

**INFLUENCE OF BENCHMARKING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TRANSNZOIA COUNTY,
KENYA**

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**A REPORT PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL


Declaration by student

This project report is my unique work and has not been submitted to any other institution for academic accreditation. No portion of this work may be reproduced without the prior consent of the author or Mount Kenya University.

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KTL/E/MED/1212/00921

Sign..........

Date..........

Approval by the supervisors


This project report has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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Sign..........

Date..........

DEDICATION

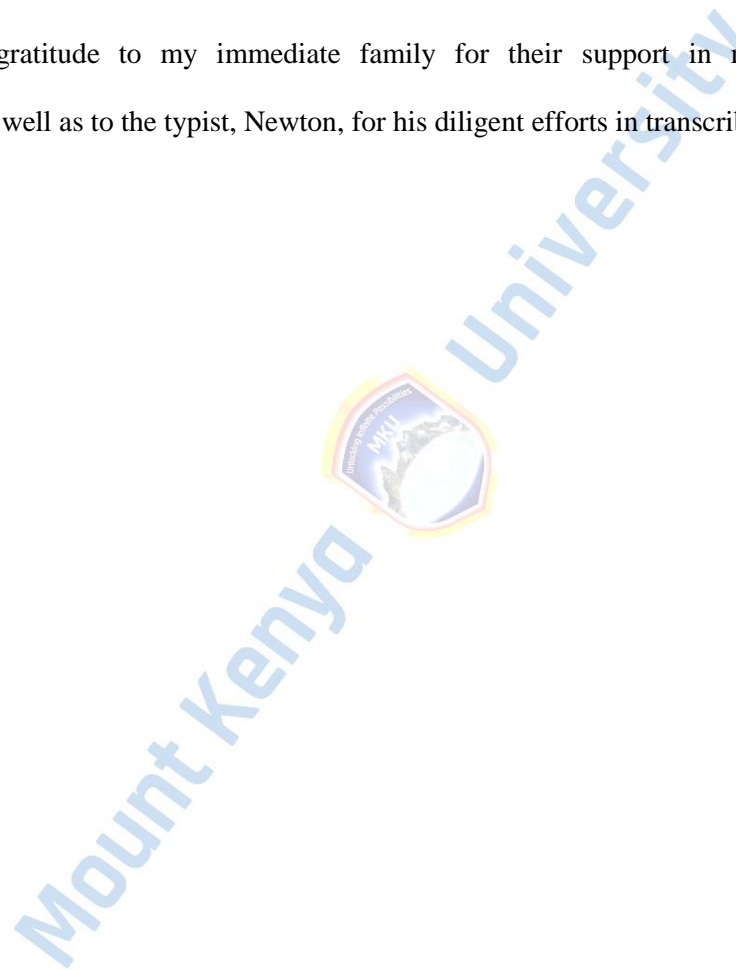
This project report is dedicated to my esteemed spouse Martin, for his unwavering moral support.



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ABSTRACT

This project titled "Influence of Benchmarking on Academic Performance of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya" investigated the relationship between benchmarking practices and student learning outcomes. The study aimed to ascertain the status of benchmarking in public secondary schools, evaluate its effect on students' perceptions of learning, analyze its impact on academic performance, and investigate its influence on student discipline. Grounded in social learning theory as articulated by Geek (2013), the research utilized a descriptive survey approach with purposive sampling to select participants. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation checklists, gathering responses from instructors, students, and principals. The analysis employed descriptive statistics, revealing several key findings. The study concluded that effective benchmarking significantly enhanced academic performance, with 75% of students reporting improved motivation and engagement. Educators used the findings to inspire students to adopt positive attitudes toward learning and cultivate discipline. Additionally, the research indicated that school leadership often lacked active endorsement of benchmarking activities, primarily due to financial constraints, which limited implementation. Despite these challenges, many students expressed a positive view of benchmarking, noting improvements in their study habits and attitudes, with 70% indicating that benchmarking had helped them academically. The study highlighted that collaborative exchanges between host and visiting principals during benchmarking led to the sharing of effective strategies for addressing academic issues, thereby improving student performance. Furthermore, benchmarking fostered student discipline, as collaborative discussions encouraged students to focus on their academic responsibilities. Ultimately, the project provided valuable insights for educational stakeholders, suggesting that increased adoption of benchmarking could enhance academic outcomes and overall school performance in Trans-Nzoia County.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

KCPE - Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

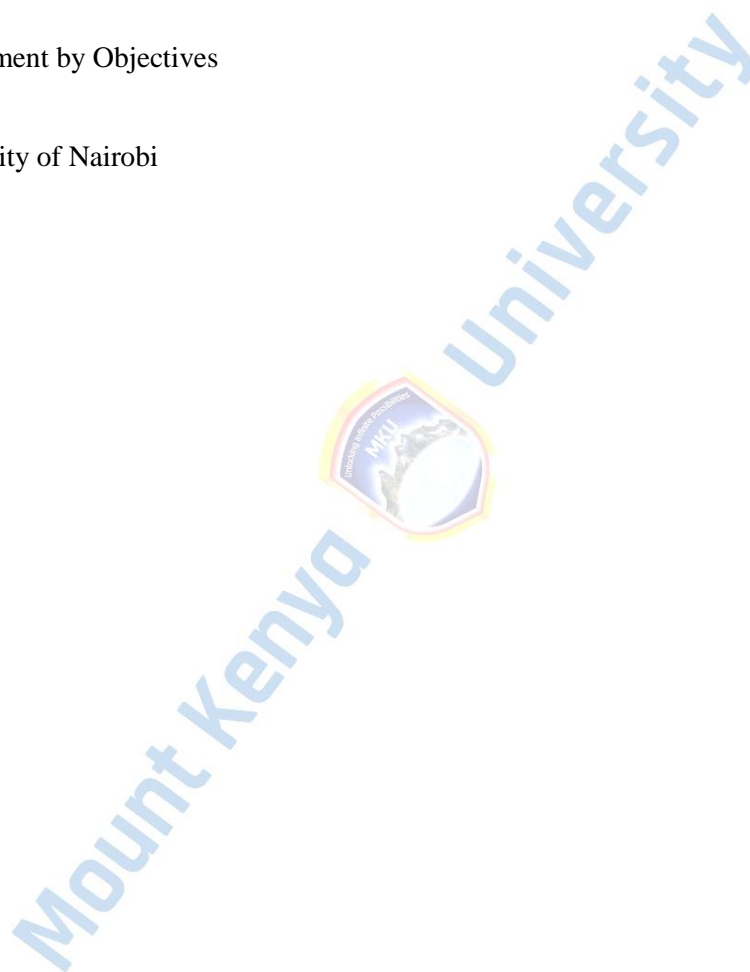
KCSE - Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KNEC - Kenya National Examinations Council (2022)

KPIs - Key Performance Indicators

MBO - Management by Objectives

U.O.N - University of Nairobi



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the influence of benchmarking on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools, presenting the study's background, issue definition, objectives, research questions, and significance.

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is often heralded as a fundamental human right, a vehicle for individual empowerment, and a crucial driver of social and economic development. As defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2021), education encompasses the processes that enable individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and values necessary for their personal development and participation in society. This understanding underscores the significance of education in developing nations, where access to quality education is a key determinant of societal progress and economic growth.

In Kenya, education has long been recognized as a vital component of national development. The Kenyan government has made substantial investments in education at all levels, underscoring its role as a cornerstone for improving the well-being of its citizens and fostering a competitive economy. The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC, 2022) reports that academic performance in standardized assessments, such as the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), plays a pivotal role in shaping students' future opportunities. High academic achievement not only enables students to pursue further education but also enhances their employability in a rapidly changing job market.

Recent studies highlight the critical importance of education in facilitating economic development. The World Bank (2023) emphasizes that every additional year of quality education can lead to a one percent increase in a nation's economic growth. This correlation illustrates that investing in education is not merely a social obligation; it is also an economic imperative. As countries strive for development, ensuring that all children receive a quality education becomes paramount. However, despite significant progress, the Kenyan education system continues to face numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness.

The landscape of public secondary education in Kenya is marked by disparities in academic performance across schools. While some institutions thrive, others grapple with persistent underachievement. Various factors contribute to this dichotomy. Research conducted by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (2023) reveals that inadequate teaching staff is a significant barrier to academic success. Many schools experience teacher shortages, which result in overcrowded classrooms and diminished instructional quality. This shortage is exacerbated by high turnover rates, leading to a lack of continuity in the learning process.

Additionally, the mobility of students poses a challenge to maintaining consistent educational standards. High rates of student mobility can disrupt the learning environment and affect academic performance. Families may relocate for various reasons, including economic factors or the search for better educational opportunities. Consequently, students often face interruptions in their education, which can hinder their academic progress and overall development.

Inadequate learning resources further compound these challenges. Many public secondary schools in Kenya operate with limited access to essential materials, such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and technology. According to a report by Ochieng and Nyabuga (2022), these deficiencies can create an environment that is not conducive to effective learning. Without the necessary resources, teachers are unable to implement innovative teaching strategies, and students may struggle to grasp complex concepts.

Parental involvement is another critical factor influencing student performance. Research indicates that active parental engagement in school activities correlates positively with students' academic achievement. However, many parents in Kenya face economic challenges that limit their ability to participate in their children's education. As a result, students may lack the support they need at home to succeed academically.

Furthermore, teacher-related factors significantly impact student outcomes. Issues such as teacher absenteeism, low expectations for student performance, and insufficient professional development can create a negative school climate. Ochieng and Nyabuga (2022) emphasize that a supportive and positive teacher-student relationship is crucial for fostering a productive learning environment. Conversely, schools with high rates of teacher absenteeism tend to experience lower student motivation and engagement, ultimately resulting in poor academic performance.

In response to the challenges facing the education system, innovative strategies are essential to improve academic outcomes. One such strategy is benchmarking, which has emerged as a valuable tool for fostering continuous improvement in educational institutions. Benchmarking involves comparing an organization's processes and performance metrics to those of leading institutions in the same field. By identifying best practices and successful strategies, schools can implement changes that enhance their performance.

According to Oduor et al. (2023), benchmarking provides schools with a structured approach to evaluating their academic performance and identifying areas for improvement. Through this process, educators can learn from the successes of others, adapting effective practices to their own contexts. This practice is particularly relevant in the Kenyan educational landscape, where some schools consistently achieve high academic results while others struggle to meet basic performance standards.

The implementation of benchmarking practices encourages a culture of accountability and high expectations among educators and students alike. By setting measurable goals and regularly

assessing progress, schools can motivate both teachers and students to strive for excellence. This alignment with the principles of continuous improvement can foster an environment where academic achievement is celebrated and pursued actively.

Moreover, benchmarking supports collaboration among schools. By forming partnerships with higher-performing institutions, schools can engage in shared learning experiences, fostering professional development opportunities for teachers and enhancing student outcomes. This collaborative approach aligns with the broader educational reforms advocated by the Kenyan government, which emphasizes quality education as a means to enhance national development.

In Trans-Nzoia County, many public secondary schools face challenges that contribute to a consistent track record of poor academic achievement. The need for effective strategies to enhance educational outcomes is particularly pressing in this context. Implementing benchmarking practices could serve as a viable solution to address the issues associated with low performance.

Research indicates that schools that adopt benchmarking practices tend to experience improvements in various aspects of their educational processes. For instance, Oduor et al. (2023) found that schools that engaged in benchmarking reported enhanced student engagement, improved teacher performance, and stronger academic results. By systematically analyzing the performance of high-achieving schools, educators in Trans-Nzoia County can identify effective teaching methods, curriculum enhancements, and administrative practices that contribute to better student outcomes.

The benchmarking process also allows for the identification of key performance indicators (KPIs) that are relevant to the local context. These KPIs can serve as benchmarks against which schools can measure their progress and success. By establishing clear performance standards, schools can work collaboratively to achieve shared goals, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education in the county.

Furthermore, the integration of benchmarking practices aligns with the aspirations outlined in the Kenyan education policy framework. The government of Kenya has consistently prioritized education as a driver of national development, recognizing the need to improve the quality of education across all levels. By embracing benchmarking as a strategy for improvement, schools in Trans-Nzoia County can contribute to the realization of these national goals.

In conclusion, the influence of benchmarking on academic performance is a critical area of investigation in the context of public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. Education is a key driver of social and economic development, yet the Kenyan education system faces numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness. By exploring the status of benchmarking, its impact on learner perceptions, managerial styles, and student discipline, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice in the Kenyan education sector.

Benchmarking presents a promising approach to enhancing academic performance in public secondary schools, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. As educators collaborate to share best practices and implement effective strategies, schools can work towards achieving higher academic standards, ultimately benefiting students and society as a whole. The successful integration of benchmarking practices can pave the way for a brighter future for education in Trans-Nzoia County, empowering students to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite significant investments in education and ongoing efforts to improve academic performance in Kenya, public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County continue to face persistent challenges that undermine educational outcomes. Recent data from the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) indicate that many of these schools exhibit a consistent track record of poor academic performance, reflected in low pass rates and limited student success in national examinations such as the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). The implications of such underperformance extend beyond individual student

achievement; they affect the overall development of the community and the nation, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limiting economic growth.

Several interconnected factors contribute to the subpar academic performance observed in these schools. Inadequate teaching staff is a significant barrier, with many schools experiencing chronic shortages of qualified educators. This shortage often results in overcrowded classrooms and reduced instructional quality, leading to disengagement among students. Moreover, the high rates of student mobility, driven by economic constraints and family relocations, disrupt the continuity of education, leaving many students ill-prepared for examinations and future educational opportunities.

Insufficient learning resources further exacerbate these challenges. Many public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County struggle with a lack of essential materials, such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and access to technology. Research by Ochieng and Nyabuga (2022) indicates that the absence of adequate resources not only hampers teachers' ability to deliver effective lessons but also diminishes students' motivation to engage with their studies. Additionally, limited parental involvement in school activities contributes to the lack of support that students receive outside the classroom, further impacting their academic success.

