principal, teachers and students had to

grapple with in their efforts to focus on their vision and to attain their mission, which was training examination-confident and ready students. These challenges came in different forms and of varying degrees of severity. Notable challenges which tested the resilience and focus of Schools have been identified in the course of this research and categorised as follows: teaching and learning hurdles, parents' interference in student disciplinary issues, students' complaints, parents failing to cooperate in school resourcing.

Some of the fundamental challenges that militated against the efforts of school in remaining focused on its goal and mission were issues that concerned teaching and learning. In spite of the school's status as among the top school, teacher attrition rate remained a huge challenge for a number of reasons. For example, students interviewed expressed their concern that schools have not had for the past five years a continuing teacher in some of the teaching and examinable subjects, namely French and Technical Sciences. The students complained that;

> *Some of us got confused with certain concepts when they were taught by different teachers during their schooling in school. The methods of teaching and the use of formulae and theories by each teacher seemed to differ. This made our efforts to understand the course content and to study effectively to perform well in tests and examinations were frustrated by the fact that when we seemed to have mastered and became familiar with a particular teacher's style of teaching then that teacher departed the School to do further education* (School 3 Student Leaders)

Similarly, a transfer of a class teacher or a subject teacher to a different school also resulted in a mismatch in the teaching of that subject by the new teacher. Thus, Schools had insufficient numbers of adequately qualified teachers for some of its key subjects such as Information Communication Technology and French language. As a result, the newly engaged Mathematics teacher, who happened to have developed a personal interest in ICT during his training, was asked by the Principal to participate in limited professional development programs for teachers who would teach the subject in the School. At the time of this research the Mathematics teacher was still the only teacher who taught ICT in the School. Despite their efforts at improvisation, students found it difficult to grasp the ICT lessons. The situation was even worse with regards to the teaching of French. The only qualified French teacher resided about 30 kilometres away from the school as he had other engagements elsewhere and had to commute either daily or weekly to school. In the course of the research that week students had not learned the subject. However, according to the testimonies of final year students, *"The teacher was an accomplished teacher and was able to intensively teach us whenever he was available. We believed that we could still pass our examinations despite this hurdle."*

Similarly, the teaching of technical sciences without the presence of a permanent teacher in School 4 was a real challenge to students, but was mitigated through extra-tutorials and students' group studies with accomplished students from neighbouring schools. School 6 principal observed that;

> *Inadequate library facility, library books and school textbooks as well as insufficient Science and ICT equipment and materials were other major hurdles the principals are confronted with in promoting effective teaching and learning in the School* (School 6 Principal)

By making available for use by teachers and students, principal's personal ICT equipment and books, in addition to other books acquired with funding from government, parents and also, through periodic visits to the Science laboratory of a neighbouring Institutions, School 3 Principal surmounted, to some degree these difficulties. A further obstacle to effective teaching and learning in schools was the unusual complaints from a few parents whose children were demoted or not allowed to progress to the next class because of their below-average performance. These parents, according to the School 4 principal and the teachers, seemed not to appreciate the fact that repeating a class was a second opportunity for these children to progress in their education. Repeating a class helped the children to master the same concepts they failed to learn the previous year. The principal explained that he attempted to resolve this misconception of the motive of repeating a class through regular education of parents during PA meetings and in his casual contacts with some of them.

Since the ethos of the school did not tolerate unnecessarily upsetting a parent, special exceptions were made sometimes to allow ill-prepared students to be promoted to the next class; for example, when dealing with mature-aged students. Such inevitable exceptions thus created additional burdens and challenges for teachers. The teachers interviewed explained that they were up to the task although they marked that; *"It required extra hard work and sacrifice."* The support and collaboration of parents was a crucial strategy in school's efforts to recruit local resources to sustain the

School as a top performing school. Generally, most parents had supported and cooperated with the school in various ways. However some parents were not always cooperative and had interfered in the School's maintenance of discipline. Others had failed to pay their PA levies and provoked difficulties in the School's efforts to maintain good rapport with all parents and community. Some also inappropriately interfered in student disciplinary issues.

According to school 3 principal, to garner parents' support for maintaining school discipline, she not only informed the parents but also had obtained their approval of the School's disciplinary measures for recalcitrant students. Nevertheless, schools also experienced the interference and complaints of some parents who had disagreed with one or another form of punishment for truancy and disobedience and miscreants. For example, one teacher interviewed explained that in school 3;

> *A parent attempted to manhandle a teacher in town because of the punishment that the teacher meted to his miscreant child in school. Others narrated that some parents entered the school and argued with a teacher who had previously disciplined a disobedient child* (School 3 Principal)

In School 5 a teachers explained how much they were embarrassed when a parent 'erupted' in school, and scolded a fellow teacher for punishing her son by requiring him to work in the school farm and for preventing him from attending lessons until the punishment was completed. School 5 Principal encouraged his teachers to bear unpleasant attitudes and interference from certain parents and to manage parents' grievances, real or imagined, with tact without necessarily compromising their own integrity and school discipline. Other times, the PA executive members intervened to help resolve issues with intransigent parents. School 6 principal accordingly admitted her difficulty in managing maturely the outbursts of parents and of teachers to avoid straining relations and to maintain a cordial school atmosphere and positive partnership with parents and community.

In spite of the seemingly active cooperation and partnership between principals and parents and the community, comments raised by parents and teachers indicated that not all parents seriously cooperated in recruiting resources for the School. For example, according to the Principal, Only about 50% to 60% of 1273 parents whose children are in the School regularly paid the PA levies meant for school resourcing. Some of those parents who failed to pay their levies sometimes paid in kind when they visited the School and showed appreciation for their work by offering foodstuffs to the teachers.

Principal 5 expressed his dismay at parents who hardly or never attended PA meetings and therefore missed out on all the educational input on parent-teacher relations and on developments in the School. These parents therefore, were ignorant of decisions made and developments in the School. Those were the parents who sometimes erupted in the School and clashed with teachers on issues already resolved at previous PA meetings. According to him, this phenomenon really posed a serious challenge to his efforts in maintaining cordial relations with parents and community. A teacher reported how difficult it was sometimes, to accept the compromised position of the Principal in order to avoid prolonging an altercation with a parent. This was corroborated by the Principal, when he said that;

> *I appreciated the efforts of my teachers to accept arbitrations, even though sometimes I knew they were not the fairest outcome. I had to always think of maintaining the relationship with the community and the parents and did everything to avoid escalations and prolonged disagreements* (School 1 Principal)

During the research student leaders exhumed that;

> *It was not unusual to hear complaints from students, who had been overtaken by numerous daily and weekly manual chores including fetching of fire wood from the nearby bush, fetching water from the dam and cleaning the compound and preparing the school garden. The overtaxed female student participants complained about the pain and sacrifice involved in coping with the overload of these school chores and studies, including class assignments and supervised class tests* (School 4 Student Leaders)

Despite the fact that the female students were mostly impacted by the tight schedule of school chores and demanding studies. In school 4 boys also complained about overstraining studies. Both the boys and the girls were unanimous in believing that the schools made too many demands on them with regards to assignments, quizzes and class tests. Some stated that they did feel sometimes that they were studying a bit too much compared to their colleagues in other schools. They, however, explained that they accepted in good faith all these exigencies from the Principal and the teachers because

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they knew they were meant for their good. They also admitted that despite the constraints they believed that these were the conditions, which made their school to compete favourably with top schools and the prospect of good KCSE results.

In view of the above, it can be deduced that principals' personality and conduct, instructional leadership as well as engagement and partnership with the local community were all part of grand efforts made to grapple with a number of school culture norms progress. The most taxing culture norms being lack of specialist teachers, inadequate library facility, text books, Science and ICT equipment and other learning materials. Culture norms challenges were difficult management of un-cooperating parents as well as parents' interference in students' disciplinary issues and students' complaints about rigorous academic life. Schools which have positively control and managed the norms have posted appealing KCSE results while the contrary is also true.

4.2 School Ceremonies and students performance:

In this objective to determine implications of school rituals and ceremonies on students academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County respondents were guided by the research question "What implication have rituals and ceremonies on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County?

Respondents were asked to identify ceremonies in their schools and how they influence performance of students in KCSE. The researcher observed that each school had unique ceremonies with some cutting across the institutions. The unique ceremonies identified include: "Fabulous Friday", "Parent University", Academic staff meetings, Debates and Drama, Parents' Meetings and Class Conferences, Co- curricular Activities School, Opening and Closing Assembly, Annual class conferences, school academic outings and innings and academic trips. These are complex, culturally sanctioned ways that a school celebrates successes, communicates its values, and recognizes special contributions of staff and students. Successful school ceremonies are carefully designed and arranged to communicate values, celebrate core accomplishments and build a tight sense of community. Ceremonies reinforce student learning under the leadership of Principals and staffs and supported through meetings as an instrument of professional dialogue and discussion. Some school ceremonies and rituals that emerged as influencing students' academic performance through school culture as observed by respondents are discussed and presented as sub themes.

In school 1 stake holders established "Fabulous Friday" to provide students with a wide assortment of courses and activities aimed at promoting teachers and students' collegiality. During these sessions all staffs (support and teaching) dine together, share and interact freely, teachers air their issues with individual students and vice versa, reconciliations, arbitrations and counseling is made freely possible. Students always yearn for this monthly ceremony that comes up a day before the parents visit the students. "*This has worked to solve issues which would spill to a mountain of issues hence the students feel refreshed and always energized"* remarked School 1 principal.

School 2 principal proudly identified that she initiated a "Parent University" –an establishment occasion when parents meet the staff and students ones a month to furnish courses and materials while building trust between the school and the largely community.

