Leadership Structure: Operations Management of Academic Institutions in Nandi South Sub County Kenya.

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Abstract

The Kenyan education system is characterized by strikes, exam cheating, student laxity and unstable leadership structure with frequent transfers of office bearers and abuse of office. These problems have left gaps and contradicting views in the field of research on the role of leadership structure in public secondary schools operations and academic performance. Using principals and deputy principals' leadership responsibilities, servant leadership and transformational theories this study strives to establish the influence of leadership structure on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Nandi South Sub-County. The researcher employed descriptive and triangulation design. The study population was 144 school administrators, defined by 48 principals, deputy principals and senior teachers. The population was derived using stratified and purposive sampling. Multiple linear regressions were used to establish the relationship between school leadership and academic performance. The flagship report and findings on principals' leadership responsibility significantly influence performance in public schools in Nandi South Sub County.

Key Terms: Leadership structure: Operations Management: *Academic Performance*

1.0 Introduction

Worldwide public secondary schools are centers for nurturing students at the golden age amidst the tremendous pressure defined by different academic systems and social economic standing (Mulford, 2006). This is inclined towards leadership development and humanity modeling in relation to new working contexts for teachers and school leaders. The definition frameworks elaborate that school as entities need to emphasize the relationship between what teachers and students do. Globally, leadership is defined by the achievement in high schools and centers of further education.

In UK, Australia and France, the idea of education in public secondary school is defined in terms of how the education system is best organized and operated especially in academic governance and leadership. Studies by Leithwood et al., (2012), in Germany, show that leadership totality is aligned to providing leadership structures and agile system.

In Asia, Hongkong and Singapore a public secondary school leadership programs are predominantly and centrally for schools leadership development. In New Zealand and the Netherlands Sagnak (2010) identifies considerate autonomy for school leadership structures. The former provides that leadership structures strategy framework is final in determining the school objectives, plans and academic success.

In Africa, education is the key to leadership development. According to Day and Sammons, (2013) in South Africa, schools need quality education defining academic achievement as envisaged by product. Carrying out a study in Nigeria, Shamaki, (2015) observed that particular leadership style and related operational activities help achieve school objectives. The Nigerian study illustrate that an effective school leadership structure led the school to attain high academic performance. The study suggests that the success of a school depends on the operational ability of the principal. The same author observed that diligent and hardworking teachers perform well in a conducive learning environment.

In Eastern Africa, Manaseh (2016), attempted to evaluate leadership in a study in Tanzania and Uganda. The findings highlight that in Uganda performance is based on motivating teachers providing their best in learning and instruction. A comparison of the study to Tanzania shows that the principals in Tanzanian secondary schools are fully in control of learning. They do this by the adequacy of learning and teaching materials. In Kenya, according to the Republic of Kenya, (2014), it is the responsibility of the government to offer free and enforced elementary education to every child. This is envisaged in the 2010 constitution as a child right. However, it has been found that leadership structure of public secondary school needs to develop a conducive and enhancing environment that propagating a reading culture. Such a culture would rewards teachers and encourages student positively. According to Bush et al., (2010), schools play a significant role in determining learning and reading. Hence, leadership structures should work deliberately to explicitly build and sustain the culture. According to Mbiti, (2009), the leadership structure need policy execution in a way that helps the execution of policies helping to direct the activities of post primary schools towards the achievement of pursued objectives, culture and performance. This is because of the direct relationship between academic performance and organization structures. The Principal, deputy principal and senior teachers need be role models. In the Kenyan setting, secondary school education faces a great challenge owing to the statistics that the teaching structure is undergoing transformation. According to the Republic of Kenya, (2012), Kenya prepares for a hundred per cent transition to secondary school and the introduction of the competency-based curriculum and major educational rights have placed the leadership structure and crossroads when it comes to policy implementation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The effect of leadership structure on the academic performance of Public Secondary Schools in Nandi South Sub-County has been wanting for the last 5 years. Leadership structure has been the main determinant of academic performance in secondary schools (Bush et al 2010). Academic degradation has been caused by student strikes, exam cheating, frequent school fires, dropouts, aggression, laxity among the student and teachers, drugs and substance abuse which have caused moral degradation in schools. The Kenyan Education Act of 2014 provides that prudent leadership structures in secondary schools could be the solution to the best performance. Robbins et al., (2014), observes that it is imperative for the leadership structure to have a common plan on how they can achieve their goals and objectives. Teklemariam and Akala, (2011), observed that exemplary leadership structure is the requisite of positive leadership which leads to schools' greater academic performance. The principal, deputy principal, and senior teacher are the key leaders in the instructional leadership. This means that they have the power to influence the academic performance of a school.