Moreover, teacher-related factors, such as absenteeism, low expectations for student performance, and inadequate professional development, create a negative school climate that affects student learning. The relationship between teacher quality and student outcomes is well-documented, and schools with high rates of teacher absenteeism tend to experience lower student motivation and engagement. These issues contribute to a sense of disenfranchisement among students, who may perceive their education as lacking value or relevance.

In light of these persistent challenges, there is an urgent need for effective strategies to enhance academic performance in public secondary schools. One promising approach is benchmarking, which involves comparing an organization's processes and performance metrics with those of leading institutions in the same field. By adopting benchmarking practices, schools can identify

best practices, set measurable goals, and implement strategies that have proven effective in other contexts. However, despite the potential benefits of benchmarking, its understanding and implementation in the context of Trans-Nzoia County remain limited.

The lack of comprehensive research on the current status of benchmarking in local schools, coupled with its influence on students' perceptions towards learning, its impact on managerial styles, and its effect on student discipline, presents a significant gap in the literature. This gap highlights the need for targeted research that can provide insights into how benchmarking can be effectively integrated into the educational practices of public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of benchmarking on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. By examining the existing challenges faced by these schools and exploring the potential benefits of benchmarking, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective strategies that enhance educational outcomes, ultimately fostering a more informed and skilled populace that can contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the region.

Addressing the academic performance challenges in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County requires a multifaceted approach that includes understanding the role of benchmarking as a tool for improvement. This study will not only fill the existing gaps in the literature but also provide actionable recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders committed to enhancing the quality of education in Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of benchmarking on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The study focused

on public secondary schools because they are the schools that get full support from the government and non-governmental organizations.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study operated with the following objectives:

- i. To examine the status of benchmarking among public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia county.
- ii. To explore the extent at which benchmarking influences perceptions of learners towards learning in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia county.
- iii. To examine the impact of benchmarking on managerial style.
- iv. To examine the influence of benchmarking on the discipline of learners in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia county.

1.5 Research Questions

The study answered the following questions:

- i. To what extent has benchmarking been undertaken in public secondary schools?
- ii. What is the influence of benchmarking on public secondary schools students perception towards learning?
- iii. What is the impact of benchmarking on managerial style of a school?
- iv. What is the influence of benchmarking on discipline of students?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hold substantial significance for multiple stakeholders in the education sector, particularly principals, educators, policymakers, and the broader community. For school principals, the study's results will be invaluable as they strive to enhance the overall performance of their institutions. By effectively utilizing benchmarking practices, principals will gain insights into how their schools perform relative to peer institutions, enabling them to

identify areas needing improvement. This comparative analysis will allow for targeted interventions that can lead to better academic outcomes, helping principals develop and implement evidence-based strategies tailored to their specific school contexts. Additionally, they will be better equipped to foster a culture of continuous improvement, accountability, and excellence within their schools.

Educators will also benefit significantly from the insights garnered in this study. The data and findings will empower teachers to rethink their pedagogical approaches and strategies, influencing how they engage with students in the learning process. By understanding the factors that affect student perceptions of learning and discipline, educators can implement more effective teaching methods and classroom management techniques. This, in turn, can lead to enhanced student motivation, improved discipline, and ultimately better academic performance. The study will serve as a catalyst for professional development, prompting educators to collaborate and share best practices that support student learning.

Moreover, the findings of this research will be particularly relevant to policymakers within the education sector. By highlighting the impact of benchmarking on academic performance, the study will provide a foundation for formulating evidence-based policies aimed at improving educational outcomes in public secondary schools. Policymakers can utilize the insights to develop strategies that promote the adoption of benchmarking practices across schools, ensuring that they are adequately supported in their efforts to enhance academic performance. Furthermore, the research could inform broader educational reforms, addressing systemic issues that contribute to poor performance and fostering a more equitable educational landscape.

The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate stakeholders within schools; the broader community, including parents and local organizations, will also benefit from improved academic performance among students. Higher academic achievement contributes to better employment prospects for graduates, which ultimately enhances the socio-economic well-being

of the community. As students become more engaged and successful in their education, they are better equipped to contribute positively to society, fostering a cycle of growth and development.

Finally, this study will add to the existing body of literature on benchmarking in education, particularly in the context of Kenya. By addressing the gaps in research related to the implementation and impact of benchmarking practices in public secondary schools, the study will serve as a resource for future research and initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality. It will provide a framework for understanding how benchmarking can be effectively integrated into school practices and how it can influence academic performance. In conclusion, this study is poised to make significant contributions to the field of education in Trans-Nzoia County and beyond. By providing actionable insights and recommendations, it aims to empower school leaders, educators, and policymakers to work collaboratively towards enhancing the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. The potential for positive change within the educational landscape underscores the importance of this research and its findings.

1.7 Justification of the Study

This research was justified on the grounds that the majority of schools in the county devote a significant amount of time and other resources to benchmarking, and that it was necessary to undertake a study in order to determine the extent to which benchmarking influences academic performance.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations that may impact the findings and their generalizability. First, the research is geographically confined to public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. As a result, the findings may not be directly applicable to other

regions or educational contexts within the country or beyond, where different socio-economic factors and educational policies may influence academic performance.

Second, the study's reliance on self-reported data from school principals, educators, and students may introduce response bias. Participants may have varying levels of understanding regarding benchmarking practices, and their perceptions might be influenced by personal or institutional agendas. Consequently, this could affect the accuracy of the data collected regarding the implementation and impact of benchmarking in their schools.

Third, the study may face challenges related to sample size and diversity. If the sample of schools selected for the study is not sufficiently representative of the broader population of public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, the findings may not fully capture the complexities of benchmarking practices or academic performance in these institutions.

Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design may limit the ability to establish causal relationships between benchmarking and academic performance. While it can identify correlations and associations, it may not provide definitive evidence on the direction or nature of these relationships. Longitudinal studies may be necessary to assess how the implementation of benchmarking practices over time influences academic performance.

Lastly, external factors beyond the control of the study, such as economic conditions, policy changes, and socio-cultural dynamics, may influence the educational landscape in Trans-Nzoia County. These factors could affect both the implementation of benchmarking and the academic outcomes observed, making it challenging to isolate the specific impact of benchmarking practices.

Despite these limitations, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the influence of benchmarking on academic performance in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, paving the way for future research and improvements in educational practices.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya, where there are a total of 163 institutions. Of these, 40 schools have actively engaged in benchmarking their academic performance. To effectively capture a representative sample, the research was conducted in 12 secondary schools, accounting for approximately 30% of the population targeted for this study. This selection allows for a comprehensive evaluation of benchmarking practices and their impact on the academic performance of students attending public secondary schools.

The primary subject of the study is the evaluation of benchmarking and its influence on various aspects of academic performance, including student learning outcomes, perceptions of the educational environment, and overall school effectiveness. By focusing on schools that have implemented benchmarking, the research aims to understand how these practices contribute to improved student performance and the educational experience.

To achieve this, the research employed a descriptive survey research design, which was conducted over a period of two months, specifically between January and February of 2016. This methodology facilitated the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from various stakeholders, allowing for a nuanced understanding of benchmarking's role in the educational landscape.

However, the scope of the study was deliberately limited to include only three key groups: school principals, teachers, and students. This focus was intended to gather diverse perspectives on the benchmarking process and its implications for academic performance. By concentrating on these stakeholders, the study aimed to assess the viewpoints of students regarding their learning experiences, the management styles employed by educators, and the overall discipline within the school environment.

Additionally, the study's scope includes an examination of the specific educational practices and strategies employed in the benchmarked schools, allowing for an exploration of best practices that may contribute to improved academic outcomes. While the research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of benchmarking in Trans-Nzoia County's public secondary schools, it is important to note that the findings may not be generalizable to all schools in the region or to private institutions.

The scope of this study is confined to the evaluation of benchmarking practices and their impact on the academic performance of students within a selected sample of public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The insights gained from this research are intended to inform educational stakeholders about the benefits and challenges associated with benchmarking, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of academic performance in the region.

1.10 Assumptions

The study was conducted under the following assumptions:

- i. Administrators would understand the purpose of the instrumentation and would answer honestly to the best of their ability.
- ii. The researcher would be impartial in collecting and analyzing the data gathered.
- iii. It's further assumed that the stipulated time would be enough for the researcher to traverse and reach all the earmarked respondents.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Academic Performance: Refers to the measurable outcomes of students' learning experiences, typically assessed through standardized examinations, grades, and overall achievement in school. In this study, academic performance is primarily evaluated through the results of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations and other relevant indicators of student achievement.

Academic performance: The outcome of education refers to the degree to which a student, instructor, or institution has accomplished their educational objectives, as stated by Annie Ward in 1996.

Benchmarking: A systematic process of comparing an organization's performance metrics and practices against those of similar organizations or industry standards to identify areas for improvement and implement best practices. In the context of this study, benchmarking refers specifically to the practices adopted by public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County to evaluate and enhance their academic performance relative to peer institutions.

Benchmarking: is the process of comparing and measuring schools with the aim of improving performance, (American productivity and quality center, 1993).

Catchment area: it refers to the predefined geographic area associated with schools.

Descriptive Survey Research Design: A research methodology that involves collecting data through surveys or questionnaires to describe and analyze a phenomenon. In this study, a descriptive survey design was used to gather insights from principals, teachers, and students regarding benchmarking practices and their perceived impact on academic performance.

Discipline: is characterized by the cultivation of self-discipline, integrity, organization, and efficacy, (savage 1991:2)

Discipline: The behavioral conduct and self-regulation of students in the school environment.

In the context of this study, discipline encompasses students' adherence to school rules and regulations, their engagement in learning activities, and their overall attitude towards education.

Management Styles: The approaches and strategies employed by school leaders and educators to direct and influence the behavior and performance of students and staff within the school. This study examines how different management styles impact the implementation of benchmarking practices and the resulting academic performance.

Principals: The head administrators of public secondary schools responsible for overseeing the management and operation of the institution. In this study, principals are regarded as key stakeholders whose perspectives on benchmarking practices are vital for understanding its implementation and impact on academic performance.

Public Secondary Schools: Educational institutions funded and administered by the government that provide secondary education to students typically between the ages of 14 and 18. This study focuses specifically on public secondary schools located in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya.

Public secondary schools: this is a formal institution which prepares pupils for tertiary education or to go to an industrial sphere and it's government sponsored, (Piet and mahlangu.1990:57)

Students: Individuals enrolled in public secondary schools who are the primary beneficiaries of educational practices and policies. In this study, students' perspectives on

learning, management styles, and discipline are crucial for understanding the effects of benchmarking on their academic performance.

Teachers: Educators responsible for delivering instruction and facilitating learning in public secondary schools. This study considers teachers as important participants in the benchmarking process, whose insights contribute to the evaluation of educational practices and student outcomes.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 An Overview

This chapter examines the literature pertaining to benchmarking in public secondary schools in Kenya. This literature research is essential for identifying gaps that led to the design of this suggestion.

2.1 Status of Benchmarking in Public Secondary School in Kenya

Benchmarking is a methodical process that involves searching for the most effective operating methods, creative ideas, and best practices that can lead to greater performance through the use of a systematic approach. The desire to learn from one another and to share aspects of good practice or to improve performance through collaboration or comparison with other schools is not a new phenomenon in higher education. This desire is shared by the majority of educational institutions. On the other hand, what is new is the growing interest in the formalization of such comparisons, which can be understood as the growth of benchmarking in higher education (Achim, M.L, 2009).

The benchmarking of schools is one of the more recent benchmarking studies that was made possible by the ease with which information from other nations throughout the world could be accessed, as stated by Friedman (2013). The research began with a benchmarking of the performance of pupils from all around the world by administering a test that was comparable to one that was given to children of the same age. When it comes to schools, benchmarking is a tool that not only enables a school to determine where it stands on a worldwide scale, but also, and this is the most essential part, it provides the opportunity to improve and quantify the extent of this improvement. Through the use of benchmarking, individual schools and teachers, as well as education authorities, are able to share their experiences and ideas with one another. This allows instructors to identify and learn from education systems that are performing better,

which in turn enables each school to know where it stands. Standards of expected performance level that schools can test and improve against are produced with the help of this information, which is valuable for schools, instructors, parents, and students.

The desire to learn from one another and to share aspects of good practice or to improve performance through collaboration or comparison with other schools is not a new phenomenon in higher education. This desire is shared by the majority of educational institutions. The development of benchmarking in higher education, on the other hand, involves a rising interest in the formalization of comparisons of this kind. This is something that is very new.

Since the middle of the 1990s, educational institutions, particularly secondary schools, have been adopting approaches for continuous improvement, such as benchmarking, in order to construct institutions that are internally and externally orientated toward the creation of efficiency in the schools.

2.2 Benchmarking and Perception of Students towards Learning

An individual's perception is the manner in which they perceive or evaluate other people or something. Despite the fact that the score on the final course examination has been the key criterion for determining the authenticity of student assessments, the scores only reflect a restricted picture of the learning outcomes of the students. Beyond a single examination score, which often only reflects narrowly specified course objectives, a more comprehensive indicator of student learning would be anything that goes beyond the scope of the examination. Students' perceptions of their growing interest in the topic, critical thinking skills, interpersonal outcomes such as cooperative capacities, intrapersonal outcomes such as self-understanding, and other broad course outcomes are examples of the types of indicators that could be considered (Koon and Murray, 1995).

(Sifuna, 1990) states that the goals of secondary school education are to prepare students to make a positive contribution to the development of society and to acquire attitudes of national

patriotism, self-respect, self-reliance, cooperation, adaptability, and a sense of purpose and self-discipline. These are the objectives of the secondary school education. As will be shown in the following discussion, the majority of these objectives have varying perceptions or attitudes with regard to various areas of learning or disciplines that are taught in secondary schools:

As a result of the utility of technology, educational institutions are currently incorporating it into their teaching, administration, and research activities. In January of 2006, the government of Kenya issued a national policy for information and communication technology (ICT) with the intention of enhancing the standard of living of Kenyans by guaranteeing the availability of ICT services that are accessible, efficient, dependable, and inexpensive (farewell, 2007). The percentage of students and teachers who were proficient in using computers, as well as their perceptions and attitudes regarding technology, were important criteria. According to the findings of study conducted by Farrell in 2007, it has been determined that both students and teachers are prepared to accept the technology of e-learning; nevertheless, in order to successfully adopt e-learning, it is necessary to improve their technical capacity through training. Although the majority of students are open to the concept of e-learning, they do not possess the fundamental computer skills necessary to make successful use of e-learning platforms.