> *Norms of collegiality, improvement, and connection reinforce and symbolize what the school is about. In many other schools, local heroes and heroines, exemplars of core values, provide models of what everyone should be striving for. These deeply committed staff comes in willing to meet with students to constantly upgrade their skills and enthusiasm towards high performance* (School 2 Principal)

Many principals most relied on and held academic staff meetings as important school routine according to the teachers. At the beginning of every school term, School 4 principal said; *"I encouraged teachers to specifically meet and discuss students' academic performance during the previous term."* At these meetings the concerns of the principal and teachers in respect of teaching and learning, and ways of resolving them are discussed (School 4 principal). As explained by one of the teachers interviewed since they re-opened he has met the Departmental Heads in respect to the tests and results of last term.

Principals of various schools call a general staff meeting for all teachers to sit down and plan the term as well as to review what they have done previously, and then the subsequent attempts as well as what they could do to supersede what they

have done previously. Just for instance, all teachers have to be at a staff meeting to restructure how they are going to put things in order, especially for candidates who had just started preparing for the 2016 term opening examinations.

The study identified that staff meeting in low performing are a response to an impending problem or solving a problem among the staff members. A teacher in one school noted that:

> *Whenever there are issues with administration they are notified to impromptu meetings whose agenda is read when the meeting has to start and only a few teachers participate though all are to be present. Performance issues are left to the individual teacher and at most the Head of Department and not factored for discussion at this level* (School 4 HOD FGD)

School 3 principal informed the students of happenings in the School and of major events and activities through daily morning assemblies with students and teachers. Sometimes, through the students' School Prefect and class Prefects, he obtained relevant feedback from students on academic, disciplinary or financial concerns of students. He encouraged students to meet and discuss certain issues among themselves and to report back to him. He also met students inside their classrooms from time to time to discuss directly academic as well as other concerns.

In addition to the Monday and Friday assembly gatherings where important announcements are made by various parties, School 2 principal plans at least ones a term to meet individual class students for a special meeting to interact freely with the students in the absence of other members of staff. This is meant to give both the students and the principal enhance rapport, identify area of students' concerns, advice, guide and counsel in order to achieve school core objectives. This principals meeting has instrumental in making performance decisions and solve issues which affect students' welfare before they are out of hand hence reducing and eliminating indiscipline and school instabilities.

School 3 principal, in addition to the assembly meetings on Mondays and Fridays the principal attends the weekly Wednesday class meetings which are organized by the class teachers without prior notification. The principal identified to the students that;

> *I belong to each class so I do visit at least two classes of my choice in a week. I spend more time in classes perceived to be having issues to address the challenges and iron out differences together at class level. I use these sessions to address discipline, performance and class targets while emphasizing on the school Vision and Mission in line with the specific class motto as together with my students lay strategies of performance. The class secretary notes all that we discuss which is typed and every student given for filing as those which cut across the school are addressed in the termly school journal. We make follow ups in the subsequent meetings* (School 3 Principal)

According to the class teachers of School 4 in connection said;

> *Mondays and Fridays assembly is attended by all teachers and the principal as a flag raising ceremony and listening to the principals' speech which is at times read by a student even when he is present. Copies are circulated in the school notice boards for students and teachers references. The principal attends to critical issues affecting students by inviting the concerned to his office through the deputy principal's office that will screen what has to reach the principal's offices* (School 4 Class teacher)

It was identified that in school 4 during assembly it is only the principal, deputy principal, senior teacher and the teacher on duty who spoke to the students. In another school there was no clear pattern and protocol especially in issues to do with assembly attendance which seemed to be left in the hands of the duty master and heads of departments who had a message to pass to the student. The principal's attendance was occasional to address issues purported to be pertinent in the school.

A teacher during HOD FGD meeting observed that:

> *The conduct of debates on topics of popular current affairs, on merits and demerits of science and technology, on environmental protection, and on politics and democratic governance, abolition of corporal punishment in schools as well as on local social, cultural and economic issues had become an essential means of informing and training students in public speaking and in the correct use of the English language in presenting logical arguments and analysis. There was a committee of teachers who worked with the Principal to select topics for all debates in the*

> *School throughout the year. Those who selected these topics took into consideration the requirements of the English language syllabus, contemporary and life skills issues* (School 1 HOD FGD)

In order to use these debates as another strategy to encourage final year students to adequately prepare for the KCSE, the Principal through the teachers ensured that the topic for a debate was announced at least two weeks in advance so that the students would have enough time to prepare and actively participate. Often, eight students, comprising two pairs who would speak 'for' the motion and another two pairs, who would speak 'against' the motion, participated in these debates. Thus, although only eight students were involved in the actual debate, all final year students were requested to use one school hour, during their non-school contact hours to research on the chosen topic of debate. In general, all final year students were informed that any of them was eligible to be selected to participate in the planned debate. As a result, all were requested to adequately prepare themselves to participate. It was only in the course of the week when the debate was to take place that the eight students pre-selected by the staff were announced; and often, this announcement would be made only two days ahead of the debate.

Teachers attested debates contribute to students' performance when they said that;

> *This practice was useful not only in making all students research and study the topic of the debate, but most especially, because it served as an additional opportunity for students to master a number of potential English comprehension passages and topics of essays and compositions that might appear in the final end of school English language examinations." Furthermore, some of the students interviewed stated that "Most students studied harder in order to be selected to participate in school debates. These debates had become a showcase for the bright students in the School. In fact, according to some of the students, their parents queried them if they were not selected to participate in any school debate throughout the school term. Participating in these debates had become a prestigious affair for some students, nevertheless it had helped invigorate otherwise unmotivated students to study more seriously* (School 2 HOD FGD)

Special prizes in the form of notebooks, pens, pencils, novels and text books were usually awarded to each of the eight students who took part in any school debate. Often, the winning pair of students received more prizes than the losing pair. These awards also served as another vital motivation to students to study and perform better in class tests and quizzes. These tests and quizzes were used as partial criterion for selecting eligible students, who would participate in school debates.

According to school 4 PA chair- person by law, all schools in Kenya must have a working Parent Teacher Association, however, how active this parent-teacher relationship would be depended on the initiative and leadership of the Principal. School principals actively and purposefully pursued engagement opportunities with parents as a strategy for promoting a dynamic PA. In meetings with parents in performing schools through the PA had become a regular affair. These meetings, attended by a significant percentage of the total number of parents whose children were in the School, took place at least once every school year with organized class conferences ones a year for each form.

The Principal and the executive members of the school 1 PA met and set the dates for all ordinary PA meetings within the School year. The PA membership at the time of the research was yet to meet in all secondary schools having formally met in December when the schools closed for Christmas holiday. It included four top executive members who performed the tasks of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer with the help of three other parent representatives of the executive board. The Chairperson and the Secretary maintained regular contacts with the School and all cheques for payment were co-signed by the Treasurer and the Chairperson. The Secretary, who was the principal of the school, besides his job as scribe, also assisted the Vice Chairperson and other three parent representatives in public relations activities and in the promotion of the interests of the PA in the local community.

The three representatives normally contacted parents to invite and remind them to attend PA meetings. Personal visits to invite parents to attend the meetings were crucial for having successful meetings. The school 5 Principal and the PA Chairperson jointly invited the parents to attend the meetings, either through verbal communication or through a formal invitation letter. Although the executive members were responsible for inviting parents to attend meetings, the students also served as a link for expediting any information from the School to their parents and vice versa.

The Principal or any other PA member, through the Chairperson could introduce items for discussions at all meetings. Decisions arrived at were adopted through a simple majority voting system where all present had one vote and neither the executive nor the ordinary members had vetoing powers. During PA meetings, parents freely expressed their opinions about developments in the school regarding the conduct of the teachers, the Principal and the students, while the Principal and the teachers did likewise. These meetings were seen by both teachers and parents as forums for effective dialogue between parents and the School. For example, when the KCSE results are released, the Principal invited all the parents to the School and explained to them the overall performance of the School with detailed explanation of the School's achievement in each subject.

During such meetings, the academic achievement of the immediate past students as well as obstacles confronting effective academic work and achievement were discussed and strategies that involved parents were determined and approved. Generally, the dynamism of the PA has helped Schools in recruiting local resources to support teaching and learning, providing some funding for teachers' welfare and support and gaining the cooperation of parents and community in disciplining students

The principals and PA regularly deliberated on measures to sustain the top academic achievement of the School so that their wards would continue to gain access to further education and to become professionals in and outside their locality. Parents interviewed declared their pride in contributing to the progress of a top school in their village. Some even donated gifts in form of farm produce to the School to reward teachers whose subjects recorded higher scores at the KCSE. In school 2 Parents through the PA levied themselves to fund teaching and learning activities such as the purchase of specific text books, past KCSE examination question papers, the repairs of school furniture and the purchase of stationery for internal school examinations, including practice examinations. Levies paid by parents were also used to give a token allowance to teachers who participated in the School's extra-tutorials.

Culture Induction and Orientation is a school ceremony conducted by staff and students who had learnt how to observe and respect the school traditions, norms, values and practices. Students explained how some of their teachers and students who were new learnt from them how to carry themselves in school and during social events. Traditional norms such as respect for and abstention from unruly criticism of other students and any teacher were highly regarded by schools. The new comers were initiated into the school routine values and customs. This was important in keeping the school in one direction with a sole aim of achieving desirable performances. Pride in the top-achieving school in the locality was demonstrated by students, teachers and principal often in gesture and words. That pride was a driving force behind the sacrifice, understanding and cooperation shown by all. The orderliness and the cleanliness of the School premises and the punctuality of students were just some of the many values cherished and practiced by school staffs and students. These and other values have become part and parcel of the schools community and have created a school community culture. In other words, school seemed to have established their own ethos, a set of unwritten traditions and values which have been absorbed by all, students, teachers and principal alike. These are passed to new members, students and teachers, by holding special sittings and days of interaction to orientate the new members. This is a common occasion in every secondary school in this study.