These reports and legislation underlying, secondary schools in Kenya still record low performance. The challenges coupled with frequent transfers of leadership structure members, has left the school leadership structure maladies unaddressed. According to Bush et al (2007), there is an unlimited concern in instructive management in the first part of the 21st century since there is far-reaching confidence that the greatest leadership structure produces excellent grades. Nandi South Sub-County was identified to be one of the sub-counties that exhibit relative numbers of poor performance in the past five years (Gunter, 2005). Studies by Okumbe (2013), also shows that leadership structure significantly affects academic performance. Studies by Harris and Jones, (2018) and World Development Report (2018) contradicts this by asserting that academic performance is dependent on established school culture and manipulation of entry behavior by both learners and teachers. The contradicting findings present a gap to be filled.

This study strives to find out the influence of leadership structure on the academic performance with particular interest on public secondary schools of Nandi South Sub-County.

1.3. General Objectives

To examine the influence of leadership structure on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Nandi South Sub- County of Nandi County

1.3.1 Specific Objectives.

i.   To investigate the influence of the Principal's responsibilities on the academic performance of the public secondary school in Nandi South Sub- County.
ii. To examine the influence of the deputy principal on the academic performance of Public Secondary Schools in Nandi South Sub- County.

1.4 Research Questions.

i.   To what extent do the principal's responsibilities influence academic performance of the public secondary school in Nandi South Sub- County?
ii. How do the deputy principal's leadership responsibilities influence the academic performance of public secondary schools in Nandi South Sub- County?

2.0 Critique of the existing literature.

The existing works of literature by various scholars have not addressed the influence of leadership structures in public secondary school. The scholars from the region have highlighted the teaching strategies on student performances, co-curricular activities by Jepketer (2015), the role of principal as Human Resource Manager in secondary by Chemutai, (2015) and finally the Relationship between Teacher Capacity Building Strategy and students' performance in public secondary schools in Nandi County by Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo (2016). The highly esteemed scholars focused their studies on the entire Nandi County but fell short of capturing the direct effect of leadership structures.

2.1 Empirical Review.

The academic and wholesome performance of schools is the core business of the learning institution. In Kenya, the number of students of particular schools joining the universities through KUCCPS could illustrate the influence stability of leadership structures and academic performance. The contribution of the principals, deputy principals, and senior teachers are critical. According to the Republic of Kenya, (2014), it is the duty of the government to provide human resources for both teaching and non- teaching staff. In addition, the government needs to provide infrastructure including classroom, learning-teaching equipment and financial resources. These are a key determinant to the success of public secondary schools.

Most scholars (Deputy, 2009: Lynch 2012: Okumbe, 2013) have tried to come up with various ways of influencing the leadership structures on academic performance. But none has directly dealt with the principals, deputy principals and senior teachers. Mbiti, (2009), explained that leadership structure implemented policies that direct the activities of post primary schools to produce sustainable results and transformational leaders. According to Legislation, (2015), the leadership structure has to perform the role of quality assurance within the institution thus supervising, ensuring quality curriculum implementation and actual syllabus coverage. With this failure in academic performance significant reduce. Many works of literature have not clearly brought to light to the direct effect of responsibility of school leadership and development structures.

There is a need for more comprehensive research on the influence of leadership structure on the performance of public secondary schools. Leadership structure has a lot to be researched. Okumbe (2013) that leadership structure significantly affect academic performance. His findings are supported by Harris and Jones, (2018), that there is weak, harmful or toxic leadership structure in our schools inferring that the academic and moral decadence in Kenyan secondary schools could be attributed to this.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

According to Gay et al., (2009) research design is a strategy or plan for conducting a study. The study used a descriptive design alongside the triangulation approach. Studies by Kothari (2014) and Creswell (2014) corroborated that a research design is a procedure of examining statistics for the purposes of trust impact on the study. The advantage of triangulation is to get data that is -saturated for the purposes of analysis. Fusch and Ness, (2015) as cited in Nawaz and Khan (2016) observed that triangulation ensures the validity and reliability of results.