The majority of students in high school struggle with the topics that are related to science. For example, the most significant obstacle that students face in chemistry classrooms is their failure to demonstrate a thorough comprehension of the subject's most fundamental concepts. It would appear that the professors are dedicated to teaching their courses, despite the fact that they are confronted with such difficulties. Kosgey and Manduku (2012) conducted a study in which they found that there are significant gender inequalities and attitudes towards the acquisition of mathematics among secondary school pupils. The findings of this study demonstrated that these disparities exist. Despite the fact that boys are more inclined to have a positive attitude toward learning mathematics than girls, both boys and girls have a favorable attitude toward the subject. The perceptions of students' parents and teachers, as well as the expectations of their

peers, were found to have a substantial impact on these gender inequalities and attitudes toward the acquisition of mathematical knowledge.

The field of physics, on the other hand, is widely regarded as the most challenging among the scientific disciplines, and it has typically attracted a smaller number of students than the fields of chemistry and biology. Students who are enrolled in secondary schools often have the impression that physics is a challenging subject. According to Cracker et al. (2006), numerous research have been carried out in order to discover the elements that influence attitudes in the field of science. These aspects include teaching and learning methodologies, the sort of science courses that are taken, methods of studying sciences, teachers and their attitudes, and the cognitive style of students, amongst others. In addition, the goal of these studies on attitude is to investigate the ways in which attitude affects success. Whether it be a positive or negative attitude, it has an effect on learning in the sciences. On the other hand, it is well knowledge that having a negative attitude toward a certain subject makes learning or studying in the future more challenging. According to Erdemir et al. (2004), one of the most significant steps in the process of teaching science is to give students the opportunity to cultivate a favorable attitude toward the scientific disciplines.

In conclusion, the way in which students feel about the sciences is a significant factor in determining how they relate to the topics, which in turn affects how they learn about the sciences. The social and cultural milieu in which students live and the social experiences they have, which in turn influence students' cognitive or intellectual capacities, are among the many elements that contribute to the formation of students' attitudes toward science. Because students' social and life experiences are inextricably tied to their positive attitude toward science, the level of success that students achieve in learning science may be traced to the level of motivation that they bring to the process of learning the sciences.

2.3 Benchmarking and Management Style

According to Kamande N. (2013), the level of performance of an organization is largely determined by the type of leadership that is demonstrated by the leader of that company. As seen from the point of view of the school, head instructors are responsible for contributing to the accomplishment of educational goals and objectives. There is a significant relationship between the leadership of the Head teacher and the quality of the school. Although performance is decided by other characteristics that are most closely interwoven, the interaction between the head teacher and the students can be particularly delicate when it is within the responsibility of the head teacher. In our immediate vicinity, there are numerous instances of educational institutions that formerly had a prestigious reputation but have now lost it due to insufficient leadership.

There are some head teachers who are providing the necessary leadership, and there are a significant number of school management who are giving their personnel new responsibilities. According to Waithanji et al. (2013), the vast majority of educational institutions do not demonstrate a commitment to quality planning strategies, but they do support efforts that emphasize human resource development. They also say that school administrators should acknowledge that leadership, in whatever shape it may take, has an effect on the culture of the school as well as the academic performance of the students. Principals and other administrative staff members are responsible for identifying and developing a leadership style or model that is effective in meeting the requirements of the school's culture and would result in improved academic performance.

The purpose of academic clinics is to improve the performance of specific subjects by enhancing the delivery methods of teachers and ensuring that they have a thorough understanding of the material of the curriculum. These clinics consist of formal presentations and workshops. One of the academic clinics that some individual schools participate in is called benchmarking, and it involves sending students to other schools to observe how they run their

academic operations. locate someone else who is strong at the activity and use them as a benchmark to increase your own standard. Bench making is a management strategy that is becoming increasingly popular. The theory behind bench making is that if you want to improve a certain area of your business or the service that it provides, you should locate someone else who is good at the activity. An informal or casual look at how other schools are performing, acquiring information regarding practices, or an in-depth analysis of the school's performance in addition to its key competitors are all examples of what this can include. Performance can be improved by the use of comparisons between schools that involve management standards. It is possible that in order to make decisions regarding performance advancement, it will be essential to imitate the ongoing evaluation program of another institution.

There is a comparative advantage in terms of market (student grades) that caters to job choice and measures the quality of education standards as they compare with others. For example, the ISO standards assigned a score of 1.4% to the University of Nairobi (U.O.N). With Management by Objectives (MBO), quality management can be accomplished through the utilization of strategic planning in order to achieve results in the direction that the management desires, all while achieving the goals and ensuring the pleasure of the participants. Management by objectives (MBO) is a dynamic management method that was developed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations. It was during the 1950s that Peter F. Drucker developed this concept for the purpose of achieving effective goal setting and performance evaluation. Basically, MBO is a method in which the supervisor asks the subordinate to jointly identify the objectives that are intended to be fulfilled by the subordinate in terms of the overall results that are expected, and then uses the same measure to evaluate the performance of the subordinates. There are a few alternative names for MBO, including "management by results," "accountability management," "work planning and review," "goals management," "management by objectives and self-control," "management by motivation," and "performance management." The acronym PRIDE stands for individual development education and results.

Staffing is essential, according to Nzuve (1997), in order to ensure the effective exploitation of available resources. Recruiting, choosing, hiring, training, compensating, and separating (retiring) staff members are all responsibilities that fall under the purview of the principal of the school. Among the steps involved in staffing are: Determine the skills, abilities, and knowledge necessary to perform, as well as training and development through induction and orientation, the maintenance of the workforce in terms of wages and benefits, and the termination or separation of employees for poor performance or old age (retirement) that is handled in accordance with policies, procedures, and managerial ethics.

2.4 Benchmarking and Discipline of Learners

The definition of discipline that can be found in the Pocket Oxford Dictionary is as follows: training that results in self-control, orderliness, and cooperation. Discipline is essential to academic performance since there is no time lost on studying in order to discipline students who are acting inappropriately. Students are provided with an atmosphere that is conducive to learning while they are in school. Additionally, the members of a school are obliged to strictly adhere to a variety of behavioral rules, as discipline is the essential component that contributes to the success of a school. We are putting in a lot of effort, but that doesn't explain why so many students are failing so horribly. Teachers sometimes express feelings of sorrow, anxiety, and even hopelessness when they are confronted with the problem of ensuring that their students meet the educational standards. This is Yvette.J 2001.

According to Khuluse (2009), the school climate that is established by the educator can have a significant impact on the learners' motivation and attitude towards learning. This is due to the fact that the most important thing to keep in mind when thinking about discipline is that the process of creating the necessary order has more to do with the skills that are involved in effective teaching in general than it does with how one deals with the behavior of the learners themselves. A range of factors, including but not limited to boredom, inability to complete assignments, low academic self-esteem, emotional troubles, and a negative attitude, are among

the reasons why students behave inappropriately in school. The acceptance of the educator's authority to govern the learner's behavior and their progress in learning is the most important factor in the establishment of discipline at students' educational institutions. According to Wanja M. (2009), students' ability to maintain discipline is an essential component not just of their academic success but also of their success in engaging in other activities at school.

2.5 Academic Performances

According to Annie w. and Howard W.S., (1996), academic achievement or performance is the result of education, which means that it refers to the degree to which a student, teacher, or institution has accomplished their educational objectives. It is common practice to evaluate students' academic performance through the use of examinations or continuous assessment tests; however, there is no consensus among practitioners regarding the most effective method of testing or the most significant aspects, which include declarative knowledge such as facts and procedural knowledge such as skills. Academic performance, or the degree to which a student satisfies the requirements established by both the local government and the educational institution itself, is the yardstick by which success is evaluated in educational institutions. It has come to the notice of parents, legislators, and government education agencies alike that the importance of pupils performing well in school has become increasingly important as the level of competition for careers in the working world continues to increase exponentially.

Performance in school is evaluated in a variety of ways: for normal grading, students demonstrate their knowledge by taking written and oral tests, performing presentations, turning in homework, and engaging in class activities and debates. In addition, students are required to turn in their homework. There is a significant emphasis placed on examinations within Kenya's educational system. In most cases, the quality of education is judged based on the percentage of pupils who are successful in passing national examinations. The elements that influence students' academic success are those that are associated with the students' personal traits as well as the environment that the students are in, which includes both the school and the family. As a

result of the low Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) results, many children who attend public secondary schools have been denied the opportunity to compete favorably for national possibilities.

In an efficient educational institution, the progress that students make on the important objectives is measured and monitored on a regular basis. The outcomes of these assessments are then utilized to enhance the behaviors and performances of individual students, as well as to enhance the curriculum as a whole (Lezotte, 2001). A national test is used as the basis for assessment in Kenyan schools. This examination is intended to measure the level of achievement that pupils have achieved. On the other hand, it has been claimed that these public tests do not offer a methodical and interventional strategy to increase the success of the learners (Oduol, 2006). It is even believed that the decline in candidates' performance in national examinations is due to a lack of monitoring of learning achievement system in Kenya. This lack of monitoring could provide a basis for the provision of intervention strategies to address the weaknesses portrayed by candidates prior to their participation in the national examination.

There are several reasons why it is beneficial to keep track of academic success records. The areas of a student's academic career in which they have achieved success and those in which they have failed need to be reviewed in order to encourage progress and make the most of the learning process. A consistent benchmark that is held to all students is provided by the results, which serve as a framework for making decisions regarding how well pupils are doing in school. In addition, performance results make it possible to rank and categorize pupils on a scale that is numerically evident. This helps to reduce the number of complaints that are lodged against schools and teachers by holding them accountable for the components of each and every grade it assigns. In spite of the fact that education is not the sole path to success in the working world, a significant amount of effort is put forth to identify, analyze, track, and promote the progress of students while they are attended school. Parents are concerned about their children's academic performance because they assume that a good academic outcome will provide more career options and employment security for their children. Schools, despite the

fact that they are involved in the development of excellent academic habits for the same reason, are frequently impacted by worries regarding the reputation of the school as well as the potential of receiving financial assistance from government organizations, which can be contingent on the academic performance of the school.

Therefore, academic performance is a primary issue for researchers in the field of education. This is due to the fact that a failure in the national test is a sign of impending doom for the students' performance, which in turn causes their lives to become unclear and filled with sorrow. The student's academic achievement is the best indicator of whether or not they will continue their education at a university or other postsecondary institution. Since this is the case, the academic success of a student on national examinations is the determining factor in their life. It is for this reason that administrators of secondary schools in Kenya are under pressure to increase the grades that pupils achieve in the Kenya certificate of secondary education, also known as the K.C.S.E.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is built upon three interrelated theories: Systems Theory, Theory of Change, and Social Learning Theory. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how benchmarking influences academic performance in public secondary schools.

2.6.1 Systems Theory

Systems Theory posits that organizations, including educational institutions, are complex entities made up of interdependent components that work together to achieve common goals (von Bertalanffy, 1968). In the context of public secondary schools, this theory suggests that academic performance results from the interactions among various elements, such as students, teachers, administrators, curriculum, and external stakeholders like parents and the community. Each component plays a crucial role in the educational process; for instance, the quality of

teaching directly affects student learning outcomes, while administrative support influences teaching effectiveness (Senge, 1990).

By employing benchmarking, schools can analyze these interconnections by comparing their practices and performance with those of similar institutions. This comparative analysis can reveal systemic strengths and weaknesses, guiding schools in making informed decisions to enhance their overall performance. Furthermore, Systems Theory emphasizes the importance of adopting a holistic approach to improvement. Rather than focusing on isolated interventions, schools can utilize benchmarking to understand how changes in one area—such as teaching methods—may impact other areas, such as student discipline and engagement (Meadows, 2008). This comprehensive perspective encourages schools to adopt coordinated strategies that address multiple facets of the educational experience, ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

2.6.2 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change framework offers a structured methodology for understanding how specific actions and interventions lead to desired outcomes (Weiss, 1995). In this study, benchmarking practices serve as the focal intervention aimed at improving academic performance in public secondary schools. The Theory of Change outlines a clear pathway from benchmarking activities to academic outcomes. For example, when schools engage in benchmarking, they assess their performance against established standards, identify areas for improvement, and implement evidence-based strategies. This process creates a logical sequence of events that can lead to enhanced teaching practices, improved student discipline, and greater overall student engagement, ultimately resulting in higher academic achievement (Connell & Kubisch, 1998).

Moreover, the Theory of Change framework emphasizes the importance of establishing measurable goals and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. By setting clear performance indicators and monitoring progress, schools can determine the impact of

benchmarking on academic outcomes. This evaluative component is crucial for accountability, as it enables school leaders and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of their efforts and make necessary adjustments to improve practices over time (Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

2.6.3 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in the acquisition of behaviors and knowledge (Bandura, 1977). This theory is particularly relevant in the context of benchmarking, as it highlights how educational institutions can learn from one another through shared practices and experiences. When schools engage in benchmarking, they observe and analyze the successful practices of higher-performing institutions. This process of observation allows educators and administrators to adopt effective strategies that have been proven to enhance academic performance. For instance, a school may implement specific teaching methodologies or administrative practices that were successful in a benchmarked institution, thereby improving its own performance (Bandura, 1986).

Social Learning Theory also underscores the importance of collaboration and shared learning in the educational context. By fostering a culture of cooperation among educators, schools can create an environment where best practices are shared and adapted. This collaborative approach not only enhances the knowledge and skills of teachers but also positively influences students' attitudes toward learning and discipline (Zimmerman, 2002). When students see their peers engaged and achieving success, they are more likely to emulate those behaviors, leading to an overall improvement in academic performance.

