

ISSN: 2320-8848 (Online)

ISSN: 2321-0362 (Print)



# *International Journal for Management Science And Technology (IJMST)*

**Volume 4; Issue 01  
Manuscript- 1**

**“STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA CENTRAL SUB-  
COUNTY, KENYA”**



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## Abstract

Strategic Leadership is an emerging management concept commonly adopted by managers of organizations to gain a competitive edge over rivals. It entails a combination of strategic and leadership skills in influencing workers to produce better results at work place. In schools, results are determined by the mean scores obtained by students in national examinations. Since education is viewed as a key contributor to the growth of our economy, good results generally referred to as good academic performance is key, yet in most schools, it has been on the downward trend causing concern among stakeholders. Poor leadership is cited as a key contributor to this scenario as most school principals lack the necessary competence to manage schools successfully. School management, just like in the commercial sector requires the combination of strategic and leadership skills. Application of strategic leadership in private commercial enterprises has revolutionized the sector globally and helped in improving performance and profitability. Most studies on strategic leadership tend to focus on the commercial sector; however, there exists scanty information on its application in learning institutions. This study sought to investigate the effect of strategic leadership on academic performance of secondary schools in Kakamega Central Sub County. It adopted a descriptive cross sectional study design. A multi stage stratified random and purposive sampling procedure was used in selecting the sample schools and respondents. Two strata were considered in isolating the category of schools and respondents. A total of 15 secondary schools out of the population of 49 were selected from which 15 school principals, and 135 teachers were sampled as respondents. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and perusal of academic performance documents. Reliability of test instruments was ensured through a test re test approach on two pilot schools outside the population of study and results compared using Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient. Data from the selected sample was first tested for normality using Kolmogorov Smirnov (K-S) test which revealed a normal distribution, it was then analysed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed existence of a significant linear positive relationship between strategic leadership and academic performance. It was therefore concluded that strategic leadership had a positive influence on students' academic performance. On the basis of this conclusion, it was recommended that the government through the Kenya Education Management Institute enhances strategic leadership training for managers of educational institutions by expanding its curriculum to include strategic leadership concepts so as to equip practicing and upcoming

school principals with competencies of strategic leadership if learning institutions are to reap maximum benefits.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Provision of quality education is fundamental to the success of the Government's overall development strategy and central to the attainment of national goals for industrial development (Government of Kenya, 2005). The government lists provision of quality and relevant education and training as one of the challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs stresses the realization of universal access to basic education and training to all children including the disadvantaged and the vulnerable, and since the government of Kenya is a signatory to these goals, it does recognize the strategic importance of improving the provision of education to all Kenyans. This has seen it take steps to increase her investment in education through increased budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (G.O.K, 2005).

The push towards achievement of MDGs has created pressure on enrolment in high schools, this pressure has been aggravated by the introduction of free primary and secondary education in 2003 and the subsequent launch of a campaign to increase the transition rate from primary to secondary from 54 % (in 2000) to at least 70% by 2010 (G.O.K,2005). This has seen enrolment in schools grow to a significant level. For instance in 1997, we had 17,080 primary schools and 3, 028 secondary schools and by 2005, total number of primary institutions had increased to 19,849 and that of secondary schools to 4,197, a growth rate of 16% and 39% respectively in a space of just eight years. Total enrolment between 2002 and 2005 grew from 778,601 to 928,149 students representing an increase of 19.2 % in just three years (G. O. K, 2006).

As enrolment increases, academic performance also tends to drop. For instance, in the same period, only 12.85% of the students who sat for KCSE managed to qualify for enrolment in tertiary institutions, of which, 27.03% joined certificate and diploma colleges and only 11.41% were admitted in public Universities and 87.15% did not make it or failed in performance. The low transition rate to tertiary institutions and Universities implies that performance both at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education has been poor.

In the four Counties of Western Kenya alone (Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga County), enrolment in secondary schools grew from 94,000 in 2000 to 117,300 in 2005 representing a growth rate of 24.79% in five years. In 2011 for instance, the four Counties had a total of 607 secondary schools up from 547 in 2007. Candidate enrolment also grew steadily from 23,348 in 2002 to 39,855 in 2010 representing a growth of 71% in just eight years. Kakamega Central Sub County which is one of the 23 Sub Counties in the region currently has an enrolment of 12,864 students (Kakamega Central Sub County Quality Assurance Office, 2010).

