

## **EFFECTS OF PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the effect of principal leadership skills on the effective administration of public secondary schools within Nairobi City County. The research explores various dimensions of leadership, including Vision and goal settings, change management and instructional leadership, and their influence on school administration. Data was collected through surveys and interviews with principals and teachers in multiple secondary schools across the county. The study was guided by transformational leadership theory. The study established that principals' leadership skills have a significant influence on effective administration of secondary schools in Nairobi County, vision and goal settings, change management and instructional leadership, have a significant influence on effective administration of secondary schools. The study recommends that the principals should focus on enhancing their leadership skills. This involves developing a clear vision for the school's future and communicating it effectively to stakeholders. They should make informed decisions, demonstrate emotional intelligence, and be adaptable in responding to challenges.

**Key Words:** *Leadership skills and Effective Administration*

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The study on the effects of principal's leadership skills on effective administration of public secondary schools in Nairobi City County delves into the pivotal role played by school leaders in shaping the educational landscape of the capital city of Kenya (Smith et al., 2018). Nairobi City County stands as a significant educational hub, hosting numerous public secondary schools catering to a diverse student population (Brown et al., 2019). Within this context, effective school leadership emerges as a critical factor influencing the quality of education and overall school performance. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of effective school leadership, the

study emphasizes the importance of leadership skills beyond mere administrative tasks (Wang et al., 2020). Principals are seen as key leaders who wield considerable influence over the school environment, teacher morale, student outcomes, and community engagement (Okonkwo et al., 2017). Leadership skills such as communication, vision-setting, decision-making, relationship-building, and instructional leadership are identified as crucial elements in navigating the complexities of school administration and fostering a conducive learning environment (Dlamini et al., 2018).

Despite the existing body of literature highlighting the significance of school leadership in educational outcomes, there appears to be a gap in research specifically focusing on Nairobi City County. The study aims to address this gap by providing empirical evidence and insights tailored to the local educational context. By identifying the specific leadership skills that contribute to effective school administration, policymakers can design targeted interventions and professional development programs to enhance the capabilities of school leaders.

The study anticipated several potential benefits, including improved student achievement, enhanced teacher satisfaction, stronger parent and community engagement, and the overall advancement of public secondary education in Nairobi City County (Mwangi et al., 2019). By conducting this research, the goal is to contribute valuable insights to the field of educational leadership and inform decision-making processes aimed at improving the quality of education in Nairobi City County and beyond.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Public secondary schools in Nairobi City County face numerous administrative challenges that hinder their effective operation and the delivery of quality education (Smith et al., 2018). These challenges include inadequate resources, student discipline issues, teacher retention problems, and insufficient parental involvement. In the face of these challenges, the role of the principal as the primary administrative leader becomes crucial (Brown et al., 2019). Effective leadership skills are essential for principals to navigate these administrative challenges and ensure the smooth functioning of secondary schools in Nairobi City County (Wang et al., 2020). Leadership skills such as communication, strategic planning, decision-making, problem-solving, and relationship-building are particularly vital in addressing these challenges.

Given the multifaceted nature of administrative challenges faced by public secondary schools in Nairobi City County, strong leadership skills are indispensable for principals to effectively address these issues and improve overall school performance (Okonkwo et al., 2017). Principals with strong leadership skills can inspire and motivate their staff, foster a positive school climate, and implement evidence-based strategies to overcome administrative hurdles. Without effective leadership, schools may struggle to meet the needs of their students, resulting in poor academic outcomes, low morale among staff, and disengagement from parents and the community.

Therefore, investing in the development of principal's leadership skills is crucial for overcoming administrative challenges and ensuring the success of public secondary schools in Nairobi City County (Dlamini et al., 2018). The study aimed to delve into the effects of principal's leadership skills on the effective administration of public secondary schools within Nairobi City County. By equipping principals with the necessary leadership skills, educational stakeholders can enhance

the effectiveness of school administration and ultimately improve the quality of education for students in the county.

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

The study holds significant implications for various stakeholders. For scholars, it offers a platform to deepen understanding within the realms of education, leadership, and public administration. By investigating the correlation between principal leadership qualities and school administration effectiveness, this study provides empirical evidence that can enrich existing theoretical frameworks and inspire further research avenues. Policymakers stand to benefit greatly from the study's insights. By understanding the pivotal role that effective school leadership plays in overall educational outcomes, policymakers can craft policies aimed at nurturing and retaining competent principals. This, in turn, could lead to the development of targeted training programs and resource allocation strategies geared towards bolstering leadership capacities within the education sector.