3.2 Study Population

The study population comprised of 144 senior teachers controlling operations of school activities in Nandi south sub county. They are distributed in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Distribution of the study population

Leadership structure representatives	Distribution
Principals	48
Deputy principals	48
Senior Teachers	48
Total	**144**

3.3 Sampling Frame.

The study population was one hundred and forty-four (144) the sampled into forty-eight (48) principals, forty-eight (48) deputy principals and forty-eight (48) senior teachers. Kothari, (2014), explained that a sampling frame is a list of all sampling units. The units of the sample frame represented the selected respondents the principals, deputy principals and senior teachers from forty-eight (48) public secondary schools Nandi South Sub County.

3.4 Data analysis

Multiple linear regressions were used to analyze the data. Data analysis and measurement of the variables are core part in research. According to Gay et al., (2009) it is an attempt by the researcher to summarize data collected for the study in a dependable an accurate manner. Singh (2006) observes that facts examination includes the studying of presented variables in order to define the integral facts or meaning. Kothari (2009), corroborates the same sentiments that this is a process of summarizing the collected data and organizing in a manner that they answer the research question. The Multiple linear regression equation applied is stated as:

$AP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \, PDR + \beta_2 \, DPLR + \beta_3 \, STCR$
Where:
AP=Academic Performance
PDR= Principal Development Responsibilities
DPLR= Deputy Principal Leadership Responsibilities
STCR= senior teacher coordinating responsibilities
β_0 = Regression unchanged.
$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$, = Regression coefficients that measure the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable.
ε_t =Error term

4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

4.1 Response Rate

The entire 144 forms were distributed to principals, deputy principals and senior teachers. Ninety (90) respondents returned the questionnaires this translates to a respondent rate of 62.5%. The results are presented in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Respondent Rate

Number Of School 48	Questionnaires Completed	Rate of Response
Principals	20	41.6%
Deputy Principal	39	81.25%
Senior Teacher	31	64.58%
Total	**90**	**62.5%**

All the respondents had a response rate of over 40%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2006), a response rate above 30% is excellent. The principal had the highest rate of response rate of 41.6%. According to Howard, (2017), instructional leadership is very important in high school. This is a show that reliable strategic information could be derived and fair representation of principal's leadership in schools.

4.2 Demographic Information.

The demographics of the target population is aimed at ensuring that there were equality and transparency in the manner to which respondents were nominated to contribute to the study.

4.2.1 School category
The study required to establish the respondents' schools category. The results are shown in **Figure 4.1.**
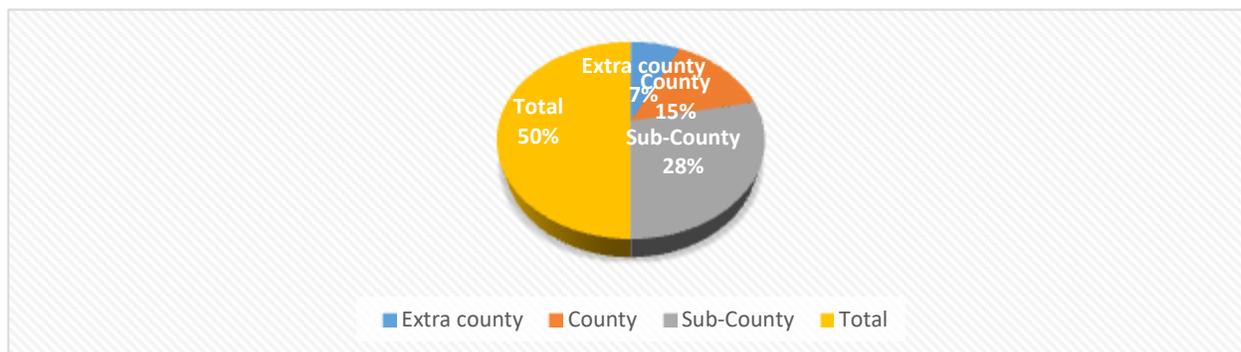

Figure 4.1 school category

The respondents were drawn from Extra County (7%), county school (15%) and the sub- County schools (28%). In Nandi south sub-county we have 48 public secondary schools. These results corroborate the republic of Kenya (2012) that categorizes schools into National, Extra county, county and sub-county schools. Moreover the Republic of Kenya, report (2014), affirms that the basic education act categorizes public schools as either extra county, county and sub county schools.

