

Management Commitment And Effectiveness Of Performance Management System In Public Secondary Schools In Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

In Kenya, the Teachers Service Commission rolled out performance management in public secondary schools in 2016. However, the performance management system has not been effective. This is shown by poor understanding of appraisal techniques, lack of appreciation of the performance management system by teachers, poor leadership, poor resource allocation and poor communication and feedback systems. This study hence sought to examine the effect of strategy effectiveness on the effectiveness of the performance management system in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. This research was anchored on the systems theory and used the positivism research philosophy. The study population was 7,797 drawn from 109 public secondary schools in Nairobi County which included 109 principals, 121 deputies, and 7,567 teachers. The sample included 369 teachers, 5 principals and 6 deputy principals. Multi-stage sampling was applied to select the sample. An interview guide and a structured questionnaire were applied to gather data. Analysis of the collected quantitative data was through descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages and means) and inferential statistics (simple linear regression analysis). The findings indicated that management commitment had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of the performance management system in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya ($\beta = 0.738, t = 18.754, p < 0.05$). Based on the findings and conclusions from this study, it is recommended that public secondary schools should strengthen support systems such as support networks and mentorship programs. The research also recommends that policymakers in education such as the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission should provide professional development to offer ongoing professional development and training for school leaders, teachers, and administrative staff on performance management practices, tools, and techniques.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Management commitment, Performance management system, Public Secondary schools.*

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I. Introduction

Performance management is a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving long-term success for organizations through the enhancement of workforce productivity and the cultivation of skills and talents among both teams and individual employees (Armstrong, 2012). This pertains to the formulation of systems for fostering a collective comprehension of objectives, as well as a strategy for effectively overseeing and nurturing individuals in a manner that enhances the likelihood of accomplishing such objectives within both immediate and extended timeframes (Aguinis, 2015). The objective of performance management is to facilitate the attainment of improved outcomes inside an organization, as well as among teams and people. This is achieved by comprehending and effectively overseeing performance within a mutually agreed-upon structure of predetermined objectives, benchmarks, and proficiency criteria (Melo & Figueiredo, 2020). By conducting regular evaluations, organizations may enhance employee motivation and commitment, while also facilitating individual growth, work satisfaction, and the realization of employees' full potential. This mutually beneficial process involves assessing the human resources inside the business, so enabling people to improve their skills and contribute to the overall success of the organization.

Various public education institutions have adopted performance management systems to improve teaching and enhance learning in schools. However, implementation of performance management system (PMS) has not been effective in various jurisdictions globally. Implementation of PMS in public schools in the United Kingdom (UK) began in the year 2000 (Toytok & Yavuz, 2018). The implementation had a mix of positive and negative outcomes due to a limited comprehension of the underlying principles and methodologies of performance management (Mohamud & Belle, 2019). However, after several refinements over the years, Waeyenberg et al. (2020), the effectiveness of the PMS in UK schools has been a success. In the African region, various countries have implemented performance management systems in schools (Dixit & Sharma, 2021). The implementation of the PMS throughout Botswana's government system, including the education sector, was

initiated in 1999 to enhance performance within the public service (Republic of Botswana, 2012). In Mauritius, PMS was introduced and implemented in state secondary schools in 2006 (Mohamud & Belle, 2019). In Ghana, Agyei and Abdul-Rahaman (2020) observe that PMS in secondary schools was introduced in 2007 and the PMS encountered various implementation challenges including bias in performance evaluation, lack of clear approaches, and ineffective use of performance data.

In Kenya, the introduction of PMS in public secondary schools by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in 2016 aimed to enhance performance in educational institutions, aligning with the commission's objective of being a distinguished institution that delivers efficient and effective services to ensure high-quality teaching. However, the adoption of the PMS in public secondary schools in Kenya has not yielded substantial improvements in learning outcomes and academic performance (Joseph et al., 2020). In Nairobi County, the implementation of PMS in public secondary schools mirrors the implementation in the country, where no notable change in performance has been reported. Owuonda et al. (2020) indicate that PMS may have failed to attain the expected objectives due to challenges in implementation which need to be investigated and addressed. The implementation of PMS according to Bauwens et al. (2019) has been affected by the low commitment of educational leaders and managers.