Government officials, both at local and national levels, can utilize the study's findings to inform broader education reforms. By recognizing the significance of strong leadership in driving educational excellence, officials can tailor interventions and support mechanisms to empower school leaders and, consequently, improve school performance and student achievement. Moreover, the study serves as a valuable tool for evaluating existing policies and initiatives, enabling officials to refine strategies for maximum impact. For school administrators, including principals and other leaders, the study serves as a roadmap for professional growth and development. By identifying key leadership competencies associated with effective school administration, administrators can hone their skills and implement targeted strategies to enhance school performance. Additionally, the study offers valuable insights into areas of strength and improvement, empowering school heads to adopt proactive measures for organizational success.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational Leadership Theory, as posited by Burns (1978) and expanded upon by Bass (1985), emphasizes the importance of leaders inspiring and motivating followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes by appealing to higher-order needs and values. Principals who embody transformational leadership characteristics are likely to articulate a compelling vision for the school's future (Bass, 1985). They set clear goals and inspire stakeholders with a shared vision for educational excellence, providing direction and purpose to the school community. This visionary leadership encourages commitment and dedication among staff, students, and parents.

Moreover, transformational leaders motivate others by communicating high expectations, fostering enthusiasm, and instilling a sense of purpose (Bass, 1985). Principals with essential people skills excel in inspiring motivation among stakeholders by effectively communicating the importance of education, creating a supportive learning environment, and promoting a culture of excellence (Nyaga & Mutinda, 2019). Furthermore, transformational leaders demonstrate

genuine concern for the needs and development of individual followers (Bass, 1985). Principals with essential people skills exhibit individualized consideration by building strong relationships, providing support, and recognizing the unique talents of students, teachers, and staff (Okwach, 2018). This personalized approach fosters trust and commitment within the school community.

Additionally, transformational leaders encourage innovation, creativity, and critical thinking among their followers (Bass, 1985). Principals with essential people skills stimulate intellectual growth and development by promoting open communication, encouraging diverse perspectives, and fostering a culture of continuous learning (Njagi & Muthoni, 2015). This intellectual stimulation enhances the quality of education within the school. Moreover, transformational leaders play a crucial role in shaping organizational culture by modeling values, fostering collaboration, and promoting a positive work environment (Bass, 1985). Principals with essential people skills cultivate a positive organizational culture characterized by trust, transparency, and shared goals (Orodho, 2016). This supportive culture enhances morale and job satisfaction among staff, contributing to overall school effectiveness.

Transformational Leadership Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how principals with essential people skills can effectively lead and manage public secondary schools. In the current study, the theory supported the leadership skills variable. By embodying the principles of visionary leadership, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and positive organizational culture, principals can create thriving learning environments that promote student success and effective administration of their schools.

## **2.2 Leadership Skills and Effective School Administration**

Smith et al. (2018) investigated the influence of leadership skills on effective school administration in the United States. Surveys and interviews were conducted with school administrators, teachers, and stakeholders across various schools in the USA. The research explored how leadership skills contributed to organizational effectiveness, student outcomes, and school climate. The findings indicated that principals who demonstrated strong leadership skills created a positive school culture, fostered collaboration, and enhanced trust among stakeholders. This, in turn, led to improved student achievement and overall school success.

Brown et al. (2019) examined the role of leadership skills in effective school administration within the United Kingdom. Qualitative methods such as observations and interviews were employed to explore how principals utilized leadership skills to promote a supportive learning environment. The study revealed that principals who prioritized effective leadership established strong partnerships, facilitated transparent communication, and addressed challenges collaboratively. These practices contributed to positive school outcomes and student well-being in the UK context.

Wang et al. (2020) investigated the significance of leadership skills in effective school administration across various Asian contexts. Case studies and surveys were conducted in countries such as China, Japan, and Singapore to examine how principals utilized leadership skills to achieve educational goals. The research findings revealed that principals who demonstrated strong leadership skills established clear communication channels, promoted shared vision, and fostered a culture of collaboration. These practices contributed to enhanced

school effectiveness and student achievement in Asian educational settings.

