



## Top Management Commitment and Performance of County Secondary Schools in Nairobi City Kenya

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**Abstract:** The investment of the government towards education in Nairobi City County Schools has increased by means of enhancing infrastructure, giving out free textbooks, as well as teachers being well-trained. Nonetheless, Nairobi City County Secondary Schools have time and again performed below the standard generally obtaining a mean score of C-. The purpose of this journal article is to determine the effect of top management commitment on performance of County Secondary Schools in Nairobi City. This study used descriptive survey research design. The study focused on 30 County Secondary Schools in Nairobi City. The target population comprised of 270 participants. The study employed simple random sampling technique to establish a sample of 180 participants out of the target population. The study adopted a questionnaire as well as an interview schedule to gather primary information. The study generated both qualitative data and quantitative data. Descriptive along with inferential statistics were adopted in analysing the data with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics included percentile, mean as well as standard deviation. Inferentially regression analysis was involved in getting the change in dependent variable caused by the effect of independent variables. The study results were demonstrated in figures as well as tables. The research concludes that the commitment of top management has a significant as well as positive influence on the performance of Nairobi city county secondary schools ( $\beta=0.183$ ,  $p= 0.000$ ). From the research findings, the study suggests that the top management of the secondary schools in Nairobi County should support change and ensure flexibility to improve performance.

**Keywords:** top management commitment, organizational performance, County Secondary Schools

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Performance of the institution, according to Mahdani, Mohammed, Ali, and Ismael (2012) is considered to be the level to which an institution is in a position to meet its planned strategy. The organizational performance is measured by an organization's achievement of goals as well as objectives. From both objective and perceptual basis, David (2005) formed a concept of performance on the ground of monetary and non-monetary pointers.

Excellent achievement in the perspective of Secondary Schools owned by county government is not essentially gauged by the schools' income earned or profits made. The most important deliberation employed to assess the performance of a school ought to be the degree of restraint among the learners, the percentage of transition of learners to universities from secondary schools as well as the number of enrolments a school makes. County Secondary schools' excellent performance would comprise of great academic grades, high numbers of student enrolment, and involvement of student in sporting activities and other extra curriculum activities both within the count and national levels. To achieve all these, top management should be committed in helping and facilitating the schools in all the activities being undertaken.

Top management facilitates employee empowerment and improved levels of job satisfaction through its leadership and commitment to the Total Quality Management (TQM) goal of customer satisfaction by creating an organizational climate that emphasizes total quality and customer satisfaction (Ababneh, 2020). Measures of top management leadership for quality and board leadership for quality showed significant, positive relationships. Top management teams make strategic decisions, and the

products of their decision making influence organizational performance. Top management commitment has enhanced secondary school performance through leadership and strategic skills employed in the process of implementation (Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015).

Nairobi County has experienced an enormous growth of population which has put more pressure on resources that go to education system. This is because a small number of schools have been constructed particularly secondary schools hence the schools is unable to meet the requirements for school enrolment in the County (Muchiri, 2017). A lot of pupils have unsuccessfully progressed to elementary school to a degree that reasonably, the County of Nairobi has been recording the second lowest possible secondary school performance point from North Eastern area (Rhodes, 2016). The City has been registering a low performance of the top management council of the Nairobi city County secondary schools. The gross as well as net rates of enrolment have been low for the girls as well as the boys (Nduta, 2020).

In Nairobi City, Some of the challenges faced in County secondary education emanates from inadequate number of secondary schools, extreme poverty, variations in supporting infrastructure resulting in inequitable access to ICT services and gender disparity against the girl child with poor households preferring to support boys if resources are limited. In addition secondary education faces high cost especially in boarding schools as well as disparity in resource allocation especially teachers of different categories of schools (Munyiri, Thinguri & Edabu, 2019). More emphasis on the challenges facing secondary education is stipulated in National Education Sector Plan (NESP, 2015) which indicates that though expanding access to secondary education has been on increase, access remains low and challenging especially at the regional levels (Majimbo, 2017)

Low enrolment and participation rates in secondary schools signify high levels of education wastage and a lot of inefficiencies in the education system which has a regressive effect on equity in education and the future distribution of wealth in the society (Leicht, Heiss, & Byun, 2018). Many secondary schools in Nairobi city have slowed down in their development and performance due to poor top management commitment. Huge population growth coupled with FPE program have led to raised demand for education at all levels thus exerting pressure on educational resources in Nairobi City County (Zhang & Xie, 2019).