The integration of Systems Theory, Theory of Change, and Social Learning Theory provides a robust framework for analyzing the influence of benchmarking on academic performance in public secondary schools. Systems Theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of school components and the need for holistic improvement strategies. The Theory of Change outlines the pathways through which benchmarking practices can lead to desired academic outcomes,

while Social Learning Theory highlights the collaborative learning process that enhances educational practices. Together, these theories inform the study's objectives and methodology, guiding the exploration of the relationship between benchmarking and academic performance.

By utilizing this theoretical framework, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how benchmarking practices can be effectively implemented in public secondary schools to enhance student academic performance and overall school effectiveness.



2.7 Conceptual Framework

Independent variable

Dependent variable

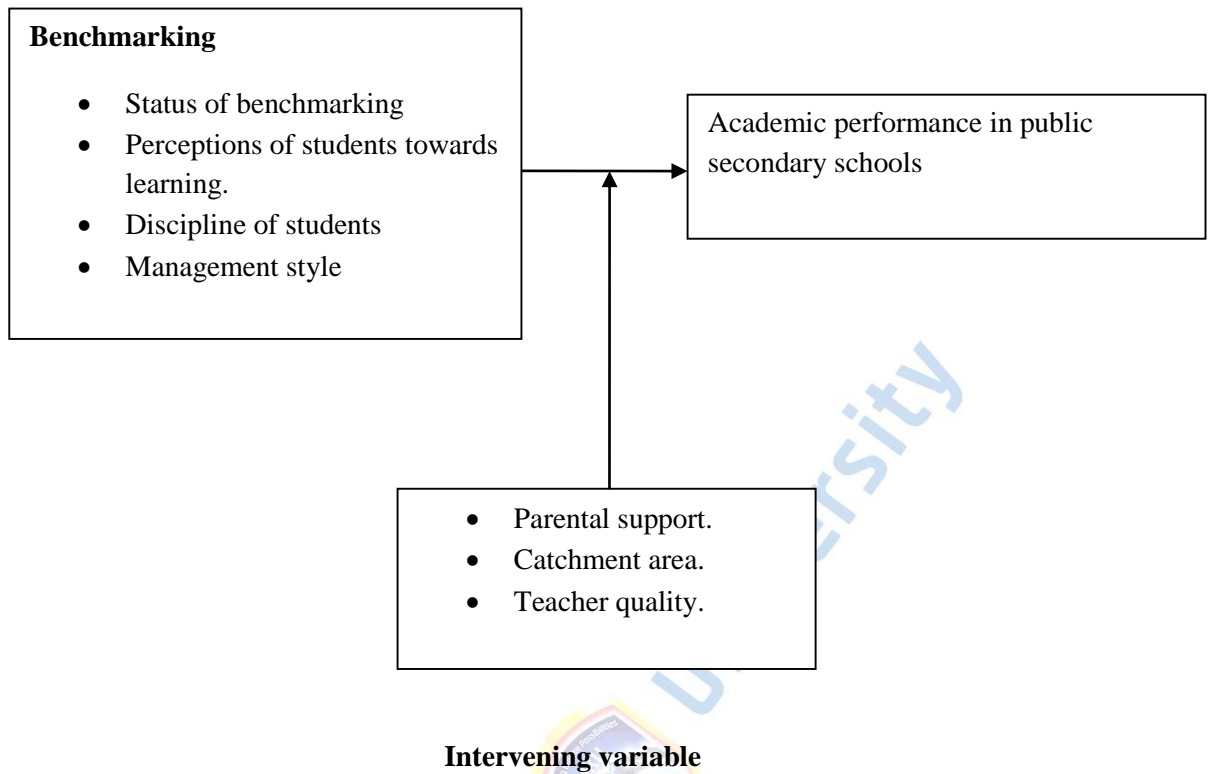


Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

In the conceptual framework that was presented earlier, it is hypothesized that benchmarking will have an effect on the academic performance of students who attend public secondary schools. In addition to this, it is presumed to have an effect on the way pupils feel about learning, the manner in which kids are disciplined, and the management style of various schools. It is possible that the intervening variables will have an effect on this relationship. In the event that the following factors remain unchanged, for instance, it is possible that they will have an effect on the academic performance of students attending public secondary schools. The support from the parents comes first. According to Hara et al. (1998), it has been repeatedly discovered that a good association exists between a child's academic success and the involvement of their parents in their child's early education. More specifically, children whose parents are more involved in their education have a higher level of academic performance than

children whose parents involvement on academic success has not only been noted by researchers, but also by policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement into broader educational policy initiatives. This suggests that children who have parents who are more involved in their education have a higher level of academic success.

There are two ways in which parents who have a favorable attitude about their child's education, school, and teachers are able to positively influence their child's academic performance:

- a) By being engaged with the child to increase the child's self-perception of cognitive competence that is, the extent to which children believe that they possess the necessary cognitive skills to be successful.
- b) By being engaged with teachers and school to promote a stronger and more positive students teachers relationship.

The catchment area is the second component. The extent to which a student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning, express high expectations for their children's achievement and future careers, and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community is the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school, according to Henderson and Berla (2004). They argued that the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not the student's income or social status.

Moreover, they emphasize that when parents are actively involved in their children's education at home, it leads to improved academic performance at school. Steinberg (2006) conducted a study that lasted for three years and involved 12,000 students from nine high schools in the United States. The findings of this study demonstrated that community involvement encourages parents to participate in improving their children's academic performance by attending school programs and extracurricular activities, among other things. Steinberg came to the conclusion that when parents make frequent visits to their children's schools, it promotes the notion that the

child's experience at home and at school are intertwined and that school is an essential component of the lives of the entire family.

A third consideration is the caliber of the instructor. According to an increasing body of data, the quality of a student's instructor has a greater impact on the student's academic performance than factors such as the student's race, class, previous academic records, or the school that the kid attends. The advantages that come with being instructed by instructors who are of high quality are cumulative. According to research, the difference in academic accomplishment between kids who have teachers who are the most effective and those who have teachers who are the least effective rises with each passing year. This shows that the most significant advances in student success will likely be obtained when kids receive instruction from competent teachers over the course of multiple years in a row.

Students who are economically disadvantaged and members of minority groups are the least likely to be taught by educators who possess experience, knowledge, and certifications. According to the findings of research, there is a clear correlation between high levels of student accomplishment and individual aspects of teacher quality. It has also been demonstrated through research that these pupils develop the greatest when they are paired with professors who are competent. The most significant factor that contributes to the achievement discrepancies is the dearth of qualified educators. The conviction that the success of their children is dependent on the quality of the teachers they hire has always been a driving force behind the efforts of schools and the communities that surround them. More than twenty years of research have yielded conclusions that are unequivocal regarding the connection between the quality of teachers and the learning of their students.

2.8 Research gaps

Identifying research gaps is crucial for understanding the landscape of existing knowledge and highlighting the need for further investigation into the influence of benchmarking on academic performance in public secondary schools, particularly in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. One

significant gap is the limited focus on contextual studies specific to this region. Most existing literature tends to concentrate on urban or well-resourced schools, leaving a void in understanding how benchmarking practices can be effectively adapted and implemented in rural or less privileged educational settings like those in Trans-Nzoia County.

Additionally, while some studies have explored the relationship between benchmarking and academic performance, there is a lack of research on the specific mechanisms through which benchmarking influences student outcomes. Understanding how factors such as student motivation, engagement, and discipline mediate the relationship between benchmarking and academic performance remains an underexplored area. Furthermore, the impact of different management practices on the effectiveness of benchmarking initiatives has not been sufficiently investigated. Research that examines how various managerial approaches facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of benchmarking in schools is necessary, especially given the diverse educational contexts in Kenya.

Moreover, much of the existing research on benchmarking is cross-sectional, providing only a snapshot of its effects at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies that track the impact of benchmarking over extended periods are essential for assessing its long-term influence on academic performance and institutional improvement. Qualitative insights into the perceptions of various stakeholders—including students, teachers, and parents—are also lacking. Such insights could provide valuable information on the barriers and facilitators of effective benchmarking implementation.

There is also a scarcity of comparative studies that examine benchmarking practices across different counties in Kenya. Such research could illuminate regional variations in effectiveness and help identify best practices that are culturally and contextually relevant. Additionally, limited research exists on how benchmarking practices inform educational policy and decision-making at both local and national levels. Investigating the relationship between benchmarking

data and policy development could bridge the gap between practice and policy, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

Lastly, most studies on benchmarking in education are grounded solely in educational theory, indicating a need for more interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate insights from sociology, economics, and organizational management. Addressing these research gaps is essential for developing a nuanced understanding of how benchmarking can effectively influence academic performance in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. By exploring these areas, the proposed study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge, inform educational practices, and provide actionable insights for policymakers and educators.

2.9 Summary

The reviewed literature is mostly on studies done in western countries, few on Africa and little in Kenya. Education institutions especially secondary schools have since the mid-1990s adopted continuous improvement techniques such as benchmarking to build institutions that are internally and externally geared towards building efficiency in the school. An understanding of how others are doing, yields the data on how to improve professional theory and most straightforward way is to assess where there are gaps between one institutions' performance and benchmarking partners. This assessment maybe used to identify best practices in particular. Benchmarking has been described as among the easiest to implement requiring few resource management supports for its success.

2.10 Knowledge Gap

In the above literature review, the literature typically describes discipline, perception of students toward learning and managerial styles, not showing if benchmarking has an impact on them. The literature also fails to describe if benchmarking is formalized in secondary schools. Furthermore, not much has been said about benchmarking and academic performance in secondary schools in the education sector. Therefore it's imperative for the study to be

undertaken to establish the influence of benchmarking on academic performance in public secondary schools in Trans- Nzoia County.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 An Overview

This chapter delineates the methodology and methods employed in the study, specifically addressing research design, demographic and sampling, research tools, data gathering procedures, and data analysis methodologies.

3.1 Research Design

An approach known as descriptive survey research was utilized in order to gather factual information for the purpose of decision making during the course of the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a descriptive survey research design is a collection of data that gathers information in order to provide answers to questions regarding the current status of the study under investigation. Issues such as economy, the ability to collect data quickly, and the capacity to comprehend a population are taken into consideration in the design.

3.2 Location of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses the entire Trans-Nzoia County, a region characterized by its vibrant educational landscape and diverse demographics. Trans-Nzoia County is comprised of several sub-counties, including Kwanza, Trans-Nzoia West, and Trans-Nzoia East. Geographically, it is strategically situated, bordered by Uasin Gishu County to the east, Pokot County to the north, Bungoma County to the south, and the international boundary with Uganda to the west. This location not only serves as a significant agricultural hub—predominantly known for its high maize production—but also plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the region.

The county is home to a variety of secondary schools, ranging from national to county and sub-county institutions, which cater to a diverse student population. This diversity is further

enriched by the county's cosmopolitan composition, as it hosts individuals from various ethnic backgrounds and cultures. The educational system in Trans-Nzoia County is reflective of this diversity, fostering an environment that encourages inclusive learning and broad perspectives. Given these dynamics, the county presents a unique context for examining the influence of benchmarking on academic performance among public secondary schools, making it an ideal setting for this research.

3.3 Target Population

Trans-Nzoia County is comprised of three sub-counties: Kwanza Sub-county, Kwanza West, and Kwanza East. Together, these three sub-counties are home to a total of 163 public secondary schools. All public secondary schools that have conducted benchmarking, as well as their principals, teachers, and students, were included in the population that intended to be targeted.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of thirty percent of the population that was being targeted. There were forty public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County that had accomplished benchmarking. Some of them are located within the county, while others are located outside of the county but have schools that are comparable to their level. Purposive sampling was used to choose principals, teachers, and students to include in the sample. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), purposeful sampling is a type of sampling in which the researcher selects data from a group of individuals who are thought to be trustworthy for the study. See table 3.1 for an illustration of the sample frame.

Table 1 : Sample Frame

CATEGORY	POPULATION	%
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Principals	12	30
Teachers	120	30
Students	180	30

Source: Researcher (2015)

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected by use of the following instruments:

3.5.1 Questionnaires

This refers to a collection of items which respondents are expected to react usually in writing. The study employed this method for the students and teachers because it saves on time, it upholds on confidentiality and most likely there would be no opportunity for interview bias.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), use of questionnaires ensures that respondents will be faced with identical stimulus thus facilitating reliability. To obtain the best results, careful instructions of questions were done ensuring that they are short, straightforward and easily understood. The researcher prepared questionnaires for teachers and students separately.

3.5.2 Interview Schedule

Based on the research conducted by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), an interview schedule is a collection of questions that the interviewer poses during the interviewing process. Through the use of the instrument, it is possible to collect the necessary data in order to accomplish the particular goals of the study. They were utilized to standardize the interview setting in order to ensure that interviewers are able to ask the same questions in the same manner. An interview schedule was established for principals, and the majority of the questions on the schedule were open-ended and straightforward queries that were easy to comprehend.

3.5.3 Observation Checklist

In order to keep track of everything that was seen during the data collection process, the researcher made use of an observation checklist. The behaviors that were to be observed were first established by the researcher, who then proceeded to develop a comprehensive list of behaviors that were checked off as they occurred during the data collection process. In order to gain an understanding of how the observed behavior contributes to successful academic performance, this instrument was utilized on both teachers and students both inside and outside of the classroom.

3.3.4 Research Procedure

A proposal was prepared by the researcher over the course of a period of two months, under the direct supervision of the supervisors. After obtaining the necessary information, the researcher went to Mount Kenya University to get permission to submit an application for a permit to the National Council of Science and Technology in order to move forward with the study. The researcher next gave an introductory letter to the respondents, asking for their approval to join in the study. Once the letter was ready, the investigation was completed. Using questionnaires, interviews, and an observation checklist, the researcher collected data from respondents in order to conduct an investigation into the impact that benchmarking has on the academic achievement of students attending public secondary schools. In order to examine the data that was obtained, descriptive statistics were utilized, with a primary focus on percentages and frequencies.

3.6 Quality Control

3.6.1 Validity

According to Oso and Onen (2008), validity is defined as the degree to which research instruments measure what they were intended to measure and perform in the manner that they were planned to perform by the researchers. For example, a questionnaire is considered valid if

the things that it assesses are the same things that it had planned to measure in the first place. Before being employed in the real study, the research instruments were put through a series of preliminary tests and pilots to gauge their validity.