Despite growth in student enrolment, performance has been unstable and on the downward trend (KCSCQAO, 2010). This poses a major challenge and concern for all stakeholders. If good performance is not achieved, then the government's efforts towards achievement of "Education For All" by 2015 and vision 2030 will be futile.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There has been an increasing awareness amongst the public of the need to acquire higher education and training. This need has been informed by the government's effort to popularize the policy of access and progression (G.O.K., 2005) so as to be at par with the provisions of the Millennium Development Goals, EFA and the Vision 2030. The effort has seen an increase in secondary school enrolment resulting in most schools recording poor results at national examinations'. This has raised concern among stakeholders because education is viewed as a key pillar for economic development. Much effort is therefore being made by the government and other stakeholders to provide additional facilities, schools and teaching staff. The recent move by the government to upgrade some of the existing secondary schools to national schools' status (G.O.K., 2009) is part of a wider scheme to improve access and performance.

However, poor academic performance in schools still persists. The government tries to address this challenge by transferring some principals from the affected schools and demoting others with little success. There is however evidence that some principals, when posted to certain schools quickly transform them into academic giants while others bring them down (Otula, 2007). This observation tends to indicate that there could be something in a principal as a manager that makes him/her perform better than the other, this special skill that enables

him/her to transform an organization and lead a team of staff towards the set goals is what Marlene, (2010) generally referred to as strategy.

A principal who has strategic leadership skills will therefore be able to create and execute plans for the organization and lead from the front and not just push from the rear. He/she will walk the talk and never break the promise (Yukl, 2006). He/she will be committed to the organization's objectives and passionately see to it that they are implemented successfully.

The concept of strategic leadership has been applied successfully in the commercial sector. Learning institutions just like other companies in the commercial sector have people, products and processes that need to be carefully handled if they are to bring up the desired results. While much research has been done on strategic leadership in relation to commercial organizations in an effort to help the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of such companies to improve profitability, learning institutions seem to have been ignored due to the fact that they are not viewed as profit making as such. This study views them otherwise, they are also in the business of making profit otherwise they should not be in existence. In fact those learning institutions that do not fair on well in producing better grades and well cultured students (profit) end up losing customers in terms of student enrolment and eventually collapse (Nyakwana, 2008). This is the reason why the researcher felt it necessary to carry out a study on strategic leadership in secondary schools in Kenya in order to find out whether strategic leadership has any influence on academic performance of secondary schools.

## **2. Materials And Methods**

### **2.1 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive and inferential cross sectional survey design to investigate the relationship between strategic leadership and academic performance in secondary schools in Kenya. Descriptive research concerns describing characteristics of an individual or of a group whereas inferential research tests the hypotheses of causal relationships between variables (Kothari, 2004). A cross Sectional survey design was preferred because the area of study is cosmopolitan having an urban and rural setting with all categories of schools.

### **2.2 Location of Study**

The study was conducted in Kakamega Central Sub County, the Sub County is located about 46Kms North of Kisumu along Kisumu - Kitale road and covers an area of 417.4 km<sup>2</sup> with three Divisions and nine Locations, it is listed as one of the Sub Counties in Kenya with the

highest rate of population growth of 4.1 % (G.O.K, 2010). The Sub County is cosmopolitan having a Municipal Council as one of its three Divisions and is densely populated, it neighbors Kakamega North, Kakamega South, Kakamega East, Mumias and Bungoma East Sub Counties.

The choice for this location was due to the fact that there is currently no documented evidence of a similar research having been done in this region. Most studies done have tended to focus specifically on leadership styles [Okoth, (2010)], leaders' training needs [Rapando, (2010)] or on other causes of poor performance in math and science. The region has also been recording weak academic results over the years, for instance, in 2005, out of a total of 6261 students who sat for KCSE, only 7.6% scored above a B mean grade, in 2006, only 6.3% scored above the said grade. In 2007 the number went even further to only 4.8%. The same trend continues to be observed in other subsequent years. This shows that despite the increase in population, the number of students getting quality grades and hence, being able to proceed with University education has continued to dwindle, this trend informed the basis for the researcher's interest and therefore choice to carry out a study in this region.