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Government investment towards learning in schools owned by the Nairobi County government has increased because of enhanced infrastructure, textbooks being given free of charge, plus teachers who are well trained. Nonetheless, (MOE, 2017) Nairobi County Secondary Schools have time and again performed below standard more often than not recording a mean score of C-. The below standard performance in secondary schools owned by the county government compared to Private Secondary Schools (Lewa, Mutuku & Mutuku, 2009) is a sign poor top management commitment that causes bad strategic plan execution of which causes incapability of school to achieve goals in addition to objectives already put in place. Schools for instance Sunshine Secondary School, Strathmore School, Loreto Convent, along with Kianda School over the years have been recording excellent performances with mean grades averaging from B to B+. On the other hand, Schools like Kamkunji as well as Dandora Secondary schools have been recording low average mean grades and in the year 2017, they recorded mean grades of C- in the national examinations (MOE, 2017).

Many studies have been done on strategy implementation but less has been done on top management commitment and performance of County secondary schools. Scholars such as Oduma and Getuno, (2017) focused effects of Procurement Regulations on Performance of Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi City, County, Kenya. The study however focused on all public secondary schools in Nairobi city, unlike the current study which focuses on County public secondary schools. In addition to that less has been done on top management commitment on secondary school performance which the current study addresses. Therefore this study sought to fill the existing knowledge gap by determining the impact of top management commitment on performance of secondary schools owned by the Nairobi County government.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1. Resource Based View Theory

Resource Based View was suggested by Wernerfelt in the year 1984. The theory contends that the possession of strategic resources provides an organization with a golden opportunity to develop competitive advantages over its rivals. Resource Based View (RBV) analyses and interprets resources of the organizations to understand how organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The RBV focuses on the concept of difficult-to-imitate attributes of the firm as sources of superior performance and competitive advantage (Barney, 1986; Hamel & Prahalad, 1996). Resources that cannot be easily transferred or purchased, that require an extended learning curve or a major change in the organization climate and culture, are more likely to be unique to the organization and, therefore, more difficult to imitate by competitors. According to Conner, performance variance between firms depends on its possession of unique inputs and capabilities

The two critical assumptions of RBV are that resources must also be heterogeneous and immobile. The first assumption is that skills, capabilities and other resources that organizations possess differ from one company to another. If organizations would have the same amount and mix of resources, they could not employ different strategies to outcompete each other. The second assumption of RBV is that resources are not mobile and do not move from company to company, at least in short-run. Due to this immobility, companies cannot replicate rivals' resources and implement the same strategies. Intangible resources, such as brand equity, processes, knowledge or intellectual property are usually immobile (Fitria, MukhtarI& Akbar, 2017). Past management researchers have also used resource based view as a theoretical basis for research construct in their studies (Kinyua, 2015; Kinyua, Muathe & Kilika, 2015; Kimaru & Kinyua, 2018; Gabow & Kinyua, 2018; Kitur & Kinyua, 2020)

In top management commitment, resource-based theory is relevant in that resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non substitutable best position an institution for long-term success. These strategic resources can provide the foundation to develop firm capabilities that can lead to superior performance over time. Capabilities are needed to bundle, manage, and otherwise exploit resources in a manner that provides value added to customers and creates advantages over competitors.

A number of criticisms of RBV have been widely cited, and are as follows: The RBV is tautological, Different resource configurations can generate the same value for firms and thus would not be competitive advantage. The role of product markets is underdeveloped in the argument and lastly the theory has limited prescriptive implications. This theory was adopted to assess the effect of top management commitment on the performance of County Secondary Schools in Nairobi City, Kenya.

#### 3.2. Empirical Review

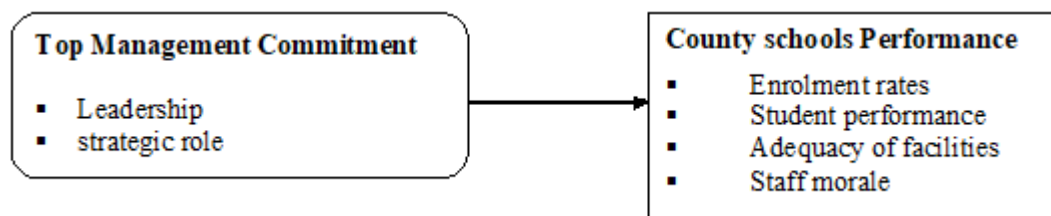
Elmelegy (2015) aimed at clarifying how school-based management (SBM) can contribute to achieve the decision-making quality in Egyptian general secondary schools and determine the requirements of quality decision-making. It depends on the descriptive method in order to acknowledge the basics of the SBM and its relationship with the quality of decision-making. The research has affirmed that SBM can facilitate the participation of teachers and employees in decision-making process. Moreover, SBM can improve decision-making quality through empowerment of teachers, delegation of authority and encouragement of shared decision-making. Although the study focused on management, it did not show the responsibility of top management and its contribution on organizational performance as it is the fact with the present research.