Not just the Principal and the students expressed their pride in their school; parents as well as teachers did likewise. Parents saw their school as a good school that had helped the children to become professionals, technicians and trades-women, as a number of schools graduates had become teachers, nurses, police officers, public officers, engineers, nuns, bankers, doctors, lawyers and so on. Some parents also stated that they were proud in having their children study in "good schools". According to some, this had motivated them to continue to pay the levies to support the schools.

The cherished values of schools such as discipline, punctuality, orderliness, commitment and perseverance and pride in their school as a top school facilitated the work of the Principal and the cooperation among teachers, students and parents in making their school a top performing school. A teacher made this point quite clearly when he stated;   *'Oh, yes we do a lot of things as teachers with the help of the principal to make our students examination ready and confident at all times'*

The study established that, all secondary schools sampled for this study offer a great range of sporting activities for the students' recreation. All the activities are coordinated by various teams, which have team heads and captains. The teams also have team teachers who help in organisation of the students and have the responsibility of taking the teams for

external functions. The performance of the teams is relatively with the students' academic achievement. Good performance in co-curricular activities a product of hard work, team work, discipline and ability to adhere to instructions which are core values replicated in class activities. There are activities, in which the houses or classes compete amongst each other within the school or with other schools from the neighbourhood or outside. These activities include - Science congress, athletics, cross-country, ball games, drama and academics. The principal usually offers a reward for the top three winners in each field and activity.

In the schools other co-curricular activities include drama, choir, publications such as the School Magazine; school leadership through the prefects' body, Sunday School teaching, Scouting, Debate Club, Wildlife Club, Environmental Club, Journalism Club, Science Club, Computer Club, SDA Society, CU and YCS for the Catholics. These activities were objectively organized so as to enhance learning activities. Students had to belong to whichever they chose voluntarily. These are common in almost every secondary school though there are variations and level of involvement. Sports range from various choices includes: - basketball, rugby, soccer, track and field, hockey, volleyball, handball, swimming, and lawn tennis. Individuals and teams have won national and regional honours in almost all of them. School 1 principal observed that;

> *Under a former principal his school emerged as the best soccer school teams in the 1990s and the record they set can only be rivaled by a few Schools. They won three consecutive national championships between 1996 and 1999. Most of the team members have played for the national team and some are playing professional football in Europe and Asia* (School 1 Principal)

In co-curricular activities, one girls schools performed very well in hockey, handball, basketball where they reach Lake Region level while in drama and music they reach nationals. The girls now aim at winning national titles," noted the principal. The principal observed that;

> *The spirit of competition identified in the girls during competition is translated into their class activities as it provides gate valve to empty in build pressures which would negatively impact on academic performance if not well managed. The interactions during these competitions enable the girls to compare their academic work with other school as they participate. The activities promote interaction and promote cohesion and national integration* (School 2 Principal)

The play fields of one school are poorly maintained and students have least time to use them in the relevant activities. This is because the value of school activities in the school has low morale. A school which produced the best players in the region and nationally has little impact in co- curricular activities in the present; The school band which was renown over a time is a thing of the past. This has been associated to the perceived poor leadership and a demoted staff (HODS FGD) from this scenario it can be deduced that as the co-curricular activity level declined the school performance of the school proportionally declined. The schools which have kept a culture of participation and supporting of these activities are depicting the same involvement of students in their academic performance.

School Opening and Closing Assembly were held with all members of teaching staff, support staff and parents' representatives in the school. According to school 1 principal;

School opening meeting is held on the second day of opening. In this meeting departments through a representative are given a chance to contribute on how they plan to make their departments better in supporting curriculum. Suggestions of their involvement are sought and each department highlights areas which the wish addressed and the necessary contributions expected from participants (School 1 Principal)

In addition to what happens in the school principal allows the academic master to take the school through previous performances in each class and members contribute on the performance by identifying cause and expectations. Students leaders are given chance to give their views and plans for bettering the results. Issues touching on any changes expected, activities of the term/ year are put to notice by all concern. The academic master provides venue specifications and timetable for opening examinations. The school closing ceremony usually has no much from the staff as compiling of assessments as to be analyzed. Students receive their performance reports. During this session those who have not had pleasant outcomes are asked to remain behind for two weeks or so for remedial with the hope of improving the students' performance. The parents/ guardians are informed as agreed in past PA meetings.

In addition to what takes place in school, school 2 and those inclined to catholic denomination holds a mass session within which all other issues are highlighted during opening day and closing days. The Bishop of the Catholic Church conducts mass or the parish priest in his absence. This is ritually believed for spiritual guidance and seeking of divine interventions in the boys' and girls' studies. During these sessions issues of student discipline are addressed while motivating them to work hard. This is followed by term opening examinations conducted for the first week before the commencement of normal actual learning. According to School 4 HODS FGD the school holds the opening session the second day after opening and all students assumed to have reported in the church hall after a mass service. The priest and teachers participate in talking to the boys. Issues which needed attentions are identified and direction given by the concern. Departments welcome the students and give them their anticipations in their class work. Official communication and notices are given too. Students and teachers are given time before they settle back to serious learning. School closing days in this school are usually without ceremony as report form and notices are given by class teachers the night before and students leave at dawn.

School 1 principal ensure that students report early on opening day and start individual opening term tests immediately after supper. These tests according to school 1 PA Chair person;

> *Tests are meant to ensure that all students report on the first day as those who miss tests are advised to either pay extra amount for the late examinations which are administered at the convenience of the academic master after being accompanied by a parent/ guardian or they be affected in their end year averages an issue that leads to a student being asked to re- learn a class for another year* (School 1 PA Chair person)

Rituals are procedures or routines that are infused with deeper meaning. They help make common experiences uncommon events. Every school has hundreds of routines, which were identified from the taking of attendance in the morning to the exiting procedures used in the afternoon. But when these routine events can be connected to a school's mission and values, they summon spirit and reinforce cultural ties. The rituals observed common in the study schools include; Roll calls, teachers' lesson logs, class prayers, class monitor report cards, departmental teachers' preparations reports and lesson observations. In the study schools, students' roll calls are taken in the morning and in the afternoons in classes to ensure that all students' absence or presences is noted. This helps in submitting reports and referrals for various reasons. It also provides ground of considerations in making future decisions on discipline and promotions. Boarding HODs with the assistance of students' leaders take roll calls at night in the hostels after night preps to ensure that all students sleep in time within their hostels. This is to monitor the students while in school and to curb possible deviancies like truancy.

In the schools both the teachers and students have to log in all lessons learned/ taught to help in monitoring lesson attendance by the teachers to ensure time is well expended and wastage is minimized. These reports are weekly submitted to the principal for further deliberations. These logs are incorporated with the parents and students report card reports. This forms the basis of decision making and determination of refresher course needs, seminars and workshops. These can be valuable expositories in delegation, recruitment placement in assignments. Heads of Departments are empowered to monitor and take consultatively decisions within their departments. This they do by observing class, checking content coverage by teachers by observing students' work in line to the common prepared schemes in relation to the individual lesson orientations. Teaching/learning resources provided at departmental level bought or improvised use is monitored to ensure proper, timely and relevantly utilized in the dissemination of syllabi content.

5.   SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary:

This study was undertaken to establish influence of school culture on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County. Analysis of each of the objectives collectively generated a series of key findings. Drawing on the key findings, gave rise to the themes and sub themes of school culture elements influencing students' performance in public boarding secondary schools. The extent to which each of the school cultural elements demonstrated effectiveness in relation to the themes determined the level of effectiveness of that school.

5.1.1Implications of Schools cultural norms on students' academic performance:

The objective is to establish implication of school cultural norms on students' academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County and guided by the research question, "What implications

have schools' cultural norms on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County?"

The study found out that:

Cultural norms circumscribed around school discipline, principals' personal attributes, leadership and administration, resources (human and financial), conflict resolution, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation. In relation therefore to this study and as a result, a school that promotes and enhances school culture and community partnerships for recruiting resources is the active collaborative involvement of school and parents and the entire local community, initiated and sustained by the Principal, to recruit additional local resources for improving teaching and learning, and better academic achievement of students. Although this partnership enables parents to discuss other school improvement issues and to collaborate with teachers in instilling student discipline whenever necessary, it is mainly geared towards the generation of resources to promote effective learning in these resource-poor schools.

This study established that the toughest part of living with norms is having the norms enforced as the reality is that every group will violate every norm at one time or another. In addressing the norms the study identified the need to talk about violations and how they will be dealt with whenever a situation occurs. This is because if attention to the fact that a norm has been violated, in effect will lead to creating another set of norms. Therefore, it is important after a group identifies its norms, they should suggest how they would like to be notified that they have violated a norm which this study recommends should be light and humorous ways to point out violations. Having all group members take responsibility for enforcing the norm is key and should not be just the job of the leader of the school or department.