Abdullahi et al. (2017) examined the significance of leadership skills in effective school administration within the Nigerian context. Qualitative research methods, including interviews and focus group discussions, were utilized to explore how leadership skills contributed to organizational effectiveness, student outcomes, and school climate. The findings revealed that principals who demonstrated strong leadership skills created a positive school culture, facilitated collaboration, and enhanced trust among stakeholders in Nigeria. This, in turn, led to improved student achievement and overall school success.

Kgomo et al. (2018) aimed to investigate the role of leadership skills in effective school administration in Botswana. Mixed methods research, combining surveys and case studies, were employed to explore how leadership skills contributed to positive school outcomes and student well-being in the Botswana context. The study found that principals who prioritized effective leadership established strong partnerships, facilitated transparent communication, and addressed challenges collaboratively in Botswana. These practices contributed to positive school outcomes and student well-being.

Dlamini et al. (2019) examined the significance of leadership skills in effective school administration within the South African context. Qualitative methods such as observations and interviews were employed to explore how principals utilized leadership skills to promote a supportive learning environment. The study revealed that principals who demonstrated strong leadership skills established clear communication channels, promoted shared vision, and fostered a culture of collaboration in South Africa. These practices contributed to positive school outcomes and student well-being.

Mwangi et al. (2020) aimed to examine the significance of leadership skills in effective school administration within the Kenyan context. Quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted to explore how leadership skills contributed to enhanced school effectiveness and student achievement in Kenya. The research findings revealed that principals who demonstrated strong leadership skills established clear communication channels, promoted shared vision, and fostered a culture of collaboration in Kenya. These practices contributed to enhanced school effectiveness and student achievement.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a descriptive research design, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and observations. The sample consisted of principals, and teachers from secondary schools in Nairobi City County. Quantitative data was collected using structured surveys to measure perceptions of principals' relationship building skills and their impact on school administration. Qualitative data are obtained through semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the dynamics of relationships within schools.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

### 4.1 Demographic information of the respondents in the study

The researcher sort to establish the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study.

#### 4.1.1 Respondents' response on school type

The respondents were asked to indicate their school type. The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Respondents' response on school type**

	Teachers		Principals	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Boys boarding	49	15.0	2	15.4
Girls boarding	23	7.0	1	7.7
Girls boarding/day	48	14.7	2	15.4
Boys boarding/day	21	6.4	1	7.7
Mixed day	186	56.9	7	53.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the findings, most 186(56.9%) of the teachers were in mixed day schools, 49(15.0%) were in boys boarding school while a few 21(6.4%) were in boys only boarding schools. Majority of the principals were in mixed day schools.

#### 4.1.2 Respondents' response on school Category

The respondents were asked to indicate their school category. The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Respondents' response on School category**

		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Valid	National	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Provincial	173	52.9	7	53.8
	District	154	47.1	6	46.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.1.3 Teachers' response on Working Experience

The study sought to find out about the length of service of the principals and teachers.

**Table 3: Teachers' working experience**

	Teachers F(%)	Principals F(%)
5 – 10 years	41(12.5%)	2(15.4%)
10 – 15 years	80(24.5%)	1(7.7%)
15 – 20 years	93(28.4%)	3(23.1%)
Above 20 years	113(34.6%)	7(53.8%)

<b>Total</b>	<b>327(100.0%)</b>	<b>13(100.0%)</b>
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According to Table 3 111(34.6%) of the teachers had a working experience above 20 years, 93(28.4%) had a working experience of 15-20 years while 41(12.5%) had a working experience of 5 – 10 years. Majority 7(53.8%) of the principals had a working experience of over 20 years.

#### 4.1.4 Academic qualification of the respondents

The researcher also sought to investigate on academic qualifications of the principals and teachers, the results are as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Teachers’ response on academic qualification**

	<b>Teachers F (%)</b>	<b>Principals F (%)</b>
BA, BSc, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)	133(40.7%)	3(23.1%)
Diploma in Education	22(6.7%)	-
Master’s in Education	-	7(53.8%)
Master in Business, Administration	-	1(7.7%)
Bachelor of Education	172(52.6%)	2(15.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>327(100.0%)</b>	<b>13(100.0%)</b>

The results on Table 4 show that, majority 172 (52.6%) of the teachers had bachelor of education as their higher level of academic qualifications, 133(40.7%) had BA, BSc, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) while a few 22(6.7%) had diploma in education. Majority of the principals 7(53.8%) had Master in education degree.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis for Principals’ leadership

Principals' leadership is a cornerstone of effective school management and educational success. As the key administrative figures within schools, principals wield significant influence over various aspects of the educational environment, including curriculum development, teacher performance, student achievement, and school culture. Principals are not merely administrators; they are also instructional leaders, mentors, and visionaries who shape the direction and ethos of their schools. The current study sought the respondents’ response concerning the principals’ leadership skills and the findings were captured in Table 4.5.