Fitria, Mukhtar and Akbar (2017) analyzed the influence of organizational structure, and leadership, to teacher performance in the private secondary school in Palembang city. This research method used quantitative method with path analysis technique (path analysis). The finding of the study showed that: there was a direct positive effect of organizational structure to teacher performance, there was a direct positive effect of leadership to teacher performance. Unlike the current study, it focused on teacher performance and the influence from organizational structure, commitment of top management and its effect on performance was not shown.

Latan et al., (2018) examine the effect of the combination of corporate environmental strategy, top management commitment, and environmental uncertainty, with a focus on the role of environmental management accounting (EMA), on corporate environmental performance. Using an online survey,

the study collected the sample data of 107 responses in ISO 14001 certified companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange. The empirical evidence shows that there is a positive and significant influence between those organizational resources (corporate ecological policy, commitment of top management, and environmental insecurity) on the use of Environmental Management Accounting, that in turn can advance the environmental performance of companies. However the study focused on combined organizational resources and their role in environmental management accounting unlike the current study variable which is specific on top management commitment and performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City.

The hypothesized relationship between top management commitment and performance is shown in the figure below.



**Figure1.** Conceptual Framework

**Source:** Author (2021)

The research hypotheses for this study were as follows;

***H<sub>0</sub>:*** Top management commitment has no significant effect on performance of County Secondary Schools in Nairobi Kenya.

***H<sub>1</sub>:*** Top management commitment has a significant effect on performance of County Secondary Schools in Nairobi Kenya.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was employed as it deals with gathering information for a large area of study (Orodhe, 2005). Saunders (2007) is of the view that descriptive research design aid in quantitative description of trends and opinions as well as attitudes of a population. This research design is popular with research on organizational phenomena (Mbugua & Kinyua, 2020; Ong'esa & Kinyua, 2020; Gatuyu & Kinyua, 2020; Chesire & & Kinyua, 2021; Kiprono & Kinyua, 2021). The study focused on 30 County Secondary Schools in Nairobi City. The accessible population for this study was 30 principals, 150 teachers and 90 head of department from the 30 selected schools. Therefore, the total accessible population was 270 participants. The sample size for teachers and head of department was obtained using Yamane formula which has been widely used in determination of sample size (Muthoni & Kinyua, 2020; Kanyoro, & Kinyua, 2021)

Where,

n= the sample size

N = the size of population

e= the error of 5 percent

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{240}{1 + 240 \times 0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{240}{1.6}$$

$$n = 180$$

Therefore, the sample size teachers and head of department were 150 respondents. All the 30 principals selected to participate in the study.

Data was collected by use of questionnaire and interview guide. Questionnaires were administered to head of departments and teachers while interview guide was used to collect data from principles. The close ended questionnaires were in likert scale (1-5) where 5 represents strongly agree; 4 –agree; 3-

undecided; 2- disagree and 1-represents strongly disagree. The study offered a semi-structured interview schedule with questions related to the research objectives and was administered to principals.

To test validity, the research instruments were availed to the supervisor and other specialized lecturers in this field of study in the university to review the test items. This was to ensure that they are based on the content area before commencing data collection. Data collected from the pilot study were used to compute the internal consistency reliability of the instruments' items. The Cronbach's alpha was applied on the results obtained to determine how items correlate among themselves in the same instrument. Cronbach's Alpha of more than 0.7 was taken as the cut off value for being acceptable. However, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient that is less than 0.70 implies that the research instrument is not reliable and the researcher should make necessary corrections before using the instruments to collect data. In this study, the aggregate reliability score was 0.903 and it particularly ranged from 0.818 for coordination activities to 0.941 for top management commitment. Hence the parameters in every variable met the set criteria.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics included percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferentially simple linear regression analysis was carried out to get the change in dependent variable caused by the effect of independent variables. The regression model used for hypotheses testing is in this way:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots \text{equation}$$

Where:

**Y**; represent performance County Secondary Schools

**$\beta_0$** , represent constant term

**$\beta_1$** , represent beta coefficients

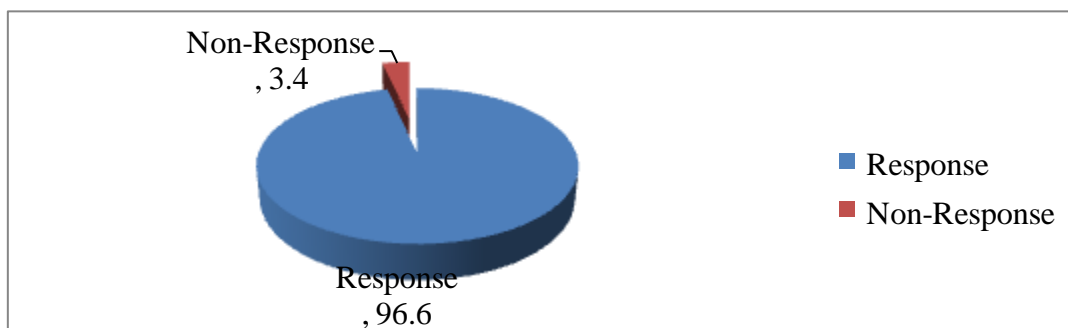
**$X_1$** , represent top management commitment

**E**; represent Error term

**5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**5.1. Response Rate**

A total of 150 questionnaires were dispersed by the researcher during the process of data collection and 145 questionnaires were fully filled and returned back to the research thus giving a response rate of 96.6% and a non-response rate of 3.4%.



**Figure2.** Response Rate

**Source:** Research Data (2020)

**5.2. Descriptive Statistics for Top Management Commitment**

The participants were requested to rate various statements relating to top management commitment and performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City County. A five likert scale was used where SA denoted Strongly Agree, A denoted Agree, N denoted Neutral, D denoted Disagree and SD denoted strongly disagree as shown in Table 1.

**Table1.** *Top Management Commitment*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
Top management influence the performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City County	12.3%	9%	2.2%	45.2%	31.3%	4.201	.923
Top management commitment to strategic direction is an important factor on the performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City County	14.6%	1.2%	2.9%	38.7%	42.6%	4.428	.985
The top managers must demonstrate willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process for the projects to succeed	2.9%	3.1%	19.0%	34.9%	40.1%	4.413	.895
The managers do not spare any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas for strategy implementation to be effective.	2.5%	4.2%	13.9%	47.3%	32.1%	3.936	.738
Lack of top management backing is the main inhibiting factor in strategy in strategy implementation	3.4%	3.6%	17.4%	52.1%	23.5%	4.318	.918
Lack of managers commitment in performing their roles leads to employees missing support and guidance through encouragement and entrepreneurial attributes	6.3%	13.2%	21.3%	49.2%	10%	3.929	.821
<b>Aggregate Score</b>						<b>4.204</b>	<b>0.880</b>

**Source:** *Research Data (2020)*

From the findings, the respondent agreed that the top management commitment to strategic direction is an important factor on the performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City County. This is shown by a mean of 4.428 (std. dv = 0.985). In addition, with a mean of 4.413(std. dv = 0.895), the respondents also agreed that the top managers must demonstrate willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process for the projects to succeed. Further, the respondents also agreed that lack of top management backing is the main inhibiting factor in strategy in strategy implementation. This is supported by a mean of 4.318(std. dv =0.918).

With a mean of 4.201(std. dv =0.923), the respondents agreed that the top management influence the performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi City County. In addition, the respondents also agreed that the managers do not spare any effort to persuade the employees of their ideas for strategy implementation to be effective. This is supported by a mean of 3.936 (std. dv =0.738). Further, the respondents agreed that lack of managers’ commitment in performing their roles leads to employees missing support and guidance through encouragement and entrepreneurial attributes. This is shown by a mean of 3.929 (std. dv =0.821). The aggregate mean of 4.204 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.880 indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that top management commitment influence performance of county secondary schools in Nairobi County.

**5.3. Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Performance**

The respondents were requested to rate various statements relating to organizational performance. A five likert scale was used where SA=Strongly Agree, A denote Agree, N denote Neutral, D denote Disagree and SD denote strongly disagree. The results were as shown Table 2.