### **2.3 Study Population**

The study targeted secondary schools in Kakamega Central Sub County. At the time of study, the Sub County had three Divisions namely Lurambi; Municipality; and Navakholo with 49 secondary schools of all categories including National, Regional, Sub County and Private schools with a teacher population of 500 including the 49 principals. The respondents were 15 principals, 15 deputy principals and 120 teachers from a sample of 15 secondary schools.

### **2.4 Sampling Procedures**

A multi stage stratified cross sectional random sampling procedure was used to select a sample of 30% (Gay, 2002) of the schools in the Sub County. Random sampling procedure has the least bias and offers the most generalizability (Sekaran, 2004). Since the Sub County has various categories of schools both public and private, designated as National, Regional, Sub County, mixed day, same sex boarding, rural and urban, stratification according to respective categories was done in order to afford each school an equal chance of being selected thus reducing the sampling error. A total of 150 respondents including 15 head teachers, 15 deputies from the 15 schools were therefore selected from the population. The

choice of 150 respondents was motivated by the argument of Karlinger, (1986) that the main factor in selection of a sample size is its manageability. This is illustrated in table 1.1.

**Table 1.1 Multi Stage Stratified Sampling**

**1<sup>st</sup> Stage: School sampling**

School Category	Population	Sampling Procedure	Sample Size	Target School
National	1	Purposive Sampling	1	1 boys School
Regional	7	Purposive Sampling	2	1 boys boarding 1 girls boarding
Sub County	35	Random Sampling	10	3 mixed urban schools
		30% of 35 = 10.5		7 mixed rural schools
Private	6	Random Sampling	2	1 Pure girls boarding
		30 % of 6 = 1.8		1 Mixed day school
<b>Total Sampled Schools</b>				<b>15</b>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Stage: Respondents Sampling**

Respondents	Population	Sampling Procedure	Sample Size
Principals	15	Purposive Sampling	15
Deputy Principals	15	Purposive Sampling	15
Teachers	470	Stratified Random Sampling	
		of 24% in each selected school	120
<b>Total Respondents Sampled</b>			<b>150</b>

*Source: Primary Data (2012)*

**2.5 Sample Size**

According to Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003), the sample size must be large enough to represent the salient characteristics of the accessible population and hence, the target population. Roscoe, (1975) suggested that sample size that are larger than 30 elements but less than 500 are appropriate for most research. Gay, (2002) recommends a sample size of between 10% to 30 % of the accessible population for a descriptive study. Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003) adds that, a larger sample size will be appropriate in reducing the sampling error, however, where the population is fairly homogenous; a smaller sample can be justified. The study incorporated Mugenda and Gay's arguments in sampling 30% of schools and respondents in the Sub County since the Sub County has all of the listed categories of schools. This translated into 15 schools, 15 principals, 15 deputy principals and 120 teachers as illustrated below in tables 1.2.

**Table 1.2 Sample Size**

<b>School Category</b>	<b>Population( N)</b>	<b>Target Population ( n)</b>	<b>Sample Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
Principals	49	15	30	Purposive
Deputy principals	49	15	30	Purposive
Teachers	402	120	30	Random Stratification
<b>Totals</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15 (Schools)</b>

*Source: Primary Data (2014)*

### **2.6 Instruments for Data Collection**

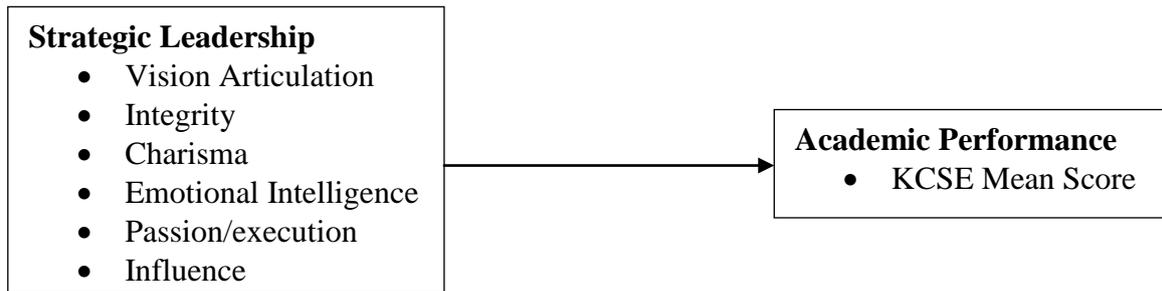
The study used questionnaire and document analysis in data collection. A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed in a definite order, it is the most suitable instrument for collecting data for big enquiries (Kothari, 2004). A five point Likert type questionnaire with a list of statements that describe strategic leadership traits were used to get responses from principals who were the main object of study. A similar questionnaire with tense adjustments was also administered to deputy principals and other teachers to re evaluate the principals' judgments of their own strategic leadership traits.

