

**INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL'S SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON
STUDENT TRUANCY AMONG PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MWINGI WEST SUB COUNTY, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the student

This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for any award in this or any other university.


Signature.......... Date:.....11/10/2024.....

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Approval by the Supervisors

The work stated in this proposal was done by the applicant while under my supervision, and I thus attest to this fact.

Signature.......... Date:.....11/10/2024.....

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family for their dedication during my study period.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development of this proposal has represented a rewarding educational journey within my academic pursuits. It is important to extend gratitude to the divine entity for granting me the strength, well-being, and resources necessary for this endeavor. The attainment of this proposal's objectives owes much to the invaluable assistance and contributions provided by various individuals during its execution. Special recognition is due to Dr. Dorcas Wambugu, my supervisor, whose dedicated guidance, constructive critique, and valuable advice played a pivotal role in facilitating a successful progression through this process. Furthermore, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mount Kenya University for affording me the opportunity to pursue my educational aspirations.

I also wish to acknowledge the significant role played by my supervisor in imparting knowledge and honing my skills. Their dedication has been instrumental in my academic development. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to my fellow colleagues within the department who served as valuable discussants during the initial phases of conceptualization.

ABSTRACT

Student truancy is a significant challenge in Kenyan secondary schools, adversely affecting academic achievement and student behavior. This study investigated the influence of principals' school management strategies on student truancy within public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya. The research specifically examines the role of principals' involvement in student leadership, motivation of peer counselors, utilization of student mentorship programs, and communication channels with students in addressing truancy. Guided by the Open Systems Theory and Assertive Discipline Theory, the study employs a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of these management strategies on truancy rates. The target population includes 36 principals, 180 class teachers, and 360 student leaders from 36 public day secondary schools in the region. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample of 17 principals, 54 class teachers, and 108 student leaders. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides, and the findings were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, particularly linear regression analysis, facilitated by SPSS Version 23. The study highlighted that the involvement of student leadership in school governance, when effectively managed by principals, can significantly reduce instances of truancy. Similarly, motivating peer counselors through recognition and rewards enhanced their role in mitigating absenteeism. The research also underscored the importance of mentorship programs in promoting student attendance, with mentorship contributing to students' personal development and academic commitment. Effective communication, particularly through direct engagement and feedback mechanisms, was identified as a critical factor in addressing student truancy. The study concluded that principals' management strategies play a pivotal role in shaping student behavior and reducing truancy. The findings suggest that enhancing student involvement in leadership, supporting peer counselors, expanding mentorship programs, and improving communication can create a more engaging school environment that curbs truancy. These insights are crucial for principals, educational administrators, and policymakers aiming to implement strategies that improve student attendance and overall academic outcomes.

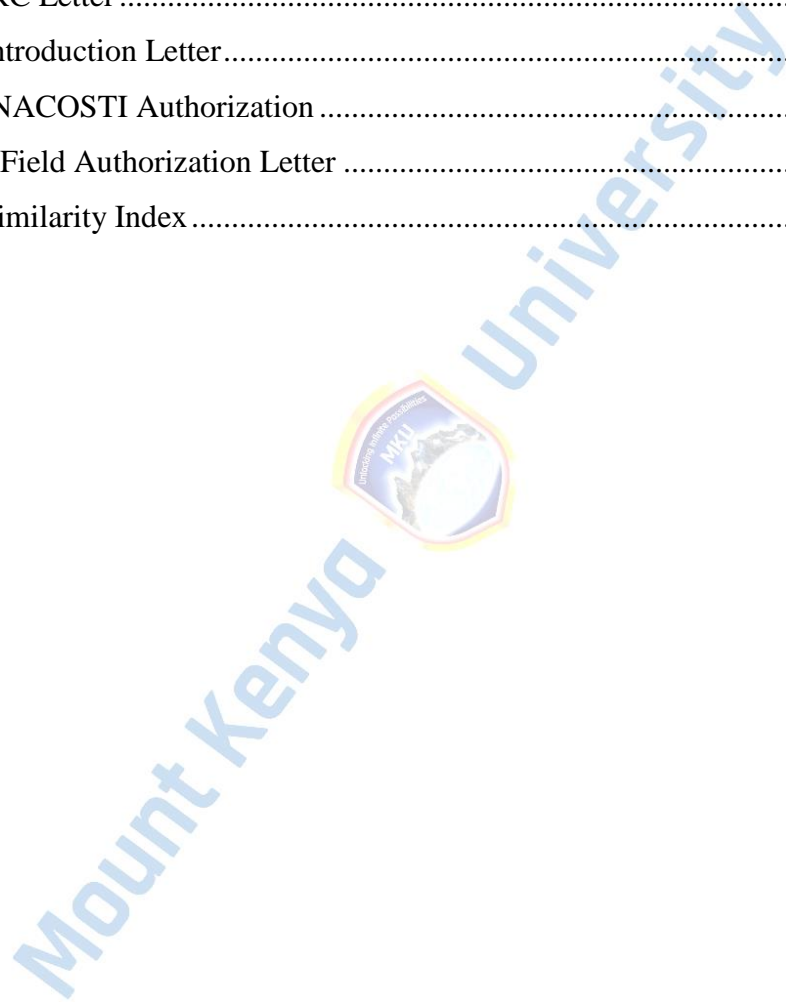
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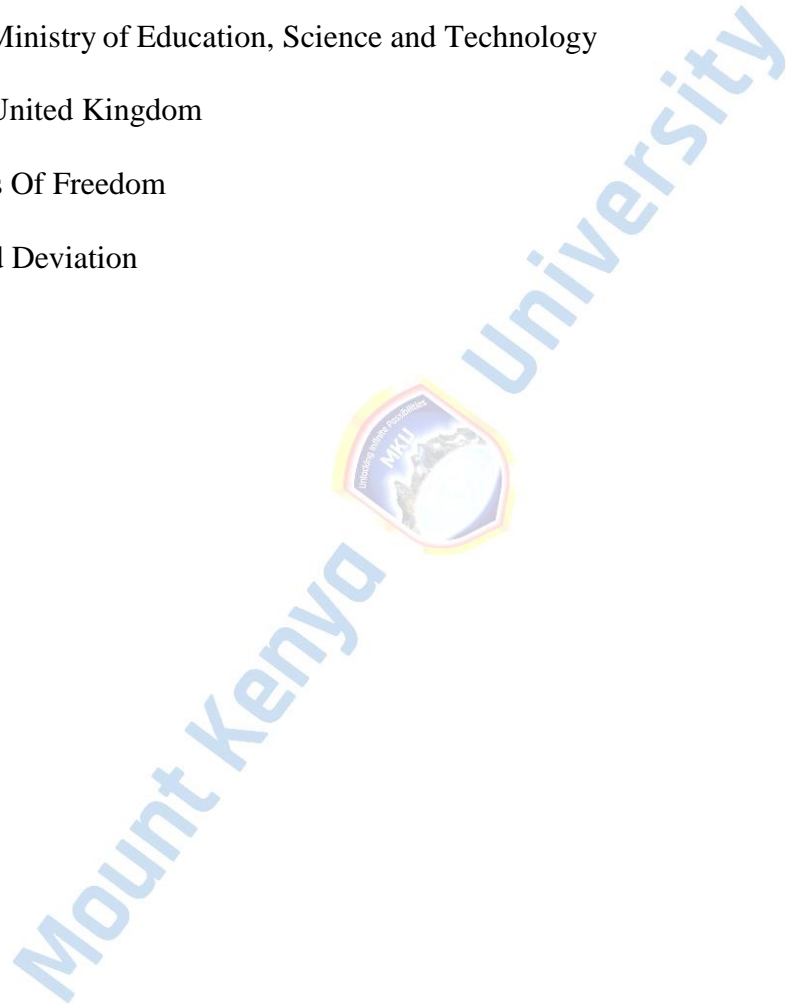
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BOM	Board of Management
KSSC	Kenya Secondary Schools Student Council
KSSHA	Kenya Secondary School Heads' Association
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
UK	United Kingdom
df	Degrees Of Freedom
SD	Standard Deviation