4.2.2 School Type

The study sought to establish the respondent's School type. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: School Type.

School type	Per cent
Girls Boarding	22.2
Boys Boarding	22.2
Mixed Day	35.6
Mixed Boarding	20.0
Total	**100.0**

The research findings show that the highest respondent was mixed day secondary schools thirty-five points six per cent (35.6%), both Girls and Boys board secondary schools at twenty two point two percent respectively (22.2%), while Mixed Boarding had twenty percent (20%). The results this shows that there few mixed boarding secondary schools in Nandi South Sub-County. the findings are supported by the The Republic of Kenya, (2014), study on the basic education which shows the most predominant schools in Kenya are classified as girls and boys boarding, mixed boarding and mixed day.

4.2.3 Teaching Experience of Respondents

The study sought to establish the teaching experience of the respondents. This is shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Teaching Experience.

Years	Frequency	%
1-3 Years	6	6.7%
4-6 years	6	6.7%
7-9 years	8	8.9%
10 years and above	70	77.7%
Total	**90**	**100%**

The seniority analysis shows respondents experience which could be used to check on their teaching and leadership experience. Seventy-seven point seven per cent (77.7%) of the respondents indicated to have been teaching for a period of above 10 years. Eight point nine per cent (8.9%) have been teaching a period between 7 to 9 years. Six point seven per cent (6.7%) have been in the service for 6 to 4 years the same applies to 3 to 1 year. The length of service could be used to refer to the experience and knowledge of the leadership structure and strategy (Keeter 2012).

4.2.4 Academic Qualification

The study sought to establish the academic qualification of the respondent. The result is shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Academic qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	15	16.6
Diploma	20	22.2
Bachelors	35	61.2
Total	**90**	**100.0**

The academic qualification of the respondent are as follows: Bachelor's degree holders sixty one point two per cent (61.2%), followed by Diploma holders twenty-two point two per cent (22.2%), then master degree holders sixteen point six per cent (16.6%). This is a clear indication that the majority of the teachers in public secondary school are bachelor's degree holder followed by the diploma and few masters' degree holders. Contradicting the findings Commission, (2014),findings show that teaching standards entails the basic principles and guideline on teachers' performance of duty. There is a minimum requirement that should be met by a teacher such as professional and pedagogical skills and mastery subject teaching content, professional ethical requirements, planning and implementation delivery of learning, assessing, providing feedback and report on learners' learning and engagement in professional learning which provides a basis for promoting leadership.

4.2.5 Reliability Coefficients of all Variables

Reliability Coefficients of all Variables was tested using alpha values. The result is shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Reliability Coefficients of all Variables

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Principal responsibility	5	.721
Deputy Principal leadership responsibility	6	.713
Senior teacher responsibility	5	.737

All the values were above 0.7. Senior teacher coordinating responsibility was at 0.737, the principal responsibility 0.721 and deputy principals' leadership responsibility at 0.713. According to Pallant (2007), values above 0.7 are accepted to test reliability. The research employed this as a benchmark. Other researcher who have employed the benchmarks are Johnson and Christensen (2008).

4.2.6 Descriptive for Academic Performance

The study sought to establish whether the school produces quality grades. The results are presented in figure 4.2
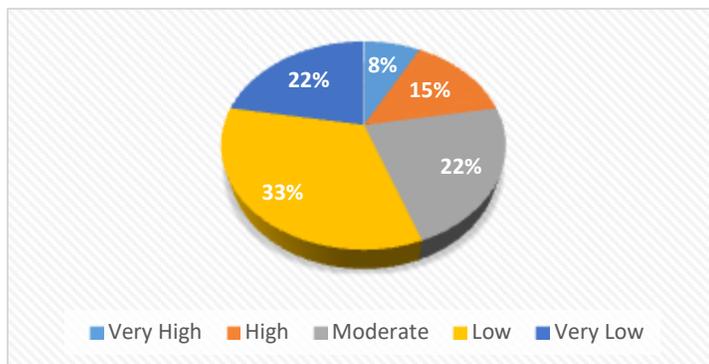