3.6.2 Reliability

A test's reliability can be defined as the degree to which the outcomes of the test are consistent with one another. Because of this, a trustworthy self-measurement test will always yield the same results each time it is carried out. In order to determine the reliability of a test, a test-retest reliability calculation was performed. This involved administering the identical questionnaire to a large sample of people at two separate periods. The individuals in the sample did not have identical scores on each test in order for the questionnaire to be declared reliable; rather, their position in the score distribution appeared to be comparable for both the initial test and the subsequent test.

3.7 Data Analysis

Using questionnaires, interviews, and an observation checklist, the researcher collected data from respondents in order to conduct an investigation into the impact that benchmarking has on the academic achievement of students attending public secondary schools. In order to examine the data that was obtained, descriptive statistics were utilized, with a primary focus on percentages and frequencies.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research study was designed to conform to the established ethical guidelines. The research provided the following:

- **Confidentiality:** Consent was sought from responsible parties before sourcing or utilizing the information to be acquired in order to safeguard their privacy.

- **Acknowledgement:** All the authorities that the study sought to use their information were acknowledged accordingly and promptly.
- **Permission:** In situations where students were used directly, the researcher sought for permission from their teachers before interacting with them.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

The data, as well as its analysis and interpretation, are presented in this chapter. The research investigated the impact that benchmarking has on the academic achievement of students attending public secondary schools in the county of Trans-Nzoia. The study was guided by four objectives, namely: to examine the status of benchmarking among secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, to explore the extent to which benchmarking influences perceptions of learners towards learning in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, to examine the effect of benchmarking on managerial skills and to examine the influence of benchmarking on the discipline of learners in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

The study involved 312 respondents categorized as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 : Respondents' Category

Category	Frequency	Percent
Principals	12	3.8
Teachers	120	38.5
Students	180	57.7
Total	312	100.0

Source: Field Data (2016)

Table 2 indicates that majority 180(57.7%) of the respondents involved in the study were students. This was attributed to the fact that in any learning institution students are the highest in number compared to teachers and any other group within the school. Students were therefore the majority to effectively represent the student fraternity. Second highest in number were teachers at 120(38.5%). Similarly, in a school set up teachers are many against one principal. The least category of respondents was that of principals, 12(3.8%). This was attributed to the fact that twelve schools were involved in the study and each school had one principal.

For the purpose of analysis in this study both teachers and principals are referred to as teachers. Table 3 presents teachers' gender as the second aspect of respondents' demographic data.

Table 3 : Teachers' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	81	61.4
Female	51	38.6
Total	132	100.0

Source: Field Data (2016)

A total of 132 teachers were engaged in the study. With regard to their gender, the study noted that majority 81(61.4%) of the teacher respondents involved in the study were males. This was attributed to the fact that from the university intake perspective males are admitted to train as teachers in larger numbers than females. Consequently, the number of male teachers released to the job market and ultimately employed is higher than that of females. Therefore, 51(38.6%) of the female teachers involved in the study was a true picture of the teachers trained and employed in Trans-Nzoia county. In the light of this observation, there is need to strengthen the education of the girl child and encourage more of the female students to go in for teaching courses.

The next item on teachers' demographic information was on their highest qualification as shown in table 4.

Table 4 : Teachers' Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	3	2.3
Diploma	9	6.8
Bachelor of Education	103	78.0
Masters	15	11.4
PhD	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

Source: Field Data (2016)

The study further sought to establish the highest level of qualifications of the teachers. This was only with regard to the teachers involved in the study sample. The study noted that majority 103(78%) of the teachers engaged in the study had bachelor of education degree as their highest level of education qualification. This was owed to the fact that majority of the universities training teachers for secondary schools train them at the level of undergraduate. However, a few colleges offer diploma in secondary teacher education as reflected by 9(6.8%) of the respondents as shown in table 4.3. in addition, 15(11.4%) of the teachers involved in the study has master's degree in varied fields as 2(1.5%) had PhD as their highest level of qualification. This shows that majority of the teachers involved in the study had good qualifications were able to provide candid information on benchmarking.

Benchmarking was done by various schools irrespective of teachers' qualifications. The issue was what was it that other schools did that others lacked and the how of doing it and the secret behind sustained academic achievement.

The study also looked at the teachers' employment status as shown in table 5.

Table 5 : Employment Status/Terms

Status /Terms	Frequency	Percent
TSC	92	69.7
BOM	35	26.5
TP	5	3.8
Total	132	100.0

Source: Field Data (2016)

The study found out that majority 92(69.7%) of the teacher respondents involved in the study had been employed by the Teachers Service Commission. This was attributed to the policy that TSC was the teacher employer in the country and therefore was tasked to employ and deploy teachers to various public schools in the country. However, as a result of shortage of teachers in public schools, some boards of management employ their own trained teachers to supplement the identified inadequacy. Consequently, 35(26.5%) of the teachers involved in the study fell under BOM status category. Lastly, 5(3.8%) of the teachers were on their teaching practice. The last aspect on the teachers' demographic information was their teaching experience. Their responses are shown in table 6.

Table 6 : Teaching Experience

Experience (in years)	Frequency	Percent
Below 1	10	7.6
1-3	23	17.4
4-6	33	25.0
7 and above	66	50.0

Total	132	100.0
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Source: Field Data (2016)

Half 66(50%) of the teacher respondents had a teaching experience of 7 and above years. These were experienced teachers who were expected to perform their duties effectively and cause good academic achievement. Furthermore, 33(25%) of the teachers had a teaching experience of 4-6 years. Additionally, 23(17.4%) of the respondents involved in the study as teachers had a teaching experience of 1-3 years as those who taught for less than a year constituted 10(7.6%) of the teachers.

The study further studied the students' demographic data. The first students' demographic data was class. Data on students' classes are presented in table 7.

Table 7 : Students' Classes

Class	Frequency	Percent
Form one	20	11.1
Form two	40	22.2
Form three	50	27.8
Form four	70	38.9
Total	180	100.0

Source: Field Data (2016)

Data in table 7 indicate that majority 70(38.9%) of the students involved in the study were form four class. This was purposely done since form four students have been in school long enough to effectively comment on benchmarking from or by other schools. In addition, 50(27.8%) of the respondents involved in the study were form threes. Like the form fours, form three students had been in school for a substantial period to commend on the issue of benchmarking. The form one and form two students were represented by 20(11.1%) and 40(22.2%) of the students involved in the study.

Students' were also studied on age as part of their demographic data. Their responses are presented in table 8.

Table 8 : Students' Ages

Age in years	Frequency	Percent
Below 14	5	2.8
14-16	47	21.1
17-20	123	68.3
Above 20	5	2.8
Total	180	100.0

Source: Field Data (2016)

Table 8 indicates that majority 123(68.3%) of the students involved in the study were of the age 17-20 years. This was attributed to the fact that this age category consists of most of the forms two, three and four students. In addition, 47(21.1%) of the student respondents belonged to the age categories of 14-16 years. The age category of below a14 years and above 20 years were each represented by 5(2.8%) of the respondents.

4.2 Status of Benchmarking Among Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

First and foremost, the purpose of the research was to investigate the current state of benchmarking in secondary schools located within the county of Trans-Nzoia. There will be two different ways that benchmarking will be carried out in relation to this objective: schools will either visit schools or schools will visit schools. In the same way that other schools come to benchmark from other schools, some schools go to benchmark from other schools. Others, on the other hand, are simply used as benchmarks because they are considered to be models and academic giants. The information pertaining to this target is displayed in table 9.

Table 9 : Status of Benchmarking Among Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

Status	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The school leadership is keen on benchmarking other performing schools	50(37.9%)	5(3.9%)	4(3.0%)	60(45.6%)	13(9.8%)
The school administration has been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance	60(45.6%)	4(3.0%)	0(0.0%)	63 (47.7%)	5(3.9%)
All teachers are effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance	62(47%)	7(5.3%)	2(1.5%)	56(42.4%)	5(3.9%)
There is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations.	101(76.5%)	15(11.4%)	0(0.0%)	14(10.6%)	2(1.5%)
There is a predetermined benchmarking time table in this school.	15(11.4%)	10(7.6%)	2(1.5%)	90(68.2%)	15(11.4%)
Benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools.	22(16.7%)	9(6.8%)	0(0.0%)	93(70.6%)	9(6.8%)
No school has come to our school for benchmarking in the last three years.	73(55.3%)	29(22%)	4(3.0%)	20(15.2%)	6(4.5%)
Our last benchmarking to other schools is within the last three year period.	50(37.9%)	18(13.6%)	4(3%)	46(34.8%)	14(10.6%)
Our school involves the entire school community in benchmarking.	43(32.6%)	21(15.9%)	3(2.3%)	57(43.2%)	8(6.1%)

Source: Field Data (2016)

The data presented in table 8 reveals that the majority of the teachers who participated in the study, who accounted for 45.6% of the total, were not in agreement with the assertion that the leadership of their school was eager to compare themselves against other schools that performed well. In addition, thirteen (13.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement in question, which stated that the leadership of their school was eager to compare themselves against other schools that produced better results. As a whole, 73 (59.4%) of the teachers who participated in the study expressed their disagreement with the assertion that the leadership of their school was eager to compare themselves against other schools that were performing well. As a result of this, it was implied that the leadership of the school did not actively encourage benchmarking initiatives, most likely due to the financial issues that were involved in the entire setup. There is no particular vote head that may be tied to where benchmarking can be attached in the school funds, regardless of whether they are provided by the government or by parents. As a consequence of this, the majority of principals of schools may publicly endorse the concept of benchmarking, but they may not put it into practice. It is important to note that when asked regarding the statement that their school administration was interested in benchmarking other performing schools, four of the respondents, or three percent, were unsure about their position.

However, 50(37.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that their school leadership was keen on benchmarking other performing schools. Additionally, 5(3.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement in question that their school leadership was keen on benchmarking other performing schools. Those who strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that their school leadership was keen on benchmarking other performing schools came from institutions where the principals were actively involved in supporting benchmarking initiatives external support such as county government and other well-wishers. The biggest hurdle in facilitating benchmarking has been lack of transport to various schools targeted to be benchmarked. However, one of the principals in the interview remarked: *“with the Constituent Development Fund support most schools in the county have school buses and would start*

benchmarking schools of their desire. Long before, the biggest problem to benchmarking initiative had been lack of transport means for staff and students” (Personal Interview, St. Teresa’s Bikeke Boys, 2016).

The school leadership consisting of members of the school board of management and parents’ teachers’ association should sensitize teachers about the need for benchmarking. The study found out that majority 63(47.7%) of the respondents involved in the study as teachers disagreed with the statement that their school administration had been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. Further, 5(3.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement in question that their school administration had been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. Generally, 68(51.6%) of the teachers involved in the study refuted the statement that their school administration had been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. This was based on the lack of funds to facilitate benchmarking. Nevertheless, each school principal has his or her leadership styles which may not be easily changed by benchmarking and as such do not sensitize teachers on the same. Furthermore, the school management may not be willing to shoulder the benchmarking expenses. In fact one of the interviewed teachers noted: *“benchmarking in itself is a noble initiative. However, it is negatively viewed by school management as unnecessary expense since teachers are trained in the same way, forgetting that they work under different environment and administration with varied motivation wavelength”* (Personal Interview, Muroki Secondary School, 2016).

However, 60(45.6%) of the teachers involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that their school administration had been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. In addition, 4(3%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that their school administration had been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance.

When it comes to benchmarking, it is necessary for all teachers to be involved. The study found out that majority 62(47%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. In addition, 7(5.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement in question that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. Cumulatively, 69(52.3%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged the statement that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. This was attributed to the perception that when all teachers are involved in benchmarking there is a sense of ownership of the entire programme rather than just involving the heads of departments or a few teachers.

The study further noted that a small percent 2(1.5%) of the respondents were undecided about the statement under investigation that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. Nevertheless, 56(42.4%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance. Further, 5(3.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement in question that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance.

Benchmarking should be made a routine practice where teachers and students go out to other schools to evaluate themselves against what other schools do to excel. The study noted that 101(76.5%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that there is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations. In addition, 15(11.4%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that there is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations. Cumulatively,

116(87.9%) of the respondents involved in the study supported the statement that there is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations. This was owed to the fact that benchmarking may assist teachers and students to compare and contrast academic operations and boost their performance. However, 14(10.6%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that there is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations. Likewise, 2(1.5%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly disagreed with the statement under investigation that there is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations.

Schools which are serious with benchmarking should have specific dates in their almanac or calendar of events on which the visits to various schools will be done. Therefore, the study sought to establish whether schools had various predetermined dates for benchmarking in their programmes. It was noted that majority 90(68.2%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that there was a predetermined benchmarking time table in this school. In addition, 15(11.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement in question that there was a predetermined benchmarking time table in their school. Cumulatively, 105(79.6%) of the respondents involved in the study as teachers refuted the statement that there was a predetermined benchmarking time table in their school. This implied that benchmarking had no clear programme and was haphazardly done. The lack of clear programme for benchmarking was attributed to uncertainty of the availability of the facilitation fund from whichever source in the school terms as observed by one of the respondents: *“we cannot plan benchmarking in advance since the availability of facilitation fund is not automatically forthcoming. We have to be ready always and distort the school programme for the sake of benchmarking whenever funds become available”*, (Personal Interview, Kwanza Friends Boys Secondary School, 2016)

However, 15(11.4%) of the teacher respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that there was a predetermined benchmarking time table in this school. Additionally, 10(7.6%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that there was a predetermined benchmarking time table in this school. Furthermore, 2(1.5%) of the respondents were undecided about the statement that there was a predetermined benchmarking time table in this school.