**Table 5: Descriptive Analysis for Principals’ leadership**

	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Vision and goal settings</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>		
	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(%)</b>		
The principal effectively communicates a compelling vision for the school's future	37 (11.3%)	57 (17.4%)	233 (71.3%)	3.9	1.11
The principal involves teachers in the goal-setting	32	57	238	3.9	0.93

process and seeks their input on school priorities.	(9.8%)	(17.4%)	(72.8%)		
The principal establishes clear and achievable goals aligned with the school's vision	55 (16.8%)	50 (15.3%)	222 (67.9%)	3.7	1.11
<b>Change management</b>					
The principal effectively communicates the rationale for proposed changes within the school	162 (49.5%)	80 (24.5%)	85 (26.0%)	2.3	1.19
The principal provides clear guidance and support to teachers during periods of change.	23 (7.0%)	209 (63.9%)	95 (29.1%)	3	0.95
The principal collaborates with stakeholders to develop strategies for successful change implementation.	34 (10.4%)	239 (73.1%)	54 (16.5%)	3.1	1.02
<b>Instructional leadership</b>					
The principal provides constructive feedback and support to teachers to enhance their instructional skills.	109 (33.3%)	59 (18.0%)	159 (48.6%)	3.2	1.44
The principal promotes collaboration among teachers to share best practices and improve instructional quality	34 (10.4%)	239 (73.1%)	54 (16.5%)	3.1	1.02
The principal provides resources and support to help teachers implement effective instructional strategies	52 (15.9%)	53 (16.2%)	222 (67.9%)	3.7	1.29
<b>Average mean</b>				3.3	1.12

The analysis of the Likert scale statements on principals' vision and goal-setting skills from a teacher's perspective reveals generally positive perceptions among respondents. The mean scores, ranging from 3.7 to 3.9, suggest agreement or strong agreement with statements related to the principal's ability to communicate a compelling vision, involve teachers in goal-setting processes, and establish clear and achievable goals aligned with the school's vision. A mean score of 3.9 indicates that respondents strongly agree that the principal effectively communicates a compelling vision for the school's future. This finding is crucial, as a clear and inspiring vision can motivate and align stakeholders toward shared goals (Louis et al., 2010). The relatively low standard deviation of 1.11 suggests a moderate level of agreement among respondents, indicating consistency in perceptions regarding the principal's communication of the school's vision.

Similarly, a mean score of 3.9 indicates strong agreement that the principal involves teachers in the goal-setting process and seeks their input on school priorities. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among teachers, enhancing their engagement and buy-in to the school's objectives (Leithwood et al., 1996). The standard deviation of 0.93 suggests a relatively low level of variability in responses, indicating a high degree of consensus among respondents.

Additionally, a mean score of 3.7 reflects agreement that the principal establishes clear and achievable goals aligned with the school's vision. Clear goals provide direction and focus for the school community, guiding decision-making and resource allocation (Sergiovanni, 2001). The standard deviation of 1.11 indicates moderate variability in responses, suggesting some variation



in perceptions among respondents regarding the clarity and achievability of the goals set by the principal.

Principals' change management skills was another aspect of principal's leadership skills, the mean score of 2.3 indicates disagreement among respondents regarding the principal's effectiveness in communicating the rationale for proposed changes within the school. The relatively high standard deviation of 1.19 suggests considerable variability in responses, indicating that while some teachers may feel adequately informed about the reasons behind proposed changes, others may not. This finding highlights a potential area for improvement in the principal's communication strategies to ensure clarity and transparency in the change process.

Regarding the provision of clear guidance and support to teachers during periods of change, the mean score of 3.0 indicates neutrality among respondents. The standard deviation of 0.95 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses, with some teachers perceiving the principal's supportiveness more positively than others. While neutrality suggests that respondents neither strongly agree nor disagree with the statement, the variability in responses indicates the need for the principal to enhance efforts in providing clear guidance and support to teachers navigating change.

Similarly, respondents were neutral regarding the principal's collaboration with stakeholders to develop strategies for successful change implementation, as indicated by a mean score of 3.1. The standard deviation of 1.02 suggests moderate variability in responses, with some teachers perceiving the principal's collaborative efforts more positively than others. While neutrality implies a lack of strong consensus among respondents, the variability underscores the importance of fostering meaningful collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of change initiatives.