Information on schools' academic performance was obtained by looking at schools' analysed K.C.S.E results for a period of six years. The period under evaluation was between 2005 and 2010. Six year period was preferred because most schools operate on a five year strategic plan system and therefore the six years were sufficient in determining performance of a principal.

### **2.7 Measurement of Variables**

The key variables in this study were strategic leadership (independent variable), and academic performance (dependent variable). Five specific attributes that best describes the disposition of a strategic leader were identified and conceptualized as; ability to create and articulate a vision for the institution, integrity, charisma, emotional intelligence, passion in executing the firm's policies, and ability to influence the team. Whereas the dependent variable of academic performance was conceptualized by assessing schools' mean score in national examinations. The relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable was conceptualized as illustrated bellow.

### **Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1.1:** Interaction between SL & AP in secondary schools

Source: Primary data (2014)

After identification of strategic leadership attributes, key indicators that well describes these attributes were also identified and used in construction of research questionnaire which were then measured on Ordinal and a five point Likert type questions as shown in table 1.3.

**Table 1.3 Summary of variables measured**

Variable		
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
	Vision Articulation	Availability of a well-articulated Vision and Mission
	Integrity	Trust, Firm decision, Ability to win attention.
	Charisma	Captivating speech, Risk taking
	Emotional Intelligence	Ability to understand staff needs, Character evaluation, Delegation, handling Staff Diversity, Team work.
	Passion in Execution	Diligence, Innovativeness, Performance oriented
	Influence	Support, Openness, Free Interaction, Fairness, Knowledge, Capacity Building.
<b>Academic Performance</b>	School Mean Score	Average School Mean Score in six years

## 2.8 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out in two randomly selected schools outside the population of study to test the validity of the study and reliability of the instruments, one boys' boarding and a mixed day school were purposively selected. Data collected was coded and tested for content validity. Internal consistency (reliability) was also established using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Piloted results revealed a normal alpha value ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) except for variables that had earlier been identified by the study to measure academic performance which produced an alpha value of 0.63 ( $\alpha < 0.7$ ). This was against the rule of the thumb that requires an achievement of a reliability of  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  before an instrument is used (Wikipedia, 2010). As

a result, appropriate adjustments were made on the tool by eliminating those variables that were not significant in measuring academic performance.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients obtained from variables under study after piloting and adjustment of the instrument are given in table 1.4.

**Table 1.4: Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients**

<b>1. Strategic Leadership Traits</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Evaluation Sekaran (2000)</b>
Vision Articulation	0.71	Acceptable
Integrity	0.83	Good
Charisma	0.73	Acceptable
Emotional Intelligence	0.70	Acceptable
Passion for work	0.85	Good
Influence	0.90	Good
<b>Mean for Strategic Leadership Straits</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>
<b>2. Academic Performance</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>Good</b>

The mean Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient found for all variable were conforming to a benchmark standard of  $\alpha > 0.7$  as proposed by Sekeran (2000) hence, the instrument used for data collection in this study was deemed reliable.

## 2.9 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

For the study to be appropriate, it was necessary to test the validity of results and the extent to which test instruments were reliable. The following subsections describe how both validity and reliability was ensured.

## 2.10 Validity of the Study

Validity, according to Best and Kahn, (2002) is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represents the phenomenon under study. To ensure content validity, the questionnaires were developed through expert guidance from members of the School of Business and Economics among whom were my supervisors. The decision to use expert judgment in determining validity was informed by Kothari's (2004) observation that the determination of content validity is primarily judgmental and intuitive, and can be determined using a panel of persons who judge how well the instruments meet the standards. The instruments were then piloted in two randomly selected schools outside the population frame to assess their adequacy in data collection (Best and Kahn, 2002). Data was obtained, coded

and analyzed. Based on the feedback from the piloted respondents, adjustments were made on the instrument.