In this study, the public boarding secondary schools initiated partnerships with parents and the local community to recruit resources to promote and enhance efficient teaching and learning, and better academic outcomes. For example, Schools conscientiously partnered with the local community by promoting an active Parent Association that recruited local resources to support teaching and learning, teachers' welfare and to enhance student discipline. The schools, advocated for parents and teachers cooperation as the best way of sustaining student discipline and parents' support which is necessary for creating an effective learning environment. Schools renewed regular meetings with PA executives and other parents. One school revived the interest of parents in school affairs and parents began to pay levies to fund school programs and also assisted the School in disciplinary issues concerning students. These effective school leaders also encouraged the respect for local ethos by teachers and students. The principals of performing schools regularly paid courtesy visits to the traditional chief and elders, local government and education officers and to some parents, including PA executive members.

Similarly, some other principals attempted to improve their relationship with the executive members of the Parent Association, parents and community but they failed. Sometimes, this was caused by a lack of engaging dialogue between the school and parents. At other times, it was due to a lack of determination, commitment and perseverance from these principals. However, sometimes even the minimal efforts of these principals were frustrated by parents' apathy towards school and by disagreements with the PA on ways of resolving the many challenges. For example, a school's inability to effectively dialogue with parents' hindered consensus on which infrastructure problems should be prioritized and resolved. Moreover, the parents and the local community of the schools, headed by less-effective principals, did not give any support to the teachers, as illustrated by the gross neglect of teachers of the school. This finding was in consonance with Family-Schools and Community Partnerships Bureau (2008) argument that research has shown that where there is effective collaboration and partnership between the school, parents and local community, the quality of schooling improves and students have better learning experiences. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) also stated that the greatest contribution of principals to the performance of their teachers and students is their ability to create meaningful, collaborative cultures or partnerships in their schools. They emphasize that when principals are able to redesign their schools' organization through collaborative cultures and structures within and outside the schools and build productive relationships with parents and communities, they strengthen the effectiveness of their schools.

In a similar vein, Fullan (2008), speaking about professional learning community, explains the significance of the establishment of collaborative cultures and partnerships which is a distinctive mark of professional learning communities. He believes that these partnerships enhance the contribution of all players in the school community, which includes the principal, teachers, students, parents, and the local community towards generating greater student learning. Watson,

Partington, Gray and Mack (2006) also argued that students' academic achievement in Aboriginal and minority communities, in Western Australia, depended on focused principalship that harnessed school and local community values and partnership a fact that is supported by the findings that community and other stakeholders commitment to school influences students' outcomes in KCSE. This is further supported by Glaze, Pervin and Maika (2007) study that stated that leadership that focuses on engaging students' families, community and culture, as well as the school system, in promoting students' learning and achievement, must equally exercise a strong instructional direction. In the context of Africa, the work of Mazibuko, Gathu, Mkatshwa and Manyatsi (2008) on promoting community partnership in the management of schools in Swaziland is informative receives positive support in line with the findings of the present study.

Similarly, this research has demonstrated how the principals who headed some low performing public boarding school, successfully transformed their schools and created better teaching and learning environments through the promotion of better rapport with the executive members of the Parent Association, and with parents and the local community. They sustained their warm relations with parents and community by occasional courtesy calls on elders, chiefs, selected parents and other leaders of the community. Further, their interaction with parents, through regular PA meetings, helped to sustain an active relationship that supported the recruitment of needed resources to enhance teacher support, teaching and learning. These local resources were critical for they helped these principals to procure teaching and learning materials and also to give token remuneration for teachers who taught extra-tutorials and to support teachers. This was how the community partnership influenced better teaching and learning outcomes was influenced in the study schools.

As illustrated by the literature, an active partnership with local community helps schools in achieving goals of improving teaching and learning and obtaining better learning outcomes of students. However, the literature of Western developed countries makes little mention of the establishment of better rapport with parents and community purposely for the recruitment of financial resources to remunerate salaried and non-salaried teachers, and in support of acquisition of teaching and learning materials and teachers' welfare. This research demonstrates this unique community partnership for recruiting resources in support of teachers' teaching and learning, and boosting students' achievement in Kisii Central Sub County public secondary school context.

Personal attributes of the principal as the central key player, coordinator of school activities has direct influence on the ways relationships are established and maintained to support students' academic achievements. This is echoed by Williams, (2005) that positive personal attributes are personal qualities or desirable characteristics of an individual. They consist positive traits of character of the individual. Being a good listener, open-minded and caring, sympathetic towards the concerns of others, inspiring, a team player and committed to one's goal are some positive traits of character also known as positive attributes (Kotelnikov, 2001; Stevens, 2003). These personal qualities or dispositions employed by successful schools to create a positive response to their initiatives, policies, instructions, and actions from their followers in establish and maintaining a school culture that significantly influences students' academic performance.

In this study, many principals in public boarding secondary schools, demonstrated positive professional and personal attributes such as friendliness, commitment, interest, and dedication to the school and students. School 1 principal was noted for his friendliness, his interest, and dedication to the School, his warm human relational skills and accessibility to students, teachers and parents, the principals' resourceful supervisory leadership and exemplary conduct and arbitration skills. In School 2, the principal positively influenced her teachers, students, and parents by her open-mindedness, her spirit of dialogue and consultation, her deep respect and support for her teachers and students alike.

The principals of these performing schools demonstrated resourceful supervisory leadership, exemplary conduct and arbitration skills, sympathy and concern for the welfare of teachers and students, as well as perseverance and dialogue. These positive characteristics were not only acknowledged and admired by their collaborators but principally helped to create better rapport with staff, students and parents in making decisions, and garnering support in implementing them. This resulted in improved collegiality and cooperation between the effective principal and his/ her collaborators and positively influenced measures taken to improve teacher professionalism, student discipline and enhance student learning. However, in low performing schools, although the professional and personal attributes of the principal might be acknowledged, these hardly influenced the behaviour and attitudes of staff and students. For example, although School 4 principal's attributes of commitment, sympathy, perseverance, and dialogue were acknowledged and admired; his lack of

managerial skills prevented the effective harnessing of these attributes to command respect, authority, obedience, and collaboration from her staff. As a result, he could not gain their commitment and cooperation in implementing policies and strategies towards improving standards. His inability to gain the active collaboration of her staff in spite of his personal attributes and efforts demonstrated by his failure to stop staff unprofessional conduct and halt student indiscipline as well as to gain parents' cooperation.

This study observed that when establishing norms it is necessary to consider the members opinions, time available, group objectives, members' abilities, strengths and weaknesses, confidentiality, decision making, participation and expectations. It was evident that personal qualities of the principal alone were insufficient in designing, influencing, and promoting students' performance as well as to gain the positive respect, obedience, and collaboration of teachers, students, and parents towards implementing the policies and actions necessary to create a positive learning environment for students and teachers. As team leaders, principals needed other skills and experiences in managerial and instructional leadership to be able to harness their personal attributes positively influence the conduct and collaboration of their followers. Guruchandran (2004) explained that there are many qualities that characterise a successful school culture and leader. However, among all the positive attributes of an individual who is a leader, he believes five of them are most essential. These characteristics or attributes are: having a personality, being a visionary, being a listener and observer, having self-belief and motivation, and being a team player. Guruchandran also argued that some successful leaders may not have all the required positive attributes of a good leader in establishing school culture but they would be intelligent enough to conceal their negatives by those qualities they possess and thus, be effective in their leadership endeavours.

The study opined that members who ascribe to certain norms make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority and include those who are affected by decisions in the decision-making. Undoubtedly, school culture, the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of those being led are usually influenced by the personal attributes of their leaders. The concept of the influence of the leader's personal attributes is well developed by Schein (2002) and Schneider (2007). Sanders (2004) explain that leaders always influence those they lead by their personal attributes and values; their traits of behaviour. This study extensive researched on the significant influence of leaders' personal attributes on their decisions, options and choices in their leading roles which are important school culture elements. This study explains that positive personal attributes of the leader influence the behaviour of the followers through the leader's responsible management and leadership. Similarly, in this study, evidence has demonstrated that the principals of School 1 and School 2 showed friendliness, warm human relational skills as well as deep respect, care and support for staff and students. Further, their personal commitment to their schools, their concern for the welfare of staff, their spirit of dialogue and consultation; in short, their personal positive attributes earned the respect and active cooperation of students and staff alike in their efforts to improve teaching and learning.

Finally, each group needs to periodically evaluate its adherence to the norms. This study points out that each member should be given an opportunity to speak about what he or she has observed or take of the norm. Each member should be encouraged to identify the group's areas of strength as well as its areas of weakness, but not to single out violators as this if not well handled may split the group farther. Students who were edified by the exemplary conduct of their principal, especially his punctuality, influenced school culture and began to arrive at school on time, while teachers who admired his arbitration skills and resourcefulness became more cooperative and committed. One may ask whether these personal attributes by themselves, without the managerial and instructional skills of these leaders would have influenced positively the attitudes and response of their followers; the teachers, students and parents and community. Evidence from this study, however, shows that the personal attributes of principals alone were incapable of influencing the school culture fully to influence the behaviour and attitudes of collaborators and partners in working as a team and collectively achieving a set of goals. The research showed that personal attributes only influenced attitudes, behaviour and response of those being led provided the principals, also exhibited a high level of instructional and managerial leadership. For example, School 4 Principal was admired by his teachers and students for her sympathetic attitude towards teachers and students, and also for his commitment to the School and his sense of perseverance.

However, due to her lack of management and supervisory skills, as exhibited by some leaders' inabilities to check teachers and students deviancies like; lateness and absenteeism ,these personal values failed to gain a positive response from staff and students in their efforts to improve academic standards. In other words, personal attributes of the principal

are necessary but not sufficient condition for his or her ability to promote high academic standards. Yes, it is important to have a person with positive attributes, good character and values as a principal. However, the good mannered principal also essentially needs good managerial and supervisory skills or experience to become an effective leader of positive school culture change and academic improvement in a school. Thus, the leading roles of the principal, whether they are managerial, instructional or collegial, are always enhanced by his or her personal positive attributes but the lack of leadership skills of the leader cannot be compensated for by his or her personal attributes alone.