Management commitment through managerial investment, follow-up, and financial support is considered vital in the effectiveness of the PMS. Locke and Latham (2012) assert that the primary determinant for the successful implementation of performance management is the level of commitment shown by management toward the performance management system. For the implementation process to achieve success, senior managers must exhibit a strong commitment to allocating resources, exerting effort, and displaying loyalty. According to Larson (2012), to effectively enhance the likelihood of successful execution of the PMS, senior executives need to recognize that lower-level managers may not share the same understanding or sense of importance regarding performance management and its underlying rationale. They must exert maximum effort to effectively convince the personnel of their opinions.

According to Al Ghamdi (2013), the adoption of performance management in organizations sometimes exceeds the initially estimated time frame owing to insufficient financial support and inadequate coordination. In a similar vein, Rapa and Kauffman (2015) contend that the PMS often gives rise to challenges and intricate issues as a consequence of the lack of clarity in assigning duties and the dispersion of responsibilities across several organizational units. To mitigate conflicts of power both interdepartmentally and inside hierarchical structures, it is essential for upper management to devise a comprehensive strategy that delineates explicit duties regarding the execution of particular implementation tasks. Management should regularly follow up on implementation plans and thus ensure any corrective action is undertaken speedily. This study will seek to determine the effect of management commitment on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Statement Of The Problem

TSC introduced PMS in public schools in 2016 to enable it to improve performance in every public secondary learning institution TSC (2016). However, according to Wanzala (2017), the implementation was not as per the plan, as there were various issues affecting the effectiveness of the process. The challenges include poor understanding of appraisal techniques and lack of appreciation of the PMS systems by teachers (Alubbe, 2015), poor leadership, poor resource allocation, and poor communication and feedback systems (Nguuro, 2017). If the PMS in secondary schools in Kenya continues to face challenges, teaching and learning will be adversely affected. There have been various successful performance management initiatives in schools including Australia (Down et al., 2015), the United Kingdom (UK), and New Zealand (Gordon & Whitty, 2017) among others. Cases of success in the African region are rare where various countries have implemented performance management systems in schools. Failure cases include Botswana (Republic of Botswana, 2012), and Ghana (Bulawa, 2011) among others. There have been various global, regional, and local studies on determinants of PMS implementation in secondary schools but they have conceptual, contextual, and methodological gaps.

Agyei and Abdul-Rahaman (2020) assessed the effect of PMS in secondary schools in Ghana and established that the commitment of school managers was a key factor that influenced implementation and effectiveness. Waeyenberg et al. (2020) assessed the effectiveness of PMS in elementary schools in the European Union countries and determined that PMS was effective in improving performance. Key factors that made implementation effective were resources, commitment by stakeholders, involvement of teachers, and training. In Kenya, Owuonda et al. (2020) investigated how attitudes by teachers affect the implementation of PMS in secondary schools in Homabay County. This study left conceptual gaps since it only considered teacher attitudes as the determining factor and did not include other key factors such as management commitment which is critical for the implementation of PMS. This study hence sought to fill these gaps by investigating how management commitment affects the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Study Hypothesis

The study tested the following null hypothesis:

H₀: Management commitment has no significant effect on the effectiveness of performance management system in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

II. Literature Review

Theoretical Review

The systems theory by Bertalanffy (1969) marks a departure from the classical management theory, which regarded organizations as machines and instead embraced a more comprehensive perspective that recognizes them as intricate webs of individuals, processes, and operations. An organization is considered a cohesive and interconnected system comprised of various subsystems (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). The systems theory was adopted in this research to link management support to the effectiveness of PMS. Bertalanffy (1969) indicated that management in the organization can be seen as the central nervous system in an organism. Therefore, a company operating as a system requires management to be effective in directing, investments and allocation of financial resources, monitoring, and taking corrective actions. When management is effective in carrying out these important activities, the system is expected to function optimally (Farmer et al., 1998). The study thus applies the theory and hypothesizes that management commitment enhances the effectiveness of the PMS in public secondary schools.

Empirical Review

Mansor et al. (2017) conducted a research study that examined the organizational characteristics that influence the PMS within higher educational institutions in Southeast Asia. The research used a quantitative methodology, using questionnaires that were sent to a sample of 123 academic professionals in a Malaysian university. The construct validity of variables impacting PMS was assessed using the use of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) approach in conducting factor analysis. The study findings indicated that management commitment affected PMS and its implementation effectiveness. Management commitment was key in providing relevant resources, assisting staff in familiarising any change and innovation and continually monitoring activities completed by employees through PMS. This research was undertaken in a higher education institution in a middle-income country whereas the current study will be conducted on public secondary schools in a developing country.