### **2.11 Reliability of the Instruments**

Reliability according to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) is the measurement of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. It refers to the dependability of a measurement instrument and the extent to which an instrument yields the same results on repeated trials (Byrkit, 1987). It helps to indicate the accuracy or precision of the measuring instrument (Norland, 1990).

To ensure reliability, a test/re test pilot study was done on two schools outside the population frame and results tested using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient as captured in table 1.4

### **2.12 Procedure for Data Collection**

The study used questionnaires for primary data collection. Two types of questionnaires were developed, one for the principals' self-evaluation and another for deputy principals and other teachers to re evaluate their principals' judgments on strategic leadership. The questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents through a drop and pick later procedure after obtaining an introductory letter from MMUST to the respondents and a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology. The study also perused analysed records of examination results from the respective schools and verified them with similar records held by the KCSCQASO office to establish the respective mean scores for the period under investigation.

### **2.13 Data Analysis**

Data was edited to check for completeness and consistency. The incomplete responses were assigned a mean of other questions measuring that particular variable (Sekaran, 2004). They were then coded, categorized and keyed in. Data obtained was then organized under the different variables and their frequency distributions, percentages and ratios established to allow for a descriptive statistical inference, final results were then presented in frequency tables and charts. Inferential statistics was then employed to test hypotheses and establish the relationship among variables using Karl Pearson's zero order coefficient of correlation as illustrated in table 1.5.

**Table 1.5: Summary of hypotheses statements and tests done**

Null Hypothesis	Test done
$H_{01}$ : There is no significant linear relationship between strategic leadership and academic performance	$H_{01}:\beta_1=0$ , against $H_{a1}:\beta_1 \neq 0$ Reject $H_{01}$ if $p\text{-value} < \alpha$ otherwise fail to reject

### 3. Results And Discussion

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of data obtained from respondents is presented in three sections; the first section presents characteristics of sample population and the respondents, the second section presents findings with respect to the objective under study after testing the hypothesis while the third section discusses the findings.

#### 3.1 Response Rate

The study targeted 15 principals and 135 teachers from the sample of 15 secondary schools giving a total of 150 respondents. Out of the 150 copies of questionnaire that were issued to the principals and teachers, only 129 were collected representing a total response rate of 86%. The 86% response rate realised falls within the confines of a large sample size ( $n \geq 30$ ). This compares favourably with response rates in Kenya of between 30% - 86% that studies such as Ng'ang'a (2004) have reported in their work. Fowler F. J. Jr., (1993) referring to a widely accepted rule of thumb also puts the acceptable minimum response rate for a survey research at 75%.

#### 3.2 Tests for Normality of Data

The tests in this study i.e. correlation; regression and ANOVA required data that has a normal distribution. In order to test for the normal distribution of data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test that compares the cumulative distribution function for the variables of interest was computed (Malhotra, 2007). This non-parametric goodness-of-fit test tests whether the observations could reasonably have come from a normal distribution. The K-S test results for the variables under study are given in table 1.6. The tests revealed that the data used in this study was normally distributed and hence could be subjected to other statistical tests of significance used to test the hypotheses that require normally distributed data.

**Table 1.6: Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S)**

		<b>SL</b>	<b>AP</b>
N		129	129
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	2.677	2.484
	Std. Dev	1.301	1.313
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.297	.231
	Positive	.215	.226
	Negative	-.297	-.231
K-S Z		1.653	1.284
Asymp.Sig(2-tailed)		0.28	.74

a. Test distribution is normal

b. Calculated from data

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

### **3.3 Relationship between Strategic Leadership and Academic Performance**

In order to determine this relationship, some attributes that were considered as a driving force behind a strategic leader, that is; vision and mission design and articulation, a leader's personal integrity, charisma, emotional intelligence, passion and his/her ability to influence followers were presented using descriptive statistics. A correlation and regression analysis was then done and the set hypothesis on the anticipated relationships tested at 0.05 confidence level.