**Table2.** Organizational Performance

Statements	SD	D	N	SA	A	Mean	Std. dev
The enrolment rate of students has been increasing over the years	7.8%	10.2%	11.9%	49.1%	21%	4.124	0.876
Most of the schools have shown inconsistent performance in the national exams	3.91%	4.85%	6.77%	56.31%	28.16%	4.321	0.765
Am satisfied with the level of student performance in the national exams	40.86%	40.53%	4.85%	9.88%	3.88%	1.798	0.712
The city county secondary schools have adequate learning facilities	9.91%	51.47%	4.85%	30.86%	2.91%	2.234	0.983
Teachers are offered incentives to motivate them	42.73%	40.51%	0.97%	4.85%	10.94%	2.124	0.812
<b>Aggregate Score</b>						<b>3.920</b>	<b>0.829</b>

Source: Research Data (2020)

From the results, the participants agreed that most of the schools have shown inconsistent performance in the national exams. This is shown by a mean of 4.321 (std. dv =0.765). With a mean of 4.124(std. dv =0.876), the participants confirmed that the enrolment rate of students has been increasing over the years. Nevertheless, the respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that the city county secondary schools have adequate learning facilities. This is shown by a mean of 2.234 (std. dv =0.983).

From the results, the respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that teachers are offered incentives to motivate them. This is supported by a mean of 2.124 (std. dv =0.812). In addition, the participants disagreed with the assertion indicating that they are satisfied with the level of student performance in the national exams. This is shown by a mean of 1.798 (std. dv =0.712).

**5.4. Inferential Statistics**

In this study, a regression analysis was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the dependent variable (organizational performance) and the independent variable (top management commitment). Regression analysis was conducted to find the proportion in the performance of county schools which can be predicted from the top management commitment.

**Table3.** Results of Regression Analysis

Model Fitness						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.283 <sup>a</sup>	.080	.074	.457		
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.599	1	2.599	12.449	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	29.848	144	.209		
	Total	32.447	145			
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Constant	2.825	.335		8.421	.000
	Top Management Commitment	.305	.087	.283	3.528	.001
a. Dependent Variable: County Secondary School Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Top Management Commitment						

Source: Research Data (2020)

The results of regression analysis in Table 3 revealed a significant positive relationship between organizational performance and the top management commitment. R square value of 0.080 means that 8% of the corresponding variation in performance of county secondary schools can be explained or predicted by top management commitment which indicated that the model fitted the study data. The results of regression analysis revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between dependent variable and independent variable at ( $\beta = 0.305$ ),  $p=0.001 <0.05$ ).

The significance value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significant in predicting how top management commitment affects performance of secondary schools. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 12.45. Since F calculated which can be noted from the ANOVA is 12.45 which is greater than the F critical (value= 2.4), this shows that the overall model was significant. The study therefore establishes that; top management commitment is an important aspect influencing performance of secondary schools. These results agree with Victor (2018) results which indicated a positive and significant influence of management commitment on performance of secondary learning schools in Kisii County.

The regression equation was;

$$\text{County Secondary School Performance} = 2.825 + 0.305\text{Top Management Commitment} + 0.087\text{error term}$$

According to the results, top management commitment has a significant effect on organizational performance ( $\beta_1=0.305$ ,  $p\text{-value}= 0.001$ ). The relationship was considered significant since the  $p\text{-value}$  0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the Mariya (2015) there is a very strong relationship between top management support and organizational performance. This is also in line with the resource Based theory by Wernerfelt in 1984 which asserts that the ownership of strategic resources offers an institution with a golden chance to build up competitive advantages over its rivals. Through commitment of top management, they are able to provide resources that are precious, difficult to imitate, rare, and non-substitutable best place an institution for long-standing success.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

In regards to top management, the simple linear regression coefficients of the study show that it has a significant effect on performance of secondary schools. This implied that increasing the commitment of top management by a unit would increase the levels of performance of secondary schools. This shows that top management has a positive influence on performance of secondary schools. The study found that top management support has a significant effect on organizational performance. This study therefore recommends that the board of governors in the secondary schools in Nairobi City County should formulate policies that would enhance support from the entire management to ensure smooth operations of activities hence improving the general performance of secondary schools in the county.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study obtained an  $R^2$  of 8% and should therefore be expanded further in future in order to include other aspects that influence performance of county secondary schools apart from top management commitment. Existing literature indicates that as a future avenue of research, there is need to undertake similar research in other institutions and public sector organizations in Kenya and other countries in order to establish whether top management commitment herein can be generalized to affect performance in other public institutions.

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