Nguuro (2017) conducted a study in the Isinya sub-county, Kajiado County, Kenya that investigated the institutional factors that affected performance contract implementation in public primary schools. One of the specific objectives of the research was to assess the influence of the adequacy of resources on the effective implementation of performance contracts. Findings from the study indicated that the allocation of resources to the performance contracting process had a significant influence on the effectiveness of the process. Allocation of resources is one of the key indicators of management commitment. However, though this study provides evidence of the influence of adequacy of resources on the execution of performance contracting, the study was conducted on primary schools and hence did not provide evidence on how management commitment influences PMS implementation in secondary public schools.

Suppa and Webb (2016) established that leadership commitment was key in implementing PMS. In the study conducted in the US and Italy, leadership commitment was indicated by high-level resource allocation by the government, active involvement of top managers, using organization culture positively to push implementation of performance management, and top management ensuring accountability. The study by Suppa and Webb (2016) left some methodological gaps as it did not include interviews as a data-gathering tool which could have provided in-depth insights. Another study with similar findings to Suppa and Webb (2016) is by Alharthi (2016). This study by Alharthi (2016) investigated the success factors that were critical during the execution of PMS in government agencies in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The research findings revealed that support and commitment from top leadership were critical in ensuring the effectiveness of PMS. In the case of UAE, there was inadequate support and commitment from top management, and hence execution of PMS was not effective. This research was undertaken in basic education and elementary schools while the current research will be undertaken in secondary schools.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the study is provided in Figure 1. The independent variable is management commitment which refers to the active involvement of senior management in all crucial and particular aspects of an initiative, process, policy, or activity of an organization (Locke & Latham, 2012). Management commitment is measured through managerial investment in the PMS, the follow-up, and financial support provided in the implementation of the PMS. The dependent variable is the effectiveness of PMS which

is measured through integration of the PMS into the culture of public secondary schools, performance improvement, and acceptability of the PMS by employees.

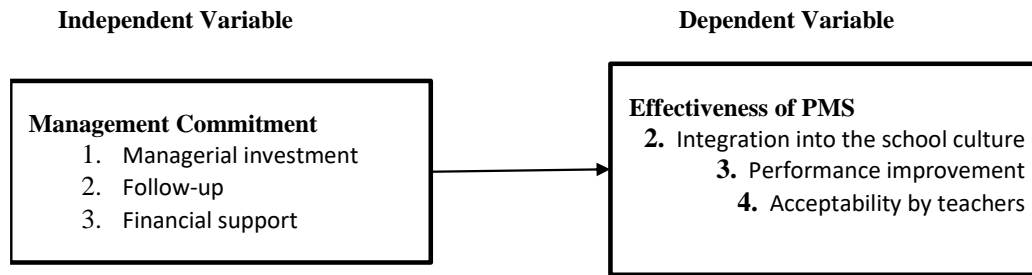


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

III. Methodology

This study used the positivism research philosophy since it sought to test a hypothesis that was generated from the systems theory. Descriptive correlational research design was used to discover and document connections or causality and illustrate how variables are in the study. The population of this research was 7,797 drawn from 109 public secondary schools in 11 sub-counties of Nairobi County. This included 109 principals, 121 deputies and 7,567 teachers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya (TSC, 2024). The study used multi-stage stratified sampling to select a sample of 380 principals, deputy principals and teachers from 86 public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research used a pretested structured questionnaire to gather data. The research followed ethical principles such as obtaining informed consent, safeguarding data and maintaining confidentiality, respecting justice, avoiding harm and promoting benefit, managing conflicts of interest, and upholding integrity. Analysis of the data was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0. Both descriptive statistical methods (means, percentages, and standard deviations) and inferential statistical methods (simple regression analysis) were used.