Whereas one would argue that benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours in class another would say no. The study sought respondents' opinion on this. It was noted that majority 93(70.6%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools. In addition, 9(6.8%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools. Cumulatively, 102(77.4%) of the respondents engaged in the study acknowledged the statement that benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools. This was owed to the new skills and knowledge that both students and teacher get through benchmarking. A respondent noted that: *"the gains from benchmarking are all round and not limited to a particular subject, the teachers and students learn a lot from other schools and this enhances academic performance"*, (Personal Interview, St. Patricks' Waitaluk, July 2016)

However, 22(16.7%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools. Additionally, 9(6.8%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement under investigation that benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools.

The state of benchmarking was also evaluated based on the schools that were given the opportunity to receive benchmarking from other schools. There were 73 respondents who strongly agreed with the assertion that no school had visited their school for benchmarking in the past three years, according to the survey. This represents 55.3% of the total respondents who participated in the study. Furthermore, 29 of the respondents, which is 22 percent, agreed with the assertion that throughout the past three years, no school had visited their school for the purpose of benchmarking. In light of this, 102 of the respondents in table 8, which accounts for 77.3% of the total, agreed with the assertion that no school had visited their school for benchmarking purposes in the preceding three years. This suggested that a significant number of schools in Trans-Nzoia County travel to other counties in order to achieve benchmarks, while receiving a limited number of schools from both within and beyond the county. Because this will result in a reduction in the overall costs associated with the exercise, it is necessary for schools to be made aware of the importance of benchmarking within the county.

Regarding the assertion that no school has visited their school for benchmarking in the preceding three years, twenty (15.2%) of the respondents who participated in the study were of the opinion that this statement was not accurate. In addition, six of the respondents, or 4.5%, strongly disagreed with the statement in question, while four of the respondents, or 3%, were uncertain at the time.

The second objective of the study was to determine the frequency with which schools benchmark their performance. It was observed that fifty of the respondents that participated in the survey, which accounts for 37.9% of the total, strongly agreed with the assertion that their most recent benchmarking to other schools occurred within the past three years for them. Moreover, 18 of the respondents who participated in the study agreed with the statement in question, which stated that their most recent benchmarking to other schools occurred within the past three years. This represents 13.6% of the total respondents. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents who participated in the study reported that their most recent benchmarking to other schools was during the past three years. This represents a somewhat higher percentage than the

previous fifty-one percent. As a consequence of this, it was observed that schools in the county visited other schools more frequently than they visited their own schools. On the other hand, forty-six (34.8%) of the respondents did not agree with the assertion that their most recent benchmarking to other schools occurred during the past three years. Moreover, fourteen additional respondents, which accounts for 10.6% of the total, strongly disagreed with the statement in question, which said that their most recent benchmarking to other institutions occurred during the past three years. Nevertheless, regarding the assertion that their most recent benchmarking to other schools occurred within the past three years, four of the respondents, which is three percent, were unsure of their position.

All of the school's stakeholders should be involved in the benchmarking process in a good school. There were 57 respondents who disagreed with the statement that their school involved the entire school community in benchmarking, which was recognized by the school. This is 43.2% of the total responses. Moreover, eight of the respondents, which accounts for 6.1% of the total, strongly disagreed with the statement in question, which said that their school integrated the entire school community into the benchmarking process. In all, 65 of the respondents, or 49.3 percent, disagreed with the assertion that their school included the entire school community in the benchmarking process. On the other hand, 43 of the respondents, or 32.6%, were in complete agreement with the assertion that their school integrated the entire school community into the benchmarking process. Additionally, twenty-one (15.9%) of the respondents concurred with the assertion that their school included the entire school community in the benchmarking process. In addition, three of the respondents who participated in the study were unsure regarding the assertion that their school has incorporated the entire school community in benchmarking. This is 2.3 percent of the total respondents.

4.3 Influence of Benchmarking on Perceptions of Learners towards Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

The second objective of the study was on influence of benchmarking on perceptions of learners towards learning in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. Data on this objective are presented in table 10.



Table 10 : Influences of Benchmarking on Perceptions of Learners towards Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

Characteristics	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Benchmarking has really improved my study style and am now focused on ultimate academic success.	75(41.7%)	25(13.9%)	6(3.3%)	60(33.3%)	14(7.8%)
There is need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because we learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance.	90(50%)	30(16.7%)	7(3.9%)	47 (26.1%)	6(3.3%)
I have personally gained from benchmarking because it changed my study habits and attitude towards learning.	87(48.3%)	47(26.1%)	3(1.7%)	40(22.2%)	3(1.7%)
As a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those go for benchmarking from our school are few but normally update on what goes on elsewhere raising our spirit of working hard.	101(56.1%)	40(22.2%)	0(0.0%)	29(16.1%)	10(5.6%)
The class teachers hand pick those who go for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance.	91(50.6%)	45(25%)	6(3.3%)	30(16.7%)	8(4.4%)
Benchmarking is a memorable experience to every learner because it provides an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning.	75(41.7%)	60(33.3%)	6(3.3%)	25(13.9%)	14(7.8%)
Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions.	90(50%)	47 (26.1%)	7(3.9%)	30(16.7%)	6(3.3%)

Source: Field Data (2016)

Benchmarking mostly benefits a student than a teacher since the former is directly related to academic performance. The study found out that majority 75(41.7%) of the students involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved their study style and were now focused on ultimate academic success. In addition, 25(13.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved their study style and were now focused on ultimate academic success. Cumulatively, 100(55.6%) of the respondents involved in the study as students acknowledged the statement that benchmarking had really improved their study style and were now focused on ultimate academic success. This was attributed to the kind of interaction that students were exposed to during benchmarking. They learnt from other students on how to effectively study and prepare for examinations as further observed by a student respondent: *“before benchmarking I was a careless student who was not time conscious. Benchmarking taught us to go places running as a strategy of saving time for academic work. We have ultimately learnt to go to the dining hall running, to the washrooms running, classrooms running and everywhere running”*, (Personal Interview, Kabuyefwe Boys High School, July 2016).

Another student respondent noted that: *“benchmarking taught me to read with a pen and paper. This assists in raising one’s concentration by writing down main points. It has improved my academic performance by two grades!”*, (Personal Interview, Kitale School, July 2016).

However, 60(33.3%) of the students involved in the study disagreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved their study style and were now focused on ultimate academic success. Additionally, 14(7.8%) of the students strongly disagreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved their study style and were now focused on ultimate academic success. Contrary, 6(3.3%) of the student respondents were undecided about the statement that benchmarking had really improved their study style and were now focused on ultimate academic success.

Regular benchmarking programmes are important for students. The study found out that half 90(50%) of the students involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance. In addition, 30(16.7%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance. Cumulatively, 120(66.7%) of the respondents engaged in the study as students supported the statement that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance. This implied that many students have a positive spot for benchmarking and this motivates that to academically improve their performance.

However, 7(3.9%) of the students involved in the study were undecided about the statement that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance. Furthermore, 47(26.1%) of the students engaged in the study disagreed with the statement that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance. Similarly, 6(3.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the same statement that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance. Therefore, 53(29.4%) of the students involved in the study refuted the statement that there was need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because they learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance.

Benchmarking is aimed at improving the academic performance of the students. Therefore, the study was much concerned about the students' opinions regarding benchmarking and the

influence it had on their learning and ultimately academic performance. The study noted that the majority 87(48.3%) of the respondents involved in the study as students strongly agreed with the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning. Additionally, 47(26.1%) of the students involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning. Cumulatively, 134(74.4%) of the students involved in the study acknowledged the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning. This implied that students had a positive attitude towards benchmarking because they felt it had really assisted them in improving their academic performance.

However, 3(1.7%) of the respondents involved in the study as students were undecided about the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning. Further, 40(22.2%) of the students disagreed with the statement in question that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning. Lastly, 3(1.7%) of the students strongly disagreed with the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning. Therefore, 43(23.9%) of the students involved in the study refuted the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their study habits and attitude towards learning.

Some host school put limit on the number of students coming from the benchmarking school. Therefore, the visiting schools may be willing to take many of their students for benchmarking but the host schools dictate the highest number of students allowed per each class. Consequently, 101(56.1%) of the students involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that as a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those went for benchmarking from their school were few but normally updated them on what goes on elsewhere raising their spirit of working hard. In addition, 40(22.2%) of the students agreed

with the statement that as a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those who went for benchmarking from their school were few but normally updated them on what goes on elsewhere raising their spirit of working hard. Cumulatively, 141(78.3%) of the students involved in the study acknowledged the statement that as a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those who went for benchmarking from their school were few but normally updated them on what goes on elsewhere raising their spirit of working hard. This was an implication that many students were willing to participate in benchmarking but would not get the chance. However, it points out that the students knew the importance of benchmarking towards learning and academic performance.

The study further noted that 29(16.1%) of the students involved in the study disagreed with the statement that as a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those who went for benchmarking from their school were few but normally updated them on what goes on elsewhere raising their spirit of working hard. In addition, 10(5.6%) of the students strongly disagreed with the statement that as a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those who went for benchmarking from their school were few but normally updated them on what goes on elsewhere raising their spirit of working hard. Therefore, 39(26.1%) of the students engaged in the study did not support the statement that as a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those who went for benchmarking from their school were few but normally updated them on what goes on elsewhere raising their spirit of working hard.

The school should put specific selection measures for the students who go for benchmarking. The study found out that 91(50.6%) of the students involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance. In addition, 45(25%) of the students agreed with the statement under investigation that three class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational program that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance. Cumulatively, 136(75.6%)

of the students involved in the study acknowledged the statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance. This was an implication that most schools did not have fair method of selecting students who go for benchmarking.

Further, the study noted that 6(3.3%) of the students were undecided about the statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance. In the contrary, 30(16.7%) of the students involved in the study disagreed with the statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance. Additionally, 8(4.4%) of the students strongly disagreed with the statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance. Therefore, 38(21.1%) of the students involved in the study refuted the statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational programme that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance.

Learners always have learning experiences from benchmarking. The study found out that 75(41.7%) of the students involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking was a memorable experience to every learner because it provided an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning. In addition, 60(33.3%) of the students involved in the study agreed with the statement that benchmarking was a memorable experience to every learner because it provided an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning. Therefore, 135(75%) of the students involved in the study supported the statement that benchmarking was a

memorable experience to every learner because it provided an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning. However, 6(3.3%) of the students were undecided about the statement that benchmarking was a memorable experience to every learner because it provided an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning. Nevertheless, 25(13.9%) of the students disagreed with the statement that benchmarking was a memorable experience to every learner because it provided an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning as 14(7.8%) strongly disagreed with it.

Both schools involved in benchmarking in terms of the host and the visitor school benefit from the undertaking. The study found out that half 90(50%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions. Further, 47(26.1%) of the students involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions. Cumulatively, 137(76.1%) of the students involved in the study supported the statement that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions.

However, 7(3.9%) of the respondents were undecided about the statement in question that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions. Additionally, 30(16.7%) of the students disagreed with the statement that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions. Finally, 6(3.3%) of the students strongly agreed with statement in question that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions.

4.4 Effect of Benchmarking on Managerial Skills in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

The third objective of the study was on effect of benchmarking on managerial skills in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. This objective was specifically responded to by the twelve principals involved in the study. Data collected on the objective are presented in table 4.8.



Table 11 : Effect of Benchmarking on Managerial Skills in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Benchmarking has really improved my managerial skills especially in handling academic matters in the quest for better performance.	8(66.7%)	2(16.7%)	0(0.0%)	2(16.7%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking is an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills especially for newly promoted principals.	6(50%)	3(25%)	0(0.0%)	2(16.7%)	1(8.3%)
I have personally gained from benchmarking because it changed my leadership style and approach to solving crisis among teachers.	7(58.3%)	3(25%)	0(0.0%)	2(16.7%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on managerial matters.	8(66.7%)	3(25%)	0(0.0%)	1(8.3%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that require precedence.	7(58.3%)	1(8.3%)	1(8.3%)	3(25%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking is a memorable experience to principals with regard to the interaction of the school boards of management.	6(50%)	4(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	2(16.7%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting principals concerning budgeting and financial management issues.	9(75%)	1(8.3%)	0(0.0%)	2(16.7%)	0(0.0%)

Source: Field Data (2016)

The study found out that benchmarking is instrumental in shaping up principals' managerial skills. Majority 8(66.7%) of the principals involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved their managerial skills especially in handling academic matters in the quest for better performance. In addition, 2(16.7%) of the principal respondents agreed with the statement in question that benchmarking had really improved their managerial skills especially in handling academic matters in the quest for better performance. Cumulatively, 10(83.4%) of the principals involved in the study acknowledged the statement that benchmarking had really improved their managerial skills especially in handling academic matters in the quest for better performance. This was attributed to the fact that during benchmarking both the host and visiting principals exchange ideas on handling academic issues leading to improved academic performance. However, 12(16.7%) of the principals involved in the study disagreed with the statement under investigation that benchmarking had really improved their managerial skills especially in handling academic matters in the quest for better performance.

Newly appointed principals should be effectively inducted through various ways. Benchmarking becomes a handy way of inducting newly appointed principals in managerial skills. The study found out that half 6(50%) of the principals strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking was an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills especially for newly promoted principals. Additionally, 3(25%) of the principal respondents agreed with the statement that benchmarking was an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills especially for newly promoted principals. Therefore, 9(75%) of the principals involved in the study acknowledged the statement that benchmarking was an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills especially for newly promoted principals. This was owed to the fact that benchmarking allows opportunity to interact with the experienced principals and learn managerial aspects with regard to specific and general school administration. Nevertheless, 2(16.7%) of the principals involved in the study disagreed with the statement in question that

benchmarking was an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills especially for newly promoted principals as 1(8.3%) strongly disagreed with it.

Any good performing school should have principals whose leadership styles embrace teacher crisis resolution. The study noted that 7(58.3%) of the principals strongly agreed with the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their leadership style and approach to solving crisis among teachers. In addition, 3(25%) of the principals agreed with the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their leadership style and approach to solving crisis among teachers. Cumulatively, 10(83.3%) of the principals involved in the study supported the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their leadership style and approach to solving crisis among teachers. However, 2(16.7%) of the principals refuted the statement that they had personally gained from benchmarking because it changed their leadership style and approach to solving crisis among teachers.