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.2 Background to the Study

Educational institutions play a crucial role in helping students reach their full potential and in laying the groundwork for sustained academic success in the years to come. To guarantee that children acquire the information and skills needed for their personal and social growth, compulsory education laws worldwide demand that students attend school for a certain number of years, usually about eleven. Problems like truancy arise, however, because to the difficulties in enforcing these regulations. Unauthorized absences from school, or truancy, are a behavior indicator of more systemic problems in a person's life. The unsupervised periods associated with truancy can expose students to high-risk activities, potentially derailing their academic and personal development (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2016).

Regular attendance is universally acknowledged as critical to academic success, with significant implications not just for the individual student, but also for their families, schools, and society at large. On an international scale, truancy is recognized as a significant barrier to the success of educational programs. In the United States, for example, truancy is classified among the top ten critical issues in schools, often referred to as a 'gateway crime' due to its correlation with juvenile delinquency and its long-term negative impacts, including a higher likelihood of violent behavior in adulthood (Sahu, 2013).

In Malaysia, truancy is identified as the second most significant disciplinary issue in schools, with contributing factors including family dynamics, school environment, economic challenges, and the students themselves (Sheldon & Epstein, 2016). The school administration plays a crucial role in creating an environment that not only

attracts students but also maintains their interest in attending. In African contexts, such as Swaziland (now Eswatini), truancy among adolescents is a pressing social issue, often linked to risky behaviors like unsafe sexual practices, substance abuse, and smoking, primarily due to the free time students have when they are not in school (Oguna & Thinguri, 2017).

In Nigeria, truancy is a major issue of indiscipline among secondary school students, significantly hindering the educational system's objectives. Factors contributing to truancy are often school-based, including harsh disciplinary practices, lack of parental involvement, and rigid administrative policies (Torubeli & Omemu, 2015). Similarly, in Tanzania, truancy remains a significant obstacle to academic performance, particularly in urban settings.

Effective school administration is heavily dependent on strong leadership. Leadership within schools involves the implementation of policies and decisions that guide activities towards achieving set objectives. The quality of leadership in secondary schools is crucial in shaping teacher motivation, enhancing the school climate, and ultimately improving educational outcomes (Bush, 2015). Research suggests that schools with authoritative principals, who set high expectations and offer substantial support; tend to have better student attendance. Conversely, lenient principals who provide minimal support often face higher rates of absenteeism (Trujillo, 2005). However, overly authoritarian leadership can backfire, leading to resistance from both teachers and students and potentially exacerbating issues such as truancy (Yahya, 2010).

In Kenya, the government introduced Free Secondary Education (FSE) in 2008 to ensure all school-age children have access to quality education. This policy mandates that every parent ensures their child regularly attends school. Despite these efforts,

truancy remains a significant challenge in Kenyan schools. Research conducted by Kanga (2015) in Meru County identified several factors contributing to truancy, including unsupportive school cultures, family dynamics, socioeconomic conditions, and psychological issues. Kanga's findings highlighted the severe consequences of truancy, such as poor academic performance, school dropout rates, and increased poverty levels.

Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on how public day school administrators' management practices affect student absenteeism. This research aims