Figure 4.2 Academic Performance

The results show that thirty-three per cent (33%) rated the school to have produced low grades, twenty-two per cent (22%) moderate, twenty-two per cent (22%), very low, fifteen per cent (15%) high and eight per cent (8%) very high. From the above results, it shows that very little percentage of respondent agrees that the school produces many grades quality amid Teklemariam and Akala (2011) assertion that, the principal is the lead educator and administrator, whose core business is to produce quality grades (Gay et al., 2009). The author proposes using grades to measure performance as an inclusive approach to measure the input of the leadership, staff, and students.

4.2.7 Students Joining the University.

The study sought to establish whether schools produce many students joining the university. The results are presented in figure 4.3
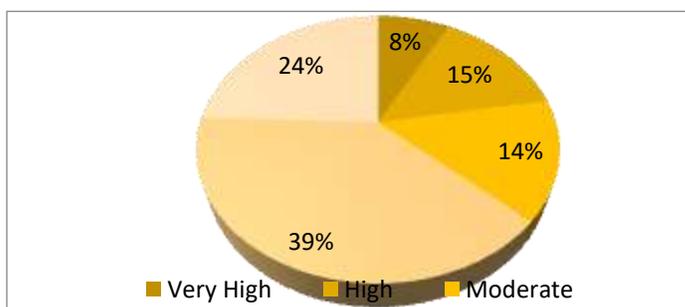

Figure 4.3 Students Joining University

The respondent rating was as follows thirty-nine per cent (39%), rated low, twenty-four per cent (24%) very low, fifteen per cent (15%) high, fourteen per cent (14%) moderate and eight per cent (8%) very high. It is the desire of every high school student to join the university. The Kenya universities and colleges central placement service places the student to their university of choice upon meeting the entry points (Goldman & Piketty (2018). This corroborates studies by goldman and Piketty (2003) that education builds adequate human capital particularly if it translates to high university entries.

Owens and Valesky, (2007), posit that the performance of the school is entirely vested to the leadership structure. It is the duty of the principal, deputy principal to see to it that they facilitate and engage in activities that promote teaching and learning. Their study illustrates that the leadership structure could motivate entire school staff to promote the academic success. Okumbe (2013), echoes the same sentiment that teacher motivation helps them to maximize their potentiality.

4.2.8 Academic Performance Nandi South Sub County

The researcher sought to establish the results Nandi South Sub County from 2014 – 2018 Sub Counties mean as shown in table 4.7

Table 4.7: Academic performance in Nandi South Sub County

YEAR	SUB COUNTY	ENTRY	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	X	Y	U	P	MEAN
2014	N SOUTH	2062	0	26	82	157	225	308	334	312	280	248	100	0					5.8737
2015	NANDI SOUTH	2118	0	19	68	137	207	280	317	336	331	267	76	0	3	78	11		5.4754
2016	NANDI SOUTH	2535	0	3	20	47	89	175	192	241	360	574	761	62	11	0	0	0	3.8415
2017	NANDI SOUTH	2661	0	0	6	21	48	83	149	214	386	683	975	86	8				3.3209
2018	NANDI SOUTH	2938	0	1	7	46	51	124	161	337	516	829	781	65	9	0	1	0	3.5981

Source: Sub County Director of Education Nandi South

From the above results there has been drop down of performance since 2014 from 5.8737 to 3.5981 in 2018. This implies the need for extra efforts to change the negative trend.

4.3 Principal leadership responsibility

4.3.1 Factor Analysis for principal leadership responsibility

The factor analysis for principal leadership development responsibility. The information is presented in Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Factor Analysis for Principal Leadership Responsibility

Item	Extraction
In your view what is the level of the principal leadership responsibility in your school?	.671
What is your principal's office involvement in project initiation?	.766
In your view how do you rate your principal's office coordination efforts?	.867

The factor-loading coefficient used for the analysis of the study was set at 0.40. This shows that the factors were appropriate for regression analysis since their values were more than 0.40.