Instructional leadership is that function of the school leadership culture that provides direction, coordination and resources for the exclusive improvement of curriculum and instruction. In other words, instructional leadership is the role of the principal in directing, coordinating and resourcing for the improvement of curriculum and instruction that is often referred to as instructional leadership. Thomas (2008) explains instructional leadership as the creation of accountable learning systems in schools to help change practices that will improve student learning in respect of standardized testing. Managerial leadership, on the other hand, refers to maintaining facilities, ensuring student discipline, and meeting state reporting requirements. Others see this managerial role more as inspiring and empowering personnel to seek quality for the school and help assure the welfare for all persons (Hoyle, 2006). These scholars emphasised that effective leaders today are no longer necessarily good managers who know how to command everyone to complete school improvement projects. Today, capable school leadership cultures are those who bring along everyone in the school team, by developing their talents, by motivating them and by guiding them collegially to achieve the goals of school improvement and student achievement.

Therefore, the findings of this study that the principal is at centre of the school culture and the principal of a public boarding school should work to strike a balance between management and leadership. This adds to Hoyle (2006),that instructional and managerial leadership of the principal has to do with the intentional creative efforts of the principal to seriously improve school culture in classroom teaching and student learning, and enhance academic achievement through his or her able coordination, direction, provision, and maintenance of the school's physical and human resourcing. However, Hoyle (2006) emphasise more the instructional role of the principal and less his or her managerial role which according to this study is identified as a role of the effective school leadership culture serves essentially to promote and consolidate his or her instructional roles.

This research revealed that some school cultures demonstrated instructional leadership through their multiple teacher supervision activities and regular checks on student learning. In schools, the principal's instructional leadership was demonstrated through his supervision of teachers' work. School culture elements worthy to note in the principal's actions were; correcting lesson notes, direct coaching of some teachers and the random check of students' work, as well as the conduct of academic and staff meetings to evaluate students' learning. Other strategies and practices which had direct influence on instruction and learning were extra-tutorials, student group studies, regular supervised class tests, debates and quizzes, instruction by expert subject tutors and teachers, as well as multiple practice examinations and teacher improvisation in Science and ICT. These were employed as standard practices for improving teaching and learning and preparing students to be KCSE confident and ready. Management of staff and students to enhance staff professionalism and student discipline featured prominently among the numerous leadership tasks of principals who headed the two high performing schools.

These school culture elements are also implemented in short-term strategies such as benchmarking teacher performance to promote teacher competency. These instructional practices and efforts did not take place in a vacuum. They were inspired, accompanied and consolidated by well-reflected and creative managerial initiatives and actions. For example, as a short-term strategy, schools provided welfare and support to teachers. This invigorated cordial relationships between teachers and Principal and strengthened teacher instructional confidence and responsibility, discipline and motivation hence promote students' performance. Also, through sustained involvement with local politicians and education officers she procured further assistance in the form of text books, repair of school furniture, wiring and electric installation in classrooms. Her cooperation with teachers to supervise students at school farms resulted in good harvests that generated additional income to support teaching and learning.

For long-term school culture improvement, the Principal of a school was lobbying the local education authorities on the recruitment of more experienced, trained teachers and active parent teacher cooperation in supporting teachers. One

principal and her teachers implemented their second strategy, which was to restore student discipline and create an academically challenging and healthy environment that would sustain learning as a short-term plan. Managerially, they instilled strict discipline among students through deterrence measures (punishments) and through positive means (rewards) such as awards for hard work, academic excellence and good conduct. These measures resulted in four positive transformations. Firstly, teachers recommitted themselves to teaching effectively and students responded positively to disciplinary measures and showed renewed enthusiasm for studies. Secondly, disciplinary measures dissuaded students and reduced absenteeism and lateness to school. Thirdly, students became sanitation and health conscious and also took their studies more seriously and actively participated in all academic activities. Fourthly, academic work and students' achievement improved.

It is noteworthy that at the very beginning of one principal's appointment as the official Principal of a school, she devoted significant time, energy and resources to management issues, such as meeting parents and encouraging them to assist the school, checking teacher and student absenteeism and lateness, and meeting and planning with staff on how to improve the learning environment. She dedicated less time and energy to actual supervision of instruction in the classrooms at that time. The principal began to place more emphasis on her instructional leadership role, only after student discipline and teacher professionalism improved.

These standard practices of performing schools blended to some extent the interplay between their instructional and managerial roles as principals. However, there is no doubt that both school leaders devoted, in the long run, more time and energy to initiatives and actions that directly contributed to improving teachers' classroom teaching and students' learning. Their success in reducing teacher and student absenteeism and lateness, for example, boosted the quality of teaching and learning that was achieved during school contact hours. It was those practices which created an effective learning environment that enhanced both teaching and student learning, and consequently, helped in preparing students to be confident and ready to sit the KCSE.

However, the other Schools' principals who attempted certain instructional strategies such as use of extra-tutorials, practice examinations and class tests to improve student learning and raise achievement failed, as they lacked the managerial skills to garner the cooperation of their staff and students. In one school the principal's inability to curb the problem of teachers' lateness/ absenteeism, despite her many initiatives to do so, rendered the introduction of extra-tutorials to cover the syllabuses ineffective. In fact, one principal undertook other instructional initiatives, such as coaching of teachers and organization of some professional learning workshops, but these made little improvement to students' learning, as lack of commitment of many teachers and students persisted. Inadequate supervision of staff, lack of collaboration among teachers and Principal and absence of dialogue with students led to the failure of extra-tutorials as a strategic tool for improving learning in school. Teachers continued to teach new concepts during extra-tutorials, and failed to correct and give feedback on practice examination scripts, and thereby deprived students of any preparation prior to sitting their final examinations.

Finally, lack of instructional leadership and management skills of principals of low performing schools created more problems for teaching and learning. For example, school 3 principal's ineffective teaching and learning environment was partly caused by the lack of teaching ability and unprofessional conduct of some teachers. These teachers wanted some form of financial support for their work and were open to coaching to improve their teaching skills and professionalism, but the principal was unable to provide the leadership to achieve that. School 3 principal's inability to acknowledge and to resolve the economic challenges faced by teachers partly provoked teacher apathy and unprofessional conduct. Consequently, not even the principal's personal teaching capability, as attested by students, or his individual commitment in organising, single-handedly, extra-tutorials were sufficient to garner teachers' cooperation in addressing the School's low standards.

Hoyle (2006) emphasised the importance of instructional leadership in comparison to managerial leadership. He reported that a nationally-acclaimed teaching award winner threatened to be transferred to a new school because principals considered investigating a reported roof leak more important than keeping abreast the more wanted and abated resources and teachers. Hoyle illustrated the danger of neglecting instructional leadership through excessive managerial practices. He explained that the management efforts of the principal must serve his or her instructional goals, as it is the instructional leadership that improves learning. This study has indicated how the high performing schools successfully

strategized with teachers and students to improve teaching and learning. The Principals, through managerial initiatives, gained cooperation of parents and community in recruiting resources to support teachers' welfare, to provide additional teaching and learning materials and to maintain student discipline. These managerial successes led to the improvement of teaching and learning as teachers became motivated and more committed and students took their studies more seriously.

Further, supervision of teaching, correction of teachers' lesson notes, and random check of students' class tests and assignments by the principals ensured that teachers and students were performing their respective roles effectively. The clean and orderly school environment and cordial school atmosphere created through the cooperation of teachers and students with other stakeholders helped to maintain a healthy learning atmosphere. Thus, the effectiveness of the schools is an illustration of how these principals balanced both their instructional leadership and managerial leadership roles in creating a favourable learning environment that fostered high student achievement.

The principals of the high performing schools in Kisii Central Sub County at various times had to give priority to one of these leadership roles. School 2 principal did not introduce extra-tutorials, nor did she begin to check students' assignments and class tests, until she was satisfied that she and her teachers had identified the factors that were challenging academic standards and had collectively begun to implement strategies to resolve those challenges. In other words, in the context of those schools where infrastructure and qualified teaching personnel remained a systemic problem, the most effective principal may be the one who has greater creative managerial initiatives in managing these hurdles while at the same time spending sufficient time to supervise instruction, promote teacher professional development and student learning. No matter how much time and energy the principal in these schools may invest in ensuring effective instruction and learning, all those efforts come to nothing if he or she fails to reduce lateness and absenteeism of teachers and students. So, a balance between managerial and instructional roles of the schools should be encouraged.

The model of leadership that has emerged from the analysis and interpretations of data gathered during the research represents how the school elements of effective leadership accounted for the transformation from low to high academic achievement that took place in Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kisii Central Sub County. No individual element that emerged from the study is sufficient by itself to transform academic standards of a school to higher student learning and achievement outcomes. It is the interconnectedness of these elements, developed through a series of specific strategies employed by the principals of Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kisii Central Sub County that resulted in the emergence of positive values which in turn created an encouraging teaching and learning environment which, foster higher academic standards and improved student performance.