### **3.4 Vision and Mission articulation**

On a five point Likert type questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the presence of vision and mission in their respective schools and the extent to which principals articulated these variables to their subjects. Results obtained were coded and grouped in four categories of weak, average, strong and very strong, those who disagreed and strongly disagreed were grouped together as indicating weak vision and mission articulation while those who agreed were coded as indicating the presence of strong vision and mission articulation, those who strongly agreed with the statements were coded under "very strong". Those who were not sure were perceived to indicate an average level of vision and mission articulation.

**Table 1.7: Vision and Mission design and articulation**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Weak	9	7	7
Average	43	33	40
Strong	69	53	93
Very Strong	9	7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

The results showed that seven percent of principals were perceived to have developed very strong vision and mission for their schools and took time articulate them to staff and students on regular basis, 53% also had strong vision and mission for their schools and had made both students and teachers to internalize them, 33% of the respondents also indicated on an average scale the presence of vision and mission in their schools. On average, 60% of the respondents said that their schools had well-articulated vision and mission, only seven percent of the respondents interviewed seemed to indicate that their principals were not keen on school vision and mission. This is captured in table 1.7.

### 3.5 Integrity

When asked whether principals could be relied upon in upholding organizational and personal integrity, six point two percent of the respondents indicated that principals had strong integrity, 85.3% indicated the presence of an average level of integrity in their principals. Only eight point five percent of the respondents perceived lack of integrity their leaders. Most of the principals in secondary schools (91.5%) therefore upheld the trait of integrity as shown in table 1.8.

**Table 1.8: Integrity**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Strong Integrity	8	6.2	6.2
Average Integrity	110	85.3	91.5
No Integrity	11	8.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

### 3.6 Charisma

Charismatic attribute of head-teachers was also rated by respondents on a five point Likert type, those who strongly agreed and agreed to the statements describing the attribute of

charisma were grouped together as indicating presence of strong charisma, those who were not sure were perceived to indicate on an average scale the presence of charisma while those who disagreed were deemed to indicate lack of charisma in their head-teachers.

**Table 1.9: Charisma**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Weak	9	7	7
Average	34	26.3	33.3
Strong	86	66.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

The overall results showed that 66.7% of the principals had strong charisma, seven percent lacked charisma since respondent perceived them to be of weak charismatic attribute while 26.3 % of them were perceived to possess average charismatic attribute as indicated in table 1.9.

### 3.7 Emotional Intelligence

Respondents were asked to rate on a five point scale principals' ability to understand, evaluate and handle staff diversity in character, their ability in team building and their willingness to delegate. Those who agreed to the statements were evaluated as approving the presence of the attribute of EI in the principals, those who were not sure were rated as having perceived an average level of EI while the respondents who disagreed with the statements were rated as having observed a weak level of EI.

**Table 1.10: Emotional Intelligence**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Weak	17	13.2	13.2
Average	52	40.3	53.5
Strong	60	46.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

Results in table 1.10 shows that, 46.5 % of respondents indicated the presence of strong emotional intelligence among the principals, 40.3% were perceived to indicate an average level while 13.2% of the respondents rated their principals as lacking the attribute of emotional intelligence. Most of the principals under investigation (86.8%) were therefore observed to possess the operates of EI.

### 3.8 Passion/Execution

As regards to whether the principals exercised passion in executing their tasks with respect to their level of diligence, commitment to duty, innovativeness and persistence, seven per cent of the respondents agreed strongly to the statements and were coded as having perceived very strong passion in their leaders, 58.9% indicated that their leaders had strong passion while 25.6% of the respondents were not sure and were therefore coded as having observed an average level of passion in their leaders. Only 8.5% of the respondents disagreed to the statements, they therefore did not observe passion in their principals, their responses were interpreted as rating the principals attribute of passion as weak

**Table 1.11: Passion/Execution**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Weak	11	8.5	8.5
Average	33	25.6	34.1
Strong	76	58.9	93.0
Very Strong	9	7.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

On average, results obtained indicate that most principals had exhibited passion in executing their duties. This is captured in table 1.11 above.

### 3.9 Influence

On the level of influence that principals had in their respective institutions as measured by the level of trust earned, their openness in dealing with administrative issues, their understanding of tasks to be performed, ability to nurture relations and boost teachers' morale through capacity building, six point two per cent of the respondents said that principals had a very strong influence, 66.7% indicated the presence of a strong influence of principals in the management of their institutions, 18.6% of the respondents thought that the principals' influence was average. Only Eight point five per cent of the respondents disagreed with the statements thereby indicating that principals had no significant influence in their institutions as shown in table 1.12.