IV. Study Results

Demographic and General Information

The study obtained a total of 296 responses out of the 380 that were provided with the questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 77.9%. The findings on gender revealed that 56.8% of the participants were female whereas 43.2% were male. On the education level attained by the respondents, the majority of the study respondents (78.7%) indicated to have attained a bachelor's degree in education with 14.2% indicating that they had attained master's degrees. Concerning the years of experience as a teacher, 33.1% had been teachers for a period of four to nine years while 29.1% had been teachers for a period between one and three years. Those who had been teachers for over 20 years were 20.6% whereas 10.5% had been teachers for a period between 10 and 15 years. The findings demonstrated that 33.8% of the study respondents had been teachers in their current schools for one to three years, 31.8% for four to nine years and 18.2% for 10 to 15 years. Those who had been teachers in their current schools for less than one year were 11.5%, 3.4 percent for 16 to 19 years and 1.4% for over 20 years. Study results also showed that 96.9% of the respondents were teachers, 1.7 percent were deputy principals and 1.4 percent were principals.

Descriptive Analysis of Effectiveness of Performance Management System

The dependent variable was effectiveness of PMS which was operationalized using three constructs which were integration into the school culture, performance improvement and acceptability by teachers. The questionnaire used in the research consisted of items that evaluated the indicators on a five-point Likert scale of one to five (1 = Very little extent and 5 = Very large extent). Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were used to analyze the responses. The findings are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Summary of Effectiveness of Performance Management

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance management has been clearly integrated in all aspects of teaching in this school	3.28	1.135
Performance of teachers in this school has improved after introduction of teacher performance management	3.31	1.117
Teachers in this school have accepted and internalized performance management system	3.50	1.067
Student learning has improved after introduction of teacher performance management	3.18	1.185
Variable aggregate	3.32	1.126

The research findings summarized in Table 1 show that, in general, the participants believed that there was a modest level of effectiveness of PMS in the surveyed public secondary schools (Aggregate mean = 3.32, SD = 1.126). Nevertheless, the findings indicated that to a great extent, teachers in the surveyed schools have accepted and internalized the performance management system (M = 3.50, SD = 1.067). However, the results indicated that the performance of teachers in the schools has moderately improved after the introduction of teacher performance management (M = 3.31, SD = 1.117). The survey participants also opined that performance management has been moderately integrated in all aspects of teaching in the schools (M = 3.28, SD = 1.135). Furthermore, respondents were of the view that student learning had moderately improved after the introduction of teacher performance management (M = 3.18, SD = 1.185).

Descriptive Analysis of Management Commitment

Management commitment was the study’s independent variable and the research applied various key indicators to operationalize it which included managerial investment, managerial follow-up, and financial support. The questionnaire used in the research consisted of items that evaluated the indicators on a five-point Likert scale of one to five (1 = Very little extent and 5 = Very large extent). Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were used to analyze the responses and the findings are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Summary of Management Commitment Items

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leadership in this school has been able to change the mindset of teachers to accept performance management	3.53	1.213
The principal provides incentives to teachers to nurture the culture of continuous improvement	3.15	1.348
Top leadership in this school has set up performance management committees	3.24	1.229
Leaders in this school have formulated and established performance quality policies and objectives	3.32	1.203
Top leadership in this school provides training for performance management	3.22	1.251
The principal and deputy oversee the implementation of performance management	3.70	1.194
Top leadership in this school motivate teachers to enhance their performance	3.29	1.423
Variable aggregate	3.35	1.192

The study results provided in Table 2 demonstrate that to a great extent, the principals and deputies oversee the implementation of performance management in their schools (M = 3.70, SD = 1.194). Additionally, respondents opined that the leadership in the schools has been able to change the mindset of teachers to accept performance management to a great extent (M = 3.53, SD = 1.213). Findings also indicated that leaders in the school have to a moderate extent formulated and established performance quality policies and objectives (M = 3.32, SD = 1.203) and that to a moderate extent, top leadership in the schools motivate teachers to enhance their performance (M = 3.29, SD = 1.423). Furthermore, the respondents indicated that to a moderate extent, top leadership in the schools have set up performance management committees (M = 3.24, SD = 1.229). Likewise, respondents were of the view that top leadership in the schools provides training for performance management to a moderate extent (M = 3.22, SD = 1.251). Moreover, study participants felt that the principals provide incentives to teachers to nurture the culture of continuous improvement to a moderate extent (M = 3.15, SD = 1.348). The aggregate statistics for the management commitment variable indicated that management commitment was moderate or just average (variable aggregate mean = 3.35, SD = 1.192). This shows room for improvement in the commitment of principals, deputy principals, and other leadership organs in the schools towards PMS.