This study witnessed a full-court press to create a school environment where all employees and students of a school act in unison to enable the school to achieve its goals and purposes better, participate in decision-making processes, can express their opinions freely, internalize the practices determined and the decisions made, and accommodate to change. Hence, school culture is of vital importance. The school culture, which affects and guides the behaviours of the entire school population positively or negatively, may become a point of support or a big obstacle in front of change though, Gunter (2007) reflects the belief that everything changes. Her premise is that there are so many variables affecting all aspects of life that change is not only inevitable; but also it is unpredictable as organizations have to adapt to changing conditions in order to survive. It is not that easy for organizations to adapt to the changing conditions; they face a variety of resistance. Changes that took place in science and technology caused important changes in education as in many other fields.

The study realized that changes in contents and presentation of curricula, process of management, teaching and learning and the roles of educational leaders is readily received and adopted to in the public boarding schools hence less wastage during transition. Schools and educational organizations have to keep pace with the changes in order to achieve their aims. It is necessary for everyone in schools and educational organizations to participate in the change process for effectiveness and improvement. However, in some schools it was seen that change process cannot be managed as it must be and there is resistance to change and as a result it results in failure. It is essential to study different attitudes of different stakeholders towards the school culture change and transformation practices in order to accomplish change initiatives successfully. Understanding the school culture correctly and realizing the importance of basic beliefs, values, and norms, which are the most important elements of the school culture, in achieving the change will help develop a broader perspective and think sophisticatedly for comprehending complex relations in the school, determining the obstacles in front of change, and settling problems.

This study found out that school culture is dynamic, it changes from time to time and vary from school to school. This supports the argument that in order for successful reform to occur, practitioners must establish a culture of change (Sarason, 2006; Hollins, 2006). Understanding the school culture is an important factor in any change and reform attempt (Hinde, 2004). Understanding school culture can help us to use "a broader framework for understanding difficult problems and complex relationships within the school" (Stolp, 2004).The school culture either enhances or blocks change. The culture of each school drives everything that happens at schools. By understanding school culture deeply, how school evolves towards continuous improvement can be understood. Finnan (2000) states that success or failure of reform efforts depend on whether brought reform model is compatible with the culture of the school or whether it is supported by the majority to a large extent.

Public boarding schools have a culture on resources mobilization and utilization that promotes school core function of students performances. These findings add to Soanes and Hawkers, (2008) that resourcing is finding and providing the appropriate material, finance and people needed for the successful execution of a specific task or project. It is noteworthy that, resourcing through provision of physical, material or financial means and human capital is a necessity for any successful human undertaking or project such as schooling. All institutions necessarily need resourcing to be able to function normally and achieve their declared objectives, vision and mission. With respect to institutions such as schools, resourcing is often described in terms of physical and human resources. Physical resources refer to the tangible reality that exists in the real material world. In the school context, these include classroom and office buildings and furniture, library and Information Communication Technology gadgets and facilities, school vehicles, science equipment, various teaching and learning materials, and so on. Human resources comprise mainly the appropriately qualified and experienced personnel employed in a school to work towards the realisation of the goals of the school, students academic performance. This study agrees to Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) explained that the fundamental business of any organisation is to make things happen in a productive manner so that the business will continue to prosper and the personnel also continue to thrive. The study also observed that a good manager or organisational leader must balance efforts of meeting human aspirations of his or her resourceful personnel with achieving the strategic goals of the organisation. This research has identified a series of physical resourcing challenges faced by all public boarding schools that were studied. Among these were inadequate infrastructures in respect of classrooms, school furniture, lavatories, library, ICT and science equipment and facilities, and a host of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks.

The study also demonstrated a number of human resourcing challenges that were faced by all the study schools and influenced school culture, namely: teaching overload, teacher unprofessionalism and teacher apathy and non-commitment. It also showed examples of resilience, perseverance and ingenuity of some effective principals in harnessing inadequate physical and human resources to achieve their goals of creating a learning environment that fostered effective learning and higher achievement of students. For example, in the absence of qualified trained teachers to teach specific subjects, the Principals recruited, on a voluntary basis, expert tutors, and expert teachers from the locality, who taught students during extra-tutorials. Schools, devised strategies that helped them compensate for the inadequacy in physical and human resourcing. For example, some principals initiated an active partnership with parents and community in order to recruit additional funding to support teachers' welfare and to purchase teaching and learning materials. Schools that collaborated with local education officers and politicians also helped them to find further assistance, although minimal, in physical resourcing of their respective schools. These strategic efforts were necessary and useful for achieving their goal of improving academic standards.

The inability of schools to initiate collectively, strategies to resolve even to a minimal degree, their physical and human resource inadequacies had adverse influence on their individual efforts towards the improvement of academic standards of their respective schools. For example, school 3 principal failed to resolve the problem of inadequate school furniture and congestion in the classrooms because she was unable to rally the parents to collectively appreciate these issues and seek common solutions. The principal and parents remained divided on issues related to infrastructural resourcing to improve standards. Another school, on the one hand, succeeded in collaborating with local politicians to bring electricity to school, a major boost to learning, as students were able to return to classes in the evening and study. However, he was unable to improve and sustain his relationship with parents and PA for further recruitment of physical resources to facilitate and improve teaching and learning. Further, in the face of acute human resourcing challenges, namely lack of trained teachers and the unprofessionalism of teachers, school 3 principal failed to initiate immediate concrete steps towards resolving these issues.

In the studied schools good human resource management positively influences good physical resource management. Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) emphasized that all successful leaders are effective human resource managers in meeting the classical organizational objectives, namely; adequate staffing, performance, change management and administration. In this study it has been observed that the successful principals of school developed strategies that enhanced supervision of teachers' work and students' learning. They also demonstrated improved management of the necessary changes that they had initiated in order to mitigate and reduce teaching and learning inadequacies and enhance learning. Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2004) also stated that successful human resource management is that which enables the staff and the authorities to agree on the nature and objectives of their working relationship and ensures the fulfilment of that agreement. By crafting and promoting a common vision and mission for their respective schools, schools rallied their teachers, students and parents through the Parents Association, in identifying firstly, the issues militating against effective teaching and learning, and secondly, in collectively agreeing on and implementing specific strategies towards improving the status quo. In one school, for example, teachers not only acknowledged the unprofessional conduct of some of their colleagues but accepted the challenge and changed their attitudes, thus improving teaching. Some heads of schools demonstrated, to some extent, good human resource management that enhanced their efforts to create an adequate learning environment that boosted effective learning and better academic achievement.

Schools 1 had a variety of separate school buildings, comprising of classrooms, offices, hostels, staff houses, libraries, stores, halls, laboratories, and kitchen. In one of the buildings, the outer room served as an office of the Principal and the inner room was used as a storage facility for books and other school materials. One school not only had separate toilet and urinal facilities for students but also female and male Staff sanitarium maintained and kept clean throughout. It also had neatly covered containers used for storing water for drinking by staff and students. The school has dormitories, dining hall, classroom block, and Computer and Science laboratories. There are Technical Education workshops for Woodwork, Metal work, Electricity, Power mechanics, and Agriculture. Students partake in watering of the livestock and vegetables from which meat and greens for meals are outsourced.

The Boarding Department at another School is mandated to ensure all students are accorded comfortable and safe accommodation for a conducive learning environment. High standards are maintained in line with the ministry of education's guidelines. For the teachers to give their best and to dedicate their energies, expertise and time to their students, their welfare must be taken care of teachers' welfare is run and managed by teachers to cater for their social and personal needs. Every teacher at school has an obligation to be a member of the welfare and participate actively in its programmes. The teachers' welfare helps in boosting teachers' morale by creating conducive environment thus improving efficiency. Schools 2 similar to other schools in Kisii County, having separate school buildings which housed classrooms, the Principal's and deputy principal's offices, bursars and accounts offices, staff common room, hostels, laboratories, library, halls, stores and sanitariums appeared decent and well maintained, probably because they were refurbished. The School compound is adorned mainly with shady cool trees planted in rows along the boundaries of the school property and at particular points across the entire compound. These provided shade during the hot afternoons. Some hedges had also been planted along the verandas of each of the buildings to beautify them. All students with the help of school assigned workers swept clean the school premises including the classrooms, staff common room, Principal's office, urinals, and toilets. Fine pebbles were arranged neatly in a circle around the School's flag pole, planted in front of the veranda of the Principal's office and against the eaves of the building. During the school assembly, which always began with the singing of the Kenya National Anthem, the Principal and other staff gave notices and other important information to students before the commencement of lessons.

School 3 had separate lavatories and urinal facilities for staff according to sex while students had their own. However, these were inadequate for the population of the school and a new pit latrine was under construction at the time of the research. In the early years of establishment, it was considered as a top-achieving school in the locality, and its graduates were among the majority of those gainfully employed in various fields in the country. The academic performance of students at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) level for the past decade however, had faced challenges related to examinations and performance credibility in 2010 and 2012 (MOEST, 2011 and 2013). Typically, all high performing pupils who completed their Primary eight and attained top marks especially much over 350 marks out of the possible 500 marks are admitted to pursue secondary education. Schools have large parcels of land more than 10 acres, has ventured into dairy, poultry and fish farming. School 2 recently introduced a piggery. "*We get enough eggs from our*

farm for the girls. The milk from 13 dairy cows is however not sufficient," she adds. Ministry of education, county government officials, elected and former MPs, parents and other stakeholder grazed a function where a multimillion block was opened officially. The block has a library, tuition classes, departmental offices, and computer lab.