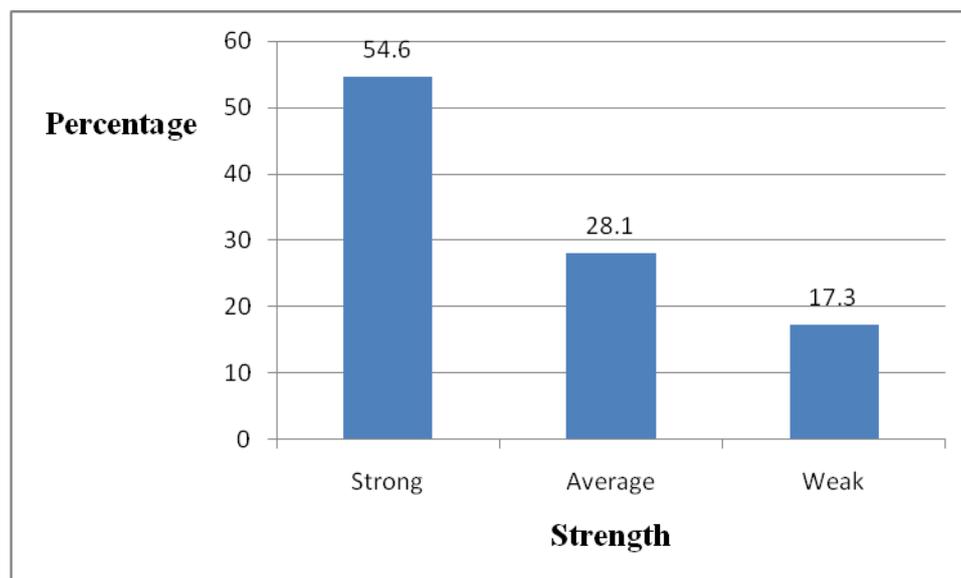
**Table 1.12: Principals' Influence**

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Weak	11	8.5	8.5
Average	24	18.6	27.1
Strong	86	66.7	93.8
Very Strong	8	6.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

### 3.10 Aggregate Measure of Strategic Leadership

In order to determine the strength of strategic leadership in schools, all the attributes under study were aggregated and grouped under three levels; strong, weak or average. Results revealed that 54.6% of the principals in the institutions under study were perceived to exhibit strong strategic leadership traits, 28.1% of them had average strategic leadership ability while 17.3 % were rated as weak and therefore lacked the attributes of strategic leadership as captured in Fig. 1.2.



**Figure 1.2: Aggregate Measure of Strategic Leadership**

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

The principals were rated well in terms of vision and mission articulation, charisma, emotional intelligence and passion, however many were observed to lack strong personal integrity and influence.

### 3.11 Academic Performance

Performance of the schools in standardized national examinations was evaluated and results showed that a majority of the schools posted weak results (66.7%). Twenty six point seven per cent (4 schools) had recorded average academic results in KCSE. Only six point seven per cent (one school) recorded good academic performance as shown in table 1.13.

**Table 1.13: Academic Performance**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Weak	10	66.7	66.7
Average	4	26.6	93.3
Strong	1	6.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary data (2012)*

Both results though observed to be weak, they were positively progressive in nature. This scenario can be explained by the fact that the Sub County has only one National school and seven Regional schools, the rest of schools (41) are of Sub County status, mixed gender and are located in rural areas. Such schools normally receive most of their students from the rural catchment with weak KCPE grades who end up posting average academic performance.

### 3.12 Correlation between Strategic Leadership and Academic Performance

To determine the strength and direction of correlation between strategic leadership and academic performance, Pearson's correlation was done and the results showed that there was a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.789$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) between strategic leadership and academic performance, at  $\alpha = 0.05$  meaning that the presence of strategic leadership in secondary schools did improve the academic performance of the said institutions.

**Table 1.14: Correlation for Strategic Leadership vs. Academic Performance**

	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Academic performance</b>	<b>Strategic leadership</b>
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.789*
	Sig.(2-tailed)	-	0.000
	N	15	15
Strategic leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.789*	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	-
	N	15	15

\*: Correlation significant at 0.05 significance level (2-tailed)

*Source: Primary data (2014)*

### 3.13 Regression of Strategic Leadership on Academic Performance and Hypothesis Testing

In order to investigate the relationship between strategic leadership and academic performance, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested as follows:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant linear relationship between strategic leadership and academic performance.