Regression of Management Commitment on Effectiveness of PMS

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of management commitment on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. This objective was accomplished through simple linear regression analysis. The linear regression model was fitted after regression assumptions on linearity, normality, and heteroscedasticity were tested and met. Table 3 presents the regression findings of the model summary which includes the correlation coefficient (R) and the value of R-squared.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.738 ^a	.545	.543	.65217
a. Predictors: (Constant), Management Commitment				
b. Dependent variable: Effectiveness of Performance Management System				

The study findings indicate that management commitment has a strong and positive linear relationship with the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya (r = 0.738). The research results further portray that management commitment explains 54.5% of the variation in the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya (r-squared = 0.545).

The model's fitness was evaluated using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, and the findings are provided in Table 4. The research results indicate that the f-value was statistically significant, hence indicating the significance of the model (F = 351.706, p < 0.05). These findings imply that management commitment had a statistically significant effect on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 4. ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	149.589	1	149.589	351.706	.000 ^b
	Residual	125.046	294	.425		
	Total	274.635	295			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Management Commitment

b. Dependent variable: Effectiveness of Performance Management System

The regression coefficients were computed to evaluate the magnitude and direction of the effect of management commitment on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Table 5 presents the research findings.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.059	.126		8.433	.000
	Management Commitment	.675	.036	.738	18.754	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Management Commitment

b. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness of Performance Management System

The study findings provided in Table 5 led to the following regression model:

$$\text{Effectiveness of PMS} = 1.059 + 0.738 (\text{Management Commitment})$$

The findings in Table 5 show that management commitment had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya ($\beta = 0.738$, $t = 18.754$, $p < 0.05$). These results provided information to reject the null hypothesis since the p-value was less than 0.05 meaning that management commitment had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya.

V. Discussion Of Findings

The objective of the research was to assess the effect of management commitment on the performance management system in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The null hypothesis was that management commitment has no significant effect on the performance management system in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study findings established that management commitment had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya ($\beta = 0.738$, $t = 18.754$, $p < 0.05$). These results provided information to reject the null hypothesis since the p-value was less than 0.05 meaning that management commitment had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya. These findings support the findings from an investigation undertaken by Mansor et al. (2017) that analyzed the organizational features that impact the PMS at higher education institutions in Southeast Asia. The study used a quantitative approach, in which questionnaires were sent to a sample of 123 academic workers inside a university in Malaysia. The research results suggested that the level of commitment from management had an impact on the efficacy of PMS implementation. The crucial factor in ensuring the timely provision of necessary resources, supporting workers in adapting to changes and innovations, and consistently monitoring employee actions via PMS was the dedication of management. These findings converge with the findings from this study indicating management commitment is crucial for the effective implementation of PMS in tertiary as well as secondary schools.

The study findings that management commitment had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of PMS in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya is also in line with Nguuro (2017) who did research in the Isinya sub-county, Kajiado County, Kenya. The study was on the institutional considerations influencing the execution of performance contracts in public elementary schools. The research findings revealed that the allocation of resources to the performance contracting process had a substantial impact on the procedure's success. Another study with similar findings is by Suppa and Webb (2016) which showed that leadership commitment is crucial for the successful implementation of PMS. The research undertaken in the US and Italy revealed that leadership commitment was shown by the deployment of substantial resources by the government,

active participation of top managers, leveraging organizational culture to promote the adoption of performance management, and top management assuring full responsibility.

VI. Conclusions And Recommendations

The study concludes that the principals and deputies in public secondary schools in Nairobi County played a significant role in supervising the implementation of performance management in their schools. In addition, public school administrations have been successful in motivating teachers to embrace performance management. In addition, public school administrators provided incentives to teachers to foster a culture of ongoing improvement to a modest degree. The management support provided was moderate and this significantly influenced the effectiveness of PMS in the public secondary schools in Nairobi County. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that management commitment has no significant effect on the performance management system in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

The study recommends that policymakers in education such as the Ministry of Education and TSC provide professional development to offer ongoing professional development and training for school leaders, teachers, and administrative staff on performance management practices, tools, and techniques. Besides, these policymakers should invest in leadership development programs to enhance the skills of school principals and their deputies in setting goals, managing performance, and providing effective feedback. Principals should demonstrate a commitment to accountability by setting an example of how performance issues are handled and how success is celebrated. They should also create a supportive environment where staff feel valued and motivated to improve performance.

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