School 4 was a relatively average school in performance and had no staffing problem due to its location and proximity to town. All of its teachers were trained. The school has enough buildings that house classrooms with additional rooms, which served as offices for the Principal, deputy principal, HODS, and a staff common room. The students each had a desk or a writing table and a chair. The classrooms were spacious enough so not congested. There is a hall designed as the visitors lobby and reception of the Principal's office and a library facility with a variety of library books bought by the school or donated by parents or Non Governmental Organisations. Teachers were allowed to borrow books to prepare their lessons and could take them home if they needed to. Students could only borrow books during school hours and were not allowed to take them home for fear that they would misplace or soil them. There were separate toilets for teaching staff, support staff and students as this makes these schools child friendly. Students kept the school compound clean and free from litter. Even the leaves shed by the few trees planted around the compound were swept, gathered and burnt in a nearby pit every morning prior to the commencement of lessons. Students used both verandas of their classroom block as play areas during breaks, especially if the weather was extremely hot. Water for drinking was kept in clean containers at the staff room and at vantage points on classroom verandas. Enough big polyethylene tanks are installed at various building for the purpose of harvesting rain water for use by students.

There are enough classrooms which are spacious and not congested provide a conducive environment suitable for learning. This the principal does by admitting only a number that is accommodative and sustainable. This study found out that teachers render better service when classes are not overcrowded and this is an established policy in these schools. To solve this issue classes are grouped to sizeable streams to make a teacher able to correct students work quickly and carefully as they have manageable numbers of students. Provision of staff housing to teachers who hold key positions in school and are involved in key roles contributes positively to school performance. According to one school, a teacher who is willing and ready to be housed in school is an indicator of commitment in serving students. Proximity to the students by teachers promotes accessibility and constant consultation. It also promotes punctuality and attendance of remedial tutorial classes. This culture has been established to promote commitment. Schools which do not have sufficient staff houses, have one common house with residential facilities to be used by duty teachers and those involved on remedial classes or assessment tests late into the night.

Negative and retrogressive school cultures were characterized by inadequacy of basic textbooks, poorly maintained school furniture and inadequate toilet facility and urinals in some schools. Absence of active partnership and collaboration with parents resulting in limited parents' support. There was a dysfunctional Parent Association and meetings were irregular. Addressing these issues became the strategic priorities of leadership of the school and as principal, there was need to solicit for support from stakeholders before embarking on supervisory and management roles. This agrees with Soanes and Hawkers, (2008) that values are beliefs of a person or a group of persons about what is right or wrong and what is important. Emerging positive values in this research refer essentially to those emergent values that characterised the top-achieving public boarding schools. Positive values are the accepted principles or standards of an individual or a group of people. Greenfield (2006) declared that what many parents really want is for their schools to reflect the same values that are meaningful and important in their own lives. In a school context, values and norms are the bedrock upon which a school culture is nurtured and thrives. These values always influence the vision and mission of the school and how they are achieved.

This study concluded that a set of values and norms that help bind the people around them together was important and in consonance to MacNeil and Maclin (2005) who explains that leaders of successful schools help to develop values with and among their collaborators, teachers, students and parents. It is through collective decision making, infusion of shared ideas, beliefs, theories and values that the successful school leader facilitates the process of developing school culture and a learning environment that supports improved student achievement. According to these intellectuals, school leaders who work together with their collaborators and favour collegiality achieve a collective purpose that gives direction and shapes beliefs, values, and attitudes of the school community in promoting better learning outcomes. As a result, every effective school has a strong functioning culture and sense of purpose. The set of values, principles, and norms upon which this functioning school culture is built and developed came about often as a negotiated product of shared sentiments of

members of the school community (Sergiovanni, 2001). This study explains that when these values and attitudes established in the school, they easily become a powerful socialiser of thought and programmer of certain behaviours positive and lead to positive students' outcomes.

In the course of this study it has been observed that the personal positive conduct of a principal, his or her sense of duty, dialogue, collegiality and team spirit coupled with the orderly school atmosphere positively influenced the attitudes, conduct and behaviour of teachers and students. For example, punctuality and orderliness, commitment, perseverance and pride in maintaining the school as a top-achieving school were cherished values in the high-achieving schools. These values begin to emerge as a result of the cordial relationship that existed between staff and students and the efforts of students to imitate the positive dispositions of their principal and their teachers. The use of dialogue, positive dissuasion, persuasion and regular supervision helped in discouraging less positive attitudes, such as students' lateness to school, long absence from school and failure to do class assignments. This was instrumental in encouraging an enhanced sense of responsibility, discipline, perseverance, hard work and the spirit of positive competition and studiousness. The attitudes, behaviour and conduct of the students were gradually characterised by these values. For example, schools, students were self-reliant and took their own responsibility to improve learning. They organised group studies on their own where some of their colleagues would help re-teach or re-explain concepts not well understood during the normal lessons. Some students began to develop their sense of hygiene and healthy lifestyles as a result of their school's policy on a clean school environment and physical fitness. The emergence of these values boost teacher and student cooperation in improving learning and thus contributed to raising standards.

This study found out that although many principals of schools demonstrated a number of positive attributes and values, these did not influence or alter positively the behaviour and conduct of their teachers and students. For example, students of one School admired the punctuality of their principal, yet many of those students kept to respond sluggishly to calls like going to class late after a break or a meal. It is through working together as a team with similar interests and collective objectives that the positive attitude and values of an individual may influence the conduct of other members to the point of altering behaviour (Sergiovanni, 2001). Consultation, team spirit and concerted efforts were rare in some schools and as a result, attitudes of students and teachers remained unchanged, possibly hampering the development of cherished values such as punctuality and commitment. For example, students and teachers of certain schools continued to be absent from school and came to school late. The failure to change attitudes rendered any concerted effort to redress their school's low academic standards less effective.

This study has confirmed the observation made by MacNeil and Maclin (2005) that through collegiality and dialogue or collective decision making, infusion of shared ideas, beliefs and values, the high performing schools, facilitates the process of developing school values that shape behaviour of the collaborators and promote better learning outcomes. Principals led their respective schools by example. Their personal punctuality influenced the change of attitude of students and teachers, who reduced lateness and absenteeism. This affirms Sergiovanni's (2001) assertion that when values and positive attitudes have become established in a school, they easily become powerful socialisers of thought and 'programmers' of certain behaviour. In one school, students responded to the principal's punctuality and orderliness by becoming sanitation and health conscious, and taking their studies more seriously through active participation in all academic activities. These elements of school culture that characterised the culture of the high-achieving Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kisii Central Sub County locality, were not sufficiently present in the all schools,. As a result, the level of school effectiveness that fostered an improved learning environment and better academic results depended on how many of the culture elements were present in a particular school. The presence of one, two, or more elements of effectiveness in a school was no guarantee of its effectiveness but rather, the cluster and the interconnectedness of all the elements that created the school environment and culture that fostered high academic standards and improved student achievement.

5.1.2 Implication of School Ceremonies on students' academic performance:

This objective was to determine implications of school rituals and ceremonies on students' academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County and guided by research question, "Which ceremonies imply on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County?"

The study found out that:

The study found out that schools under study had common ceremonies. Some of the common ceremonies include; Parents' meetings, and prize giving days, class conferences, "Fabulous Friday", "Parent University", Academic staff meetings, Debates and Drama, Parents' Meetings and Class Conferences, Co- curricular Activities School, Opening and Closing Assembly, Annual class conferences, school academic outings and innings, academic trips among others. The rituals observed common in the study schools include; Roll calls, teachers' lesson logs, class prayers, class monitor report cards, departmental teachers' preparations reports and lesson observations.

Academic staff meetings had become an important school routine according to the teachers. At the beginning of every school term, the principals encouraged teachers to specifically meet and discuss students' academic performance during the previous term. At these meetings the concerns of the principal and teachers in respect of teaching and learning, and ways of resolving them were discussed. The findings are in line with Deal and Peterson (2011) who say ceremonies are times to come together to connect to deeper values and purposes. Through ceremonies a school celebrates successes, communities its values and recognizes special contributions of staff, parents and students. Celebrations are opportunities to recognize the accomplishments of individuals groups. They demonstrate possible possibilities for success and build up a sense of pride in a school performance.

In many other schools, local heroes and heroines, exemplars of core values, provide models of what everyone should be striving for. These deeply committed staff comes in willing to meet with students to constantly upgrade their skills and enthusiasm towards high performance. The Principal informed the students of happenings in the school and of major events and activities through daily morning assemblies with students and teachers or internal memos. Sometimes, through the students' school prefect, he obtained relevant feedback from students on academic, disciplinary or financial concerns of students. He encouraged students to meet and discuss certain issues among themselves and to report back to him. Peterson (2002) shares ways in which principals and staff leaders can nurture the school culture's positive aspects as to celebrate successes in staff meetings and ceremonies, tell stories of accomplishment and collaboration whenever there is an opportunity. Ouma (2011) recommends that School Management Committee should encourage parents to get involved in the school rituals and ceremonies in order to increase reward ceremonies and rituals that involve the teachers in order to improve their motivation.

Monday and Friday assembly gatherings where important announcements are made by various parties, the principal plans at least ones a term to meet individual class students for a special meeting to interact freely with the students in the absence of other members of staff. This is meant to give both the students and the principal enhance rapport, identify area of students' concerns, advice, guide and counsel in order to achieve school core objectives. This Study submits to research by Akyeampong (2007) initiate and encourage a participatory decision making process through regular staff meetings, consultation with implementation committees and heads of department and a dialogue with students. Unlike the academic teaching-staff meetings, where not only academic issues are discussed, the regular staff meetings catered for all issues, ranging from teachers' welfare, students' discipline, parents' support, teaching and learning and academic performance to sports, recreational activities and socio-cultural issues.