It is important for principals of various schools to compare notes during benchmarking. It was noted that 8(66.7%) of the principals involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on managerial matters. In addition, 3(25%) of the principals involved in the study agreed with the statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on managerial matters. Generally, 11(91.7%) of the principals involved in the study acknowledged the statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on managerial matters. This was attributed to the fact that benchmarking enables principals to share experiences and this because reference points of solving problems in their own schools. However, 1(8.3%) of the principals disagreed with the statement in question that benchmarking gives school principal's opportunity to compare notes on managerial matters.

The study noted that majority 7(58.3%) of the principals strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that

require precedence. Further, 1(8.3%) of the principals agreed with the statement that benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that require precedence. Cumulatively, 8(66.6%) of the respondents supported the statement that benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that require precedence. This was attributed to the fact that benchmarking enables principals to see what happens in other schools that lacks in theirs. Therefore, what happens in other schools and is worth being emulated is borrowed in terms of managerial skills. However, 3(25%) of the principals involved in the study refuted the statement that benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that require precedence. Nevertheless, 1(8.3%) of the principals involved in the study was undecided with the statement that benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that require precedence.

Furthermore, half 6(50%) of the principals involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking is a memorable experience to principals with regard to the interaction of the school boards of management. In addition, 4(33.3%) of the principals agreed with the statement that benchmarking is a memorable experience to principals with regard to the interaction of the school boards of management. Cumulatively, 10(83.3%) of the principals involved in the study supported the statement that benchmarking is a memorable experience to principals with regard to the interaction of the school boards of management.

Financial management is a key issue in schools. It was noted that 9(75%) of the principals involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting principals concerning budgeting and financial management issues. Further, 1(8.3%) of the principals involved in the study agreed with the statement that benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting principals concerning budgeting and financial management issues.

4.5 Influence of Benchmarking On the Discipline of Learners in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

The last objective of the study was on influence of benchmarking on the discipline of learners in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. Data on this objective are presented in table 12.



Table 12 : Influence of Benchmarking On the Discipline of Learners in Public Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Benchmarking has really improved the discipline level in our school since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools is geared towards academic matters.	80(60.6%)	17(12.9%)	3(2.3%)	2(16.7%)	0(0.0%)
Student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models.	66(50%)	29(22%)	5(3.9%)	30(22.7%)	2(1.5%)
The reduction of indiscipline cases in this school is attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures.	53(40.2%)	39(29.5%)	5(3.9%)	33(25%)	2(1.5%)
Benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the aim of improving it.	59(44.7%)	36(27.3%)	2(1.5%)	35(26.5%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline cases.	61(46.2%)	37(28%)	5(3.9%)	29(22%)	0(0.0%)
Benchmarking may lead to negative behaviour learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days.	66(50%)	5(3.9%)	2(1.5%)	30(22.7%)	29(22%)
Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting students concerning academics and general discipline.	53(40.2%)	44(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	33(25%)	2(1.5%)

Source: Field Data (2016)

The study sought to investigate whether benchmarking had effect on students' discipline. The study established that majority 80(60.6%) of the teacher respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved the discipline level in their schools since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools was geared towards academic matters. In addition, 17(12.9%) of the teachers involved in the study agreed with the statement that benchmarking had really improved the discipline level in their schools since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools was geared towards academic matters. Cumulatively, 97(73.5%) of the teachers involved in the study acknowledged the statement that benchmarking had really improved the discipline level in their schools since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools was geared towards academic matters. When students share academic matters they get encouraged to focus on the right discipline to enable them excel in their performance. However, 3(2.3%) of the respondents were undecided about the statement that benchmarking had really improved the discipline level in their schools since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools was geared towards academic matters. Furthermore, 2(16.7%) of the respondents refuted the statement that benchmarking had really improved the discipline level in their schools since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools was geared towards academic matters.

Student unrests witnessed in most schools in the country can be curbed through benchmarking. The study found out that half 66(50%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement that student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models. In addition, 29(23%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement that student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models. Cumulatively, 95(73%) of the teachers involved in the study were of the view that student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models. They believed that when students are taken to discipline model schools for benchmarking, they can

positively foster a sense of self discipline. However, 5(3.9%) of the teachers involved in the study were undecided about the statement that student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models. In the contrary, 30(22.7%) of the teachers involved in the study disagreed with the statement that student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models. Similarly, 2(1.5%) of the teachers strongly disagreed with the statement in question that student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models.

The study sought to find out whether the reduction of indiscipline cases in schools was attributed partly to benchmarking. It was noted that 53(40.2%) of the respondent teachers involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that the reduction of indiscipline cases in their schools was attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures. Further, 39(29.5%) of the teachers involved in the study agreed with the statement in question that the reduction of indiscipline cases in their schools was attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures. Cumulatively, 92(69.7%) of the teachers involved in the study supported the statement that the reduction of indiscipline cases in their schools was attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures. This was owed to disciplinary measures that are used to curb indiscipline cases as applied by the benchmarked schools. Furthermore, the students may copy the positive behaviour of the target schools during benchmarking and this helps in raising the level of discipline in our secondary schools. Benchmarking is therefore a pillar strategy in improving student discipline.

However, 5(3.9%) of the teachers involved in the study were undecided about the statement that the reduction of indiscipline cases in their schools was attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures. Additionally, 33(25%) of the teacher respondents disagreed with the statement under investigation that the reduction of indiscipline cases in their schools was attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures as 2(1.5%) strongly disagreed with it.

Benchmarking remains relevant in the management of students' discipline issues. The study found out that 59(44.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the aim of improving it. Further, 36(27.3%) of the respondents agreed with the same statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the aim of improving it. Generally, 95(72%) of the respondents acknowledged the statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the aim of improving it. However, 2(1.5%) of the respondents were undecided about the statement that benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the aim of improving it as 35(26.5%) refuted it.

Further, the study found out that majority 61(46.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline cases. In addition, 37(28%) of the respondents agreed with the statement in question that benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline cases. Cumulatively, 98(74.2%) of the teachers involved in the study supported the statement that benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline cases. This implied that teachers in general and members of the disciplinary committee in particular can learn a lot in terms of handling complex indiscipline cases through benchmarking. Nevertheless, 5(3.9%) of the respondents in table 4.9 were undecided about the statement in question that benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline cases. In contrary, 29(22%) refuted the statement that benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in

handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline cases.

Benchmarking may have negative effects on student discipline. Some students have hidden behavior which cannot be easily detected by the prefects or teachers. In such cases, when students come to a given school for benchmarking for a number of days as residents, the hosting or visiting students may influence each other positively or negatively. As a result of such a possibility, the study found out that half 66(50%) of the teacher respondents strongly agreed with the statement that benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days. In addition, 5(3.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days. Cumulatively, 71(53.9%) of the teachers involved in the study supported the statement that benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days. However, 30(22.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement in question that benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days. Additionally, 29(22%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement under investigation that benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days. Cumulatively, 59(44.7%) of the respondents refuted the statement that benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days.

Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting students concerning academics and general discipline. Teachers were subjected to the above statement and noted that 53(40.2%) strongly agreed with it. In addition, 44(33.3%) of the respondents agreed with the same statement that benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting students concerning academics and general discipline. Cumulatively, 97(73.5%) of the teachers involved in the study supported the statement that benchmarking is learning experience for both

the host and visiting students concerning academics and general discipline. However, 33(25%) of the respondents refuted the statement that benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting students concerning academics and general discipline.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

5.1 Summary

First and foremost, the purpose of the research was to investigate the current state of benchmarking in secondary schools located within the county of Trans-Nzoia. Following the findings of the survey, it was discovered that 73 (59.4%) of the respondents who were teachers and participated in the study denied the statement that their school leadership was interested in benchmarking other schools that were performing well. As a result of this, it was implied that the leadership of the school did not actively encourage benchmarking initiatives, most likely due to the financial issues that were involved in the entire setup. There is no particular vote head that may be tied to where benchmarking can be attached in the school funds, regardless of whether they are provided by the government or by parents.

Furthermore, 68 teachers, which is 51.6% of the total number of teachers who participated in the study, denied the assertion that their school administration had been at the forefront of educating teachers about benchmarking as a tactic that is used to improve academic achievement. This decision was made due to a lack of money that would have made benchmarking easier. However, every school principal has their own unique leadership style, which may not be easily altered by benchmarking. As a result, teachers are not made aware of the fact that all principals have their own unique styles. Furthermore, 69 of the respondents who participated in the study acknowledged the assertion that all teachers were effectively involved in benchmarking as a tactic employed in enhancing academic achievement. This statistic represents 52.3% of the total respondents. This was ascribed to the view that when all teachers are involved in benchmarking, there is a sense of ownership of the entire program. This is in

contrast to the situation in which only the heads of departments or a few teachers are involved in benchmarking assessments.

The research also found that 116 (87.9%) of the respondents who participated in the study agreed with the statement that there is a requirement for school leadership to take part in the organization of regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools that perform well in national tests. The reason for this was due to the fact that benchmarking has the potential to assist both teachers and students in comparing and contrasting academic operations, which in turn can improve their performance.

On the other hand, 105 of the respondents who participated in the study as instructors expressed their disagreement with the assertion that their schools had a planned benchmarking time table. This represents 79.6% of the total respondents. This gave the impression that benchmarking was carried out in a random manner and lacked a clear program. In spite of this, 102 (77.4%) of the people who participated in the study agreed with the statement that benchmarking decreases the number of hours that students and instructors interact with one another, particularly in situations where a small number of teachers and kids travel to other schools. This was due to the fact that benchmarking facilitates the acquisition of new skills and information by both the students and the teacher. Despite this, 102 of the respondents, which is 77.3% of the total, agreed with the statement that no school had visited their school for benchmarking purposes in the past three years. This suggested that a significant number of schools in Trans-Nzoia County travel to other counties in order to achieve benchmarks, while receiving a limited number of schools from both within and beyond the county. 51.5 percent of the respondents who participated in the study mentioned that their most recent benchmarking to other schools was during the past three years. This represents a slightly higher percentage than the rest of the respondents. In addition, 65 of the respondents, which is 4.93 percent of the total, disagreed with the assertion that their school included the entire school community in the benchmarking process.

An additional purpose of the study was to investigate the impact that benchmarking has on the attitudes of students attending public secondary schools in the county of Trans-Nzoia regarding the process of learning. According to the findings of the survey, one hundred (55.6%) of the respondents as students who participated in the study acknowledged the assertion that benchmarking had significantly improved their study style and that they were now concentrating on achieving the highest possible level of academic performance. It was determined that this was due to the type of engagement that the students were exposed to while they were being benchmarked. The statement that there is a need for benchmarking to be routinely scheduled was endorsed by 120 (66.7%) of the respondents who participated in the study as students. This is due to the fact that they learn a great deal from the students of other schools, which is a significant step toward improving our learning and academic performance.

Additionally, 134 students, which accounts for 74.4 percent of the total number of students who participated in the survey, acknowledged the statement that they had personally benefited from benchmarking since it altered their study habits and their philosophy on learning. This suggested that students had a favorable attitude toward benchmarking since they believed that it had been of great use to them in enhancing their academic achievement. Additionally, 141 students, which accounts for 78.3 percent of the total number of students who participated in the study, acknowledged the statement that as a consequence of a lack of transport logistics at the host school, those students who went for benchmarking from their own school were few, but they were typically updated on what was happening elsewhere, which increased their motivation to work hard. The upshot of this was that a large number of students were eager to take part in benchmarking but would not be given the opportunity to do so eventually. The statement that the class teachers handpicked those who went for benchmarking without having a rotational program that would ultimately see all of the students in the class involved and improve the class's learning and performance was acknowledged by 136 of the students who participated in the study, which is 75.6% of the total number of students who acknowledged the statement. The conclusion of this was that the majority of schools did not have a procedure that

was fair for selecting children who would participate in benchmarking. In addition, it was observed that 135 students, which is 75% of the total number of students who participated in the research, agreed with the assertion that benchmarking was an experience that every learner would look back on fondly since it afforded them the chance to engage in conversation with students from the other school, thereby rekindling their enthusiasm for education. In a similar vein, 137 students, which is 76.1% of the total number of students who participated in the study, agreed with the assertion that benchmarking was a learning experience for both the host school and the visiting school, which ultimately led to enhanced academic performance for the institutions that were concerned.

The third purpose of the study was to investigate the impact that benchmarking has on the managerial abilities of students attending public secondary schools in the county of Trans-Nzoia. Ten of the principals who participated in the study acknowledged the assertion that benchmarking has actually enhanced their managing skills, particularly in the area of addressing academic concerns in the pursuit of greater performance. This makes up 83.4% of the principals who acknowledged the statement. The reason for this was that during the benchmarking process, both the principals of the host school and the principal of the visiting school shared their thoughts on how to address academic challenges, which ultimately led to increased academic performance. In a similar vein, nine of the principals who participated in the survey acknowledged the assertion that benchmarking was an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills, particularly for principals who had recently been promoted. The reason for this was due to the fact that benchmarking provides the opportunity to engage in conversation with seasoned administrators and acquire knowledge of management elements pertaining to both general and specific school administration.

Generally speaking, eleven of the principals who participated in the study acknowledged the assertion that benchmarking provides school principals with the opportunity to share notes on managerial matters. This represents 91.7% of the participation. One possible explanation for this is that benchmarking makes it possible for administrators to share their experiences and to

use those experiences as reference points when attempting to solve problems in their own schools. In addition, eight of the respondents, which is 66.6% of the total, agreed with the assertion that benchmarking is a wake-up call for principals in terms of how they should handle administrative issues that demand precedence. It was determined that this was due to the fact that benchmarking gives principals the opportunity to observe what occurs in other schools that is lacking in their own. Furthermore, ten of the principals that participated in the study, which accounts for 83.3% of the total, agreed with the assertion that benchmarking is an experience that principals would remember for a long time in relation to the engagement with school boards of management.