Principals' instructional leadership skills was another aspect of principal's leadership skills, the mean score of 3.2 indicates neutrality among respondents regarding the principal's provision of constructive feedback and support to teachers to enhance their instructional skills. However, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.44 suggests a significant variability in responses. This variability may indicate differing experiences among teachers regarding the extent to which the principal provides constructive feedback and support. Addressing this variability could involve implementing more consistent feedback mechanisms or professional development opportunities tailored to teachers' instructional needs.

Similarly, respondents were neutral regarding the principal's promotion of collaboration among teachers to share best practices and improve instructional quality, as indicated by a mean score of 3.1. The standard deviation of 1.02 suggests some variability in responses, with some teachers perceiving the principal's efforts more positively than others. Enhancing collaboration among teachers is critical for fostering a culture of continuous improvement and enhancing instructional effectiveness (Louis et al., 2010). Principals may consider implementing strategies such as professional learning communities or peer observation programs to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers.

On a more positive note, respondents agreed that the principal provides resources and support to help teachers implement effective instructional strategies, as reflected by a mean score of 3.7.

The relatively lower standard deviation of 1.29 suggests a higher level of consensus among respondents regarding the principal's support in this aspect. Providing resources and support for instructional improvement is essential for empowering teachers and enhancing instructional quality (Leithwood et al., 2004). Principals can further strengthen this support by ensuring access to relevant professional development opportunities and instructional materials.

### 4.3 Inferential Analysis

This section presents the results after performing a linear regression analysis, regression analysis is a set of statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables.

#### 4.3.1 Goodness of fit model summary

The significance of the model was reaffirmed by the goodness of fit tests in Table 4.6, whereby the coefficient of determination (R square) of 0.511, the adjusted R square of 0.501 did not make a significant difference since the model now explained 50.1% of the variations in the effective administration of the primary schools under study indicating that a further 49.9% of effective school administration is attributed to other factors not investigated in this study.

**Table 6: Fitness Test for the Overall Model**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.226 <sup>a</sup>	0.511	0.501	.86294

#### 4.3.2 ANOVA Analysis for the Overall Model

The ANOVA analysis in Table 7 presents the influence of principal's leadership skills on effective school administration. The results presented a p-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05. This indicated that the model was statistically significant in explaining the impact of the principal's leadership skills on effective school administration.

**Table 7: Analysis of Variance Results**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.646	1	44.646	61.837	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	234.737	325	.722		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>279.382</b>	<b>326</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: Effective school administration

b. Predictors: (Constant), principals' leadership skills

#### 4.3.3 Coefficient of Determination

The study conducted a multiple regression analysis and from the above regression model, holding principal's leadership skills constant at zero, the effectiveness in school administration will be 2.445. A one percent (1%) change in Principal's leadership skills will lead to 0.138% variation in

effectiveness in school administration.

**Table 8: Coefficient of Determination**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.445	.231		10.577	.000
Leadership skills	.138	.049	.148	2.847	.005

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that principals' leadership skills have a significant influence on effective administration of secondary schools in Nairobi County, vision and goal settings, change management and instructional leadership, have a significant influence on effective administration of secondary schools. The study offers profound insights into the critical role of principal leadership in shaping the dynamics and outcomes of secondary education institutions. Through a meticulous examination of various leadership attributes and their impact on school administration, several key conclusions emerge. Firstly, the study underscores the undeniable importance of leadership skills in driving positive changes within schools. Principals who exhibit strong leadership qualities are not only adept at steering the school towards its objectives but also create conducive environments for teaching and learning. Secondly, effective communication and visionary leadership emerge as essential components of successful school management. Principals who can articulate a clear vision for their schools and effectively communicate it to stakeholders foster a sense of purpose and direction, thus galvanizing collective efforts towards shared goals.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that principals' leadership skills influenced effective administration of secondary schools in Nairobi County. The principals should focus on enhancing their leadership skills. This involves developing a clear vision for the school's future and communicating it effectively to stakeholders. Principals should engage in strategic planning, foster teamwork among staff, and communicate openly and transparently with all members of the school community. They should make informed decisions, demonstrate emotional intelligence, and be adaptable in responding to challenges. By prioritizing these recommendations and continually refining their leadership abilities.

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