The conduct of debates on topics of popular current affairs, on merits and demerits of science and technology, on environmental protection, and on politics and democratic governance, abolition of corporal punishment in schools as well as on local social, cultural and economic issues had become an essential means of informing and training students in public speaking and in the correct use of the English language in presenting logical arguments and analysis. These findings are in support to Deal and Peterson (2011) that rituals are processes or daily routines that are infused with deep meaning. They are more than just technical actions. Rituals help transform common experience into uncommon events. When these routine events can be connected to a school mission and values they summon spirit and reinforce cultural ties. Many of the nuances of secondary school life such as the movement of students to a system of bells or buzzers, the congregating in front of lockers, homeroom and the clustering of classrooms by subject area have become something of cultural icons deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of a significant portion of the public.

Secondary Schools offer a great range of sporting activities for the students' recreation. All the activities are co-ordinated by various teams which have team heads and captains. The teams also have team teachers who help in organisation of the students and have the responsibility of taking the teams for external functions. The performance of the teams is relatively

good. There are activities, in which the houses compete - Science congress, athletics, cross-country, ball games, drama and academics. Hoffman (2002) agrees that contemporary secondary schools have developed into complex social organizations. These institutions have a definitive impact on the way in which their community members negotiate the terms of their existence within their walls and directly affect students' engagement with the institutions they attend, as well as with the process of formal education.

The school opening meeting is held on the second day of opening. In this meeting departments through a representative are given a chance to contribute on how they plan to make their departments better in supporting curriculum. Suggestions of their involvement are sought and each department highlights areas which the wish addressed and the necessary contributions expected from participants. These findings agree to Deal and Peterson (2010) who say ceremonies are complex culturally sanctioned events in which organizations celebrate success, communicate values, and recognize the special contributions, of employees. They add that schools can strengthen the cultural bonds through ceremonial occasion of their own design. They give four types of as opening-day ceremonies which rebind staff to the school and its mission. These kick-off events reinforce core values remind people of the hard yet rewarding year ahead, renew their commitment to the growth of young people. The other type is seasonal ceremonies which take advantage of cyclical merriment outside the school. Recognition ceremonies pay tribute to the special accomplishments of individuals and groups, thereby forging pride and respect. They add that successful cultures find ways to celebrate commemorate, salute the accomplishments of others.

According to Deal and Peterson (2010) there are five types of rituals. Firstly are greetings rituals which are value-embedded ways of connecting people. Secondly are transition rituals which shore up symbolic ties to bridge changes in people, practices, or procedures. Thirdly, is battle preparation rituals which gird people with the armor and pluck needed to face threatening challenges. Fourthly are initiation rituals that connect newcomers to a school community. Fifthly are school improvement rituals that signal the importance of collegiality and change. Lastly are rites of passage rituals, which furnish needed support and compassion when things end. This study established the presence or absence of ceremonies/rituals and how they influence school culture and eventually students' academic performance.

Most low performing secondary school, meetings are marked by attacks on new ideas and as battlegrounds with negative staff to effectively sabotage any attempts to school improvement. Oppositional groups of staff or parents who want to spread a sense of frustration, anomie, and hopelessness often facilitate strikes, riots and discontentment especially when the heads are not *"Sons or daughters of the soil"*. Negativity dominates conversations, interactions, and planning; where the only stories recounted are of failure. Those that show improved performance take leadership, time, and focus to rebuild these festering institutions. This has though been identified that many schools have cultural patterns that do not serve staff or students resulting to low students' academic performance (MOEST, 2014) this finding agrees with Robbins (2002) in his study that observed that the customs, traditions and general doing of things in an organization was heavily dependent on the success achieved leading to organizational culture

5.2 Conclusions:

This objective to establish the implications of school culture norms on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County, and guided by the research objective, "How do schools' cultural norms influence students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County" the study concludes that; In order to understand the culture of organization, hidden elements of the culture, that is, hidden beliefs and norms must be uncovered. This hidden beliefs and norms shape cultural elements such as behaviors and visible organizational structures and processes and therefore affect results of that which goes on in the school especially those directed to students' academic performance. These norms are tacit understandings that are rarely brought to the fore in school cultures (Hinde, 2004). The key to successful organizations such as a school is the unspoken beliefs and norms of the organizational members about the organization and the world, that is, tacit institutional culture. The power of beliefs and norms, that is tacit culture stems from the fact that they influence behaviors of the people although they are not aware. Schein (2004) states that norms form the basis of the organizational culture and successful change can't be realized if these norms aren't addressed. The most significant reason that is invisible behind the failure of various institutions' attempts is the disregard for the norms and beliefs which comprise the hidden culture of the schools and the subsequent inability to understand whether this culture is harmonious with reform attempts. In order for any kind of school culture to be efficient, it is imperative that the norms of the culture be compatible with the culture of the school and, by extension, with the norms which shape and mould the school culture in every aspect.

Positive personal attributes of the principal of high performing school, when combined with effective instructional, managerial and collegial leadership, can help gain the trust of collaborators and influence positively the attitudes and behaviour of teachers, students and parents. However, these positive personal attributes of the principal may become less influential without the support of good managerial and instructional leadership skills. The principals of the high performing schools exhibited good instructional and managerial leadership. The principals emphasised more their managerial role at certain times and concentrated on their instructional role at other times. Consequently, the principals of high performing schools, first resolved the basic issues of student indiscipline (lateness and absenteeism), teacher unprofessionalism (lateness, absenteeism and uncooperative conduct), and a lack of minimal infrastructure (extremely insufficient classroom furniture and learning materials) before concentrating on supervision of teachers' teaching and students' learning. Collegial leadership is a key element of school culture in effective leadership of high performing schools. The collegial leaders were able to influence the conduct and commitment of teachers and community members through their attention to the welfare of teachers, through dialogue and consultation, and sharing of responsibilities and privileges.

Schools were transformed not only through effective management and instructional efforts but also, and most essentially, by awakening in their teachers, students and collaborators, values, and positive attitudes and beliefs that they cherished themselves, and practiced via their collegiality, dialogue and collective decision-making focused on school improvement. Public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County demonstrated that each element of school culture, namely, school artifacts, principal's positive attributes, thriving collegial leadership, shared school vision, successful instructional and managerial leadership, productive school and community partnerships for recruiting resources, and innovative physical and human resourcing are each necessary but not sufficient on its own to transform a school. It is the interconnectedness of the strategies employed to enhance each of these effective elements that resulted in the emergence of the positive school values which created a thriving teaching and learning environment that fostered higher academic standards and improved achievement.

It is noteworthy that school culture elements discussed in this study were only minimally and based on public boarding secondary schools. Thus, for these school culture elements to influence students' performance in the positive and principals to succeed, they cannot be left on their own without regular support in the form of professional development, peer-mentoring and regular contact with other stakeholders, especially in public boarding schools. Appropriate professional learning development programs that would encourage dialogue, give feedback to principals and enhance their experiential learning should be promoted. Principals' transformational leadership that makes schools more caring communities by leaders, guided by principle, morality and service to others may also offer a useful insight for improving school culture as directed by the individual principals in Kisii Central Sub County public boarding secondary schools. Further, appropriate benchmarking, networking and regular relevant training of teachers should be done to improve learning through enhanced pedagogy. The need for the principal to focus on each student's achievement and offer coordinated numeracy and literacy enrichment programs in and outside classroom hours is of essence. This is presented as a useful strategy to include in the resource for the professional development of principals of secondary schools.

This objective to determine implication of school ceremonies on students' academic performance in boarding public secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County and guided by the research question, "What do school rituals and ceremonies imply on students' academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County?"It was concluded that; Through ceremonies a school celebrates successes, communicates its values and recognizes special contributions of staff, parents and students. Celebrations provide opportunities to recognize the accomplishments of individuals or groups and demonstrate possible possibilities for success and build up a sense of pride in a performance. The study establishes that school ceremonies should be vetted and those that work for the school's attainment or promotion of school's core function should be promoted while those that are retrogressive should be in consultation explained to the stakeholders and persuaded to embrace the decisions of avoiding them.

5.3 Recommendation:

The objective concern with school culture norms recommends that as principals play a crucial role in shaping the school culture, this study recommends that the Ministry of Education Science and Technology should prepare special training classes for those wishing to be principals to be taught and trained on school leadership and principalship. A suitability test

and assessment evaluation should be conducted over a time and those who passed based on the established criteria assigned the principals' position. This is unlike the present status where principals are chosen from among teachers after serving as deputy principals above considering affiliations to political classes, sponsors and tribe/ clan inclinations.

This study establishes that school discipline contributes to students' performance. As there are well established and elaborate procedures in the provision of school teaching staff discipline so should be in cases of students. This is meant to curb unprecedented measures from the case of the school administration on addressing students discipline issues. This study recommends that there should be clear evaluation of the role of sponsors and clear structures defined on their limitations, challenges and participation. Sponsors contribution to education should be concern with specific tasks of provision of infrastructure, morality of school staffs and students. Key Education roles of school administration should be a reserve of the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission. The study recommends for an establishment of clear school culture policies on which each school should be assessed on. Those who do not adhere to the school culture as is established should be relieved leadership duties and even face elaborate disciplinary measures. The study recommends the need for contracting principals on their roles in enhancing and implementation of cultural establishments.

Based on the objective on establishing the implications of school ceremonies and rituals, the study recommends standardization of these ceremonies over all learning institutions. There should be enhancement of objective ceremonies which promote school goals and education objectives while giving credence to those whose influence to students' academic performance is positive. In addition to the paintings of the school core values, motto, vision and mission there should be modalities of enforcement and assessment. The study recommends the frequent re-evaluation and re-assessment as well as restructuring of the school's visible elements to attainable and achievable levels while involving all stakeholders.

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