With regard to the influence of benchmarking on the discipline of students attending public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, the final purpose of the study was to investigate this influence. As a result of the fact that the interaction between students from hosting schools and visiting schools was focused on academic topics, it was observed that 97 (73.5%) of the teachers who participated in the survey acknowledged the assertion that benchmarking had actually enhanced the level of discipline in their schools. In addition, 95 (73%) of the teachers who participated in the study were of the opinion that student unrest can be curbed by benchmarking, which involves sending kids to high-discipline schools to serve as role models. They were of the opinion that kids may be positively influenced to develop a feeling of self-discipline if they were taken to schools that served as models of discipline for the purpose of benchmarking. Additionally, 92 (69.7%) of the instructors who participated in the study agreed with the assertion that the reduction in instances of indiscipline in their schools might be due, among other things, to the implementation of frequent benchmarking methods. In addition, 95 of the respondents, or 72%, agreed with the assertion that benchmarking provides school principals with the opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the intention of improving it. The statement that benchmarking broadens teachers' viewpoints in addressing student discipline concerns and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through difficult indiscipline cases was supported by

72.2% of the teachers who participated in the study. In addition, 98 instructors contributed to the study. In conclusion, 71 teachers, or 53.9% of the total number of teachers who participated in the survey, agreed with the assertion that benchmarking could result in kids acquiring undesirable behaviors, particularly when the visiting students stay in the host school for a few days.

5.2 Conclusion

When it came to the current state of benchmarking, the study found that the leadership of the school did not actively encourage benchmarking efforts. This was most likely due to the financial considerations that were involved in the entire setup. There is no particular vote head that may be tied to where benchmarking can be attached in the school funds, regardless of whether they are provided by the government or by parents. As a consequence of this, the majority of principals of schools may publicly endorse the concept of benchmarking, but they may not put it into practice. It was inferred that there was a deficiency in financial resources to make benchmarking possible. However, every school principal has their own unique leadership style, which may not be easily altered by benchmarking. As a result, teachers are not made aware of the fact that all principals have their own unique styles.

According to the findings of the study, a significant number of students have a favorable regard for benchmarking, which serves as a source of motivation for them to enhance their academic performance. The students who took part in the research acknowledged the assertion that they had individually benefited from benchmarking since it altered their study habits and their perspective on the process of learning. This suggested that students had a favorable attitude toward benchmarking since they believed that it had been of great use to them in enhancing their academic achievement.

In addition, the study found that during the benchmarking process, both the host principal and the visiting principal share their thoughts on how to address academic challenges, which ultimately results in improved academic performance. The practice of benchmarking provides

an opportunity to engage in conversation with seasoned principals and acquire knowledge about managerial factors pertaining to both general and specific parts of school administration.

Based on the findings of the study, benchmarking is beneficial to the development of student discipline. It is through the sharing of academic concerns that students are encouraged to concentrate on the appropriate subject matter, which in turn enables them to excel in their performance. It was believed that children may positively nurture a sense of self-discipline when they were led to schools that served as models of student discipline for the purpose of benchmarking.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings:

1. There is need for schools to have a clear policy on sustained benchmarking tradition.
2. There is need for uniform school rules to enhance student discipline through benchmarking.
3. Benchmarking should be treated as academic trips to attract funding from the parents and other stakeholders.

5.4 Suggestion for further Studies

The following suggestions are made for further studies:

1. Effect of benchmarking on academic performance of the host schools.
2. Teachers' attitudes towards benchmarking and its influence on teaching.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introduction Letter

Dear Respondent,

RE: DATA COLLECTION

The researcher is a student of Mt. Kenya University who seeks to examine benchmarking and its influence on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. It's in this regard that the questionnaire and interview schedule have been drawn. You are kindly requested to give your response with utmost honesty and you are assured that your responses will be treated with strict confidence.

Kindly note that the information being gathered is for academic purpose only as it is not intended by the researcher of the university to publish part or all of the data gathered here in for any economic gain.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely.

Faith Mwanga.

Appendix IV: Questionnaire for Students.

The following questionnaire seeks to obtain information about the influence of benchmarking on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. Please provide the information asked in the questionnaire by ticking () and filling the necessary information. All information will be treated in confidence. Don't write your name.

Section A: information of respondents.

Please tick () all that apply.

1. Gender:

- a) Female ()
- b) male ()

2. School gender composition.

- a) Girls ()
- b) Boys ()
- c) Mixed ()

3. Nature of the school.

- a) Day ()
- b) Boarding ()
- c) Both day and boarding ()

4. i. Which is your best subject?

i. In your own opinion, what's the general performance of the school?

Average	<input type="text"/>	fair	<input type="text"/>	good	<input type="text"/>
Very good	<input type="text"/>	above average	<input type="text"/>		

iii. a) personally do you like the school?

b) If yes, why?

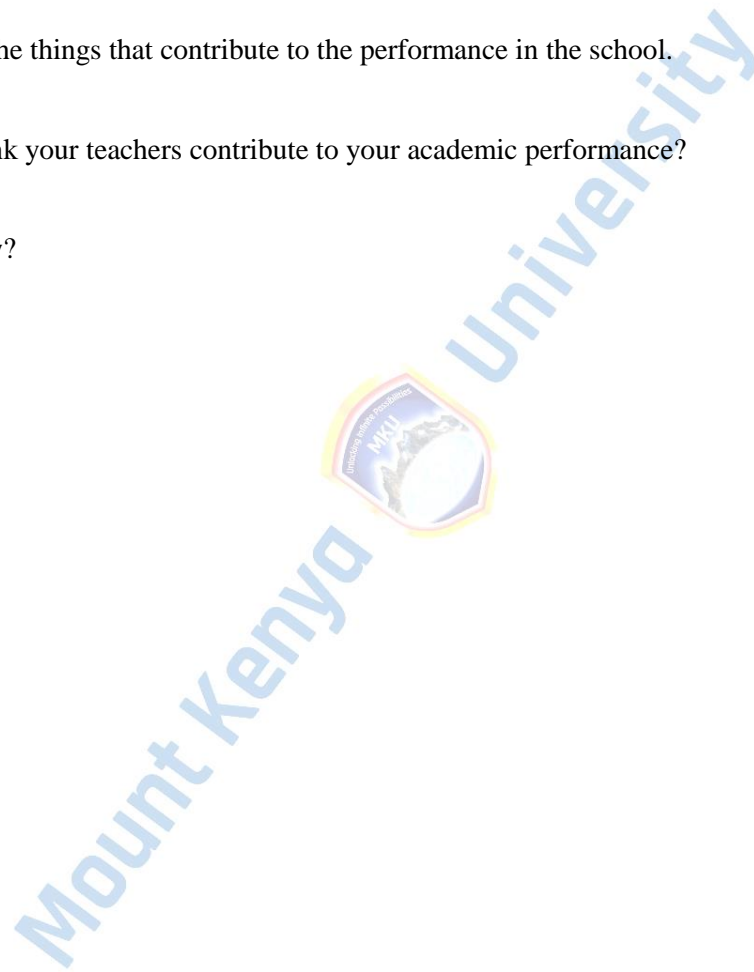
c) If no, give the reason?

5. In your own opinion, comment on the discipline in your school. Explain how it affects learning in the school.

6. List some of the things that contribute to the performance in the school.

7. a) Do you think your teachers contribute to your academic performance?

b) If yes, how?



Appendix V: Questionnaires for Teachers.

1. Name of school.....

2. What is your highest level of education?

3. Who is your employer?

BOM TSC

4. How long have you been in the teaching service?

Less than 1 year 1-5 year

6-10 years above 11 years

5. How long have you been in your current station?

Less than 1 year 1-5 year

6-10 years above 11 years

6. .What are your two teaching subjects.....and.....

STATUS OF BENCHMARKING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TRANS-NZOIA COUNTY

Select the most appropriate rating of the following statements about the status of benchmarking in your school.

Status	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The school leadership is keen on benchmarking other performing schools					
The school administration has been the forefront on sensitizing teachers about benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance					
All teachers are effectively involved in benchmarking as a strategy used in improving academic performance					
There is need for school leadership to involve itself in organizing regular benchmarking of teachers and students with schools which do well in national examinations.					
There is a predetermined benchmarking time table in this school.					
Benchmarking reduces the student-teacher contact hours especially when a few teachers and students go out to other schools.					
No school has come to our school for benchmarking in the last three years.					
Our last benchmarking to other schools is within the last three year					

period.					
Our school involves the entire school community in benchmarking.					

**INFLUENCES OF BENCHMARKING ON PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNERS
TOWARDS LEARNING IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TRANS-NZOIA
COUNTY**

Characteristics	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Benchmarking has really improved my study style and am now focused on ultimate academic success.					
There is need for benchmarking to be regularly arranged because we learn a lot of things from other schools' students which go a milestone in boosting our learning and academic performance.					
I have personally gained from benchmarking because it changed my study habits and attitude towards learning.					
As a result of lack of transport logistics in the host school those go for benchmarking from our school are few but normally update on what goes on elsewhere raising our spirit of working hard.					
The class teachers hand pick those who go for benchmarking without having a rotational program that would ultimately see all the students in the class involved and improve the class learning and performance.					

Benchmarking is a memorable experience to every learner because it provides an opportunity to interact with students of the other school creating a renewed desire for learning.					
Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting schools leading to improved academic performance for the concerned institutions.					

**EFFECT OF BENCHMARKING ON MANAGERIAL SKILLS IN PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TRANS-NZOIA COUNTY**

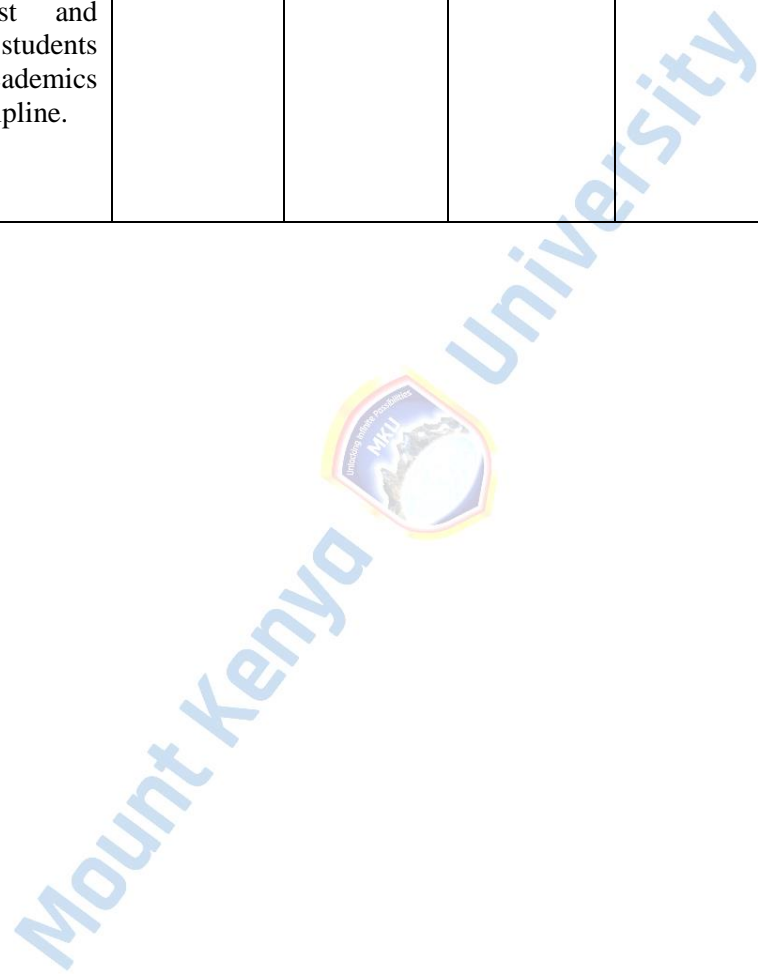
Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Benchmarking has really improved my managerial skills especially in handling academic matters in the quest for better performance.					
Benchmarking is an important training tool in shaping one's managerial skills especially for newly promoted principals.					
I have personally gained from benchmarking because it changed my leadership style and approach to solving crisis among teachers.					
Benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on managerial matters.					
Benchmarking is an eye opener to principals concerning handling of administrative issues that require precedence.					
Benchmarking is a memorable experience to principals with regard to the interaction of the school boards of management.					
Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting principals concerning budgeting and financial					

management issues.					
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**INFLUENCE OF BENCHMARKING ON THE DISCIPLINE OF LEARNERS IN
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TRANS-NZOIA COUNTY**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Benchmarking has really improved the discipline level in our school since the interaction between students of hosting and visiting schools is geared towards academic matters.					
Student unrest can be checked through benchmarking where students are taken out to high discipline schools as role models.					
The reduction of indiscipline cases in this school is attributed to regular benchmarking among other measures.					
Benchmarking gives school principals opportunity to compare notes on student discipline measures with the aim of improving it.					
Benchmarking widens teachers' perspectives in handling student discipline matters and creates an avenue upon which members of the disciplinary committee can navigate through complex indiscipline					

cases.					
Benchmarking may lead to negative behavior learning especially when the visiting students stay in the host school for some days.					
Benchmarking is learning experience for both the host and visiting students concerning academics and general discipline.					



Appendix VI: Interview Schedule for Principals and Teachers

1. a) How is the general performance of the school?

b) Has the school ever benchmarked? If yes, how many times and what has been the feedback?
2. a) How many teachers are in the school?

b) How many are employed by the government and how many by the board of management?

c) In your own opinion do you think the quality of a teacher affects the academic performance of the students? If yes, how?
3. What is the perception of the students towards learning in the school?
4. a) Who is in charge of discipline in the school?

b) Does discipline of students affects their academic performance in your school? If yes, how?

Appendix VII: Observation Checklist

1 (a) Check on time management by the students.

(b) Check on time management by the teachers

2 (a) Check on student's behavior in class.

(b) Check on students' and teachers' participation in class.

(c) Check on students' participation on activities outside the class.

3(a) Check on the daily activities of the school.

(b) Check on the students' examination records

(c) Check on the resource materials in the school.