A regression analysis was carried out to test the null hypothesis. From the regression analysis and hence the regression parameters obtained (table 1.15) the hypothesis was tested by constructing the following linear model:  $AP = B + \beta \cdot SL$  where: AP is academic performance (the dependent variable) B is the y-intercept (the constant),  $\beta$  is gradient/slope of the regression line and SL denotes strategic leadership (the independent variable).

**Table 1.15: Regression of Strategic Leadership on Academic Performance**

Goodness-of-fit					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error		
.789 <sup>a</sup>	0.623	0.618	0.56542		

a. Predictors: (Constant). SL

Overall significance: ANOVA (F-test)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	56.406	1	56.406	176.435	0.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	9.271	128	.320		
Total	65.677	129			

a. Predictors: (Constant). SL  
b. Dependent variable: AP

Individual significance

Model	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	-.370	.235		-1.573	
SL	1.054	.079	.789	13.283	0.000

a. Dependent variable: A P  
 $R^2 = 0.623$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.618$   
Level of significance,  $\alpha = 0.05$

Source: Primary data (2014)

Thus the linear equation relating strategic leadership and academic performance took the form:  $AP = -0.370 + 1.054 *SL$ . This model has a high correlation ( $R^2 = 0.62.3$ ) and is strongly significant ( $F = 176.435$  and  $p = 0.000$  which is less than the significance level of  $0.05$ ) while  $\beta \neq 0$ .

In ANOVA, large  $F$  and  $R^2$  values were observed indicating that most of the variation in the dependent variable ( $AP$ ) is explained by the regression model. Hence the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there is sufficient evidence, at 95% level of significance, that there is a significant positive linear relationship between strategic leadership and academic performance such that, if a school is headed by a strategic leader, a conducive environment can be created to influence teachers to perform their responsibilities diligently and students to produce better grades.

Findings of this study are consistent with those of the study carried out by Serem and Kindik (2007) on how leadership styles affects academic performance in Rift Valley province, they established the existence of a strong correlation between a leader's leadership style and performance where schools with good leadership styles portrayed good academic performance and those with bad leadership styles produced poor academic results. Therefore, if all principals embraced the concept of strategic leadership, academic performance in schools would be greatly boosted since a strategic leader is able to develop a winning vision, mission and coil them into strategic policies and move on to marshal support from all players to full implementation. Once successfully implemented, the end result would be good academic performance for their respective schools.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the results of this study, it was established that strategic leadership has positive influence on schools' academic performance. Presence of strategic leadership makes the school to perform better academically as the principals exploit the treasure within the various strategic leadership traits to transform their schools into academic giants. The study therefore concluded that strategic leadership is the forgotten trait of management that can have a significant influence on teachers' and students' morale and can help in boosting academic performance of schools. Excellent academic performance in schools therefore requires able leadership. The kind that is focused, aggressive and diligent, able to think and act strategically seizing every opportunity for profit. If principals of schools are endowed with

this treasure, then it will be easier for them to record good academic results irrespective of the status or category of schools that they lead, they will be able to comfortably maintain a competitive edge over other competitors who lack such competencies. Since strategic leadership had significant positive influence on academic performance, a principal who has strategic leadership abilities is able to influence teachers and students towards delivering their best.

## **5. Recommendations Of The Study**

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to stakeholders in the education sector.

- i) Since academic institutions operate in a dynamic environment, managers of such institutions need to quickly embrace and employ the use of strategic leadership in management so that these schools are managed like commercial enterprises as Starratt, (1996) suggested.
- ii) The Ministry of Education through the Kenya Education Management Institute which has been tasked with the responsibility of training managers in the education sector should enrich their curriculum with aspects of strategic leadership and sensitize the principals on the importance of application of strategic leadership; they should consider incorporating it in their training curriculum.

## **6. Suggestions For Further Research**

Based on the conclusions and recommendations, the following suggestions are made:

- i) A similar study should be conducted in other education sectors using a wider population sample in order to broaden the relevance and application of strategic leadership in learning institutions.

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