4.3.2 Descriptive Analysis for Principal Leadership Responsibility

The researcher sought to establish the level to which the principal applied leadership development responsibility. The results are shown in table 4.9

Table 4.9: Principal Application of leadership responsibility

Response	Frequency	Cumulative %
Very Poor	6	6.8
Below Average	13	14.4
Average	13	14.4
Above Average	45	50.0
Excellent	13	14.4
Total	**90**	**100.**

The analysis presented in the above table showed that fifty per cent (50%) rated the principal application of leadership responsibility above average. The rating for excellent, average, and below average were fourteen point four per cent (14.4%), very poor was rated six points eight per cent (6.8%). According to Singh (2006), the principal is responsible for the implementation of the government policies of education, as the C.E.O makes sure that there are proper means and mode of communication Mbiti (2009), Republic of Kenya, (2009). According to Gill, (2014), for the principal to discharge the leadership responsibilities effectively there are three leadership skills that must be employed; technical skills which are the ability to use knowledge, methods, technique, and equipment. Human skills the ability and judgment in working with and through the members of staff. Conceptual skills ability to understand the complexities of the overall institution and where one's own operation fit. Schleicher, (2012), for desirable teaching jobs, giving superior weight to potentials that are tougher to measure, such as eagerness, assurance and compassion to students' needs, where these are seen to be superfluous rightly allied to the excellence of instruction and knowledge than the customary importance on experiences and understanding. Corroborating the findings, Lynch (2012),maintains that for the principal to be rated able he needs to show a high degree of the transformation. The purpose of such a leader is to be skilful at guaranteeing the attention of learners in their institutions through specific devotion, inspirational motivation, and charismatic influence through stable structures.

The principals' involvement in project initiative was rated very high at thirty-six per cent (36%), thirty-one per cent (31%) high, moderate at fourteen (14%), very low at eleven per cent (11%) low at eight per cent. Supporting the findings Pandya (2011), argues that for the principals to be effective in project initiation they must be good in interpersonal relationship. Good knowledge of people is strength in influencing the people to support projects. The author maintains that principals must be good planners and networkers. Further support from Bush and Middlewood (2010), holds that networking in education leadership is very important for it takes account of the influence derived from the relationship as well as from management. The former findings show that principals must be good mobilizers as an administrator, mobilizing resource for the project initiated by his office (Okumbe, 2013).

4.3.2 Linear Correlation for Principal S Leadership Responsibilities

The study sought to establish the linear relationship between deputy principal s leadership responsibilities and academic performance. The results are shown in table 4.10

Table 4.10: Linear correlation for Principals Leadership responsibilities

Variable	Adjusted	r	P
Principals Leadership responsibilities	.430		0.000

The adjusted r value shows that 43% of the changes in academic performance in public secondary schools in Nandi Sub County are caused by the principal's responsibilities. The principal makes sure that there is unity of purpose in the institution if to succeed. Corroborating the findings, Nayak (2011) argues that the principal must strive to promote an effective working relationship in the school.

5.0 Summary Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Principal's Responsibility.

The study established that principal responsibility is the main variable in the academic performance of public secondary schools. The study established that such principal's responsibilities benefit the leadership structure in public secondary school thus improves the overall performance of the public secondary school in Nandi South Sub – County. In this case the study school principals' ability to influence the structure, culture and mission of the school are well defined. The leader needs to create a vibrant and successful learning community is a collaborative in nature to all staff in schools. Based on the principal's responsibilities findings it was evident that both the leadership structure and the student determine the performance of the school.

6.0 Managerial implication

The findings of the study show that the principal's leadership responsibilities are very important in the influence of leadership structure on the academic performance in Nandi South Sub-county. The principal should be in a position to motivate teachers, students and other members of staff to produce good results thus enhancing academic performance. The deputy principal's should be used as consultation hub to connecting the high office and the operation staff to realize quality grades and uplift academic performance.

7.0 Areas for further research.

The researcher just highlighted the Influence of leadership structures on the performance of public secondary schools in Nandi South Sub-county. A lot of money is given by the government to public school but sometimes it is not well accounted for. There areas that need to be studied include leadership and financial management in public secondary schools. Other viable areas include drug abuse in schools, exam cheating, early pregnancies, rising cases of student suicides and defilement of school children and their leadership to induced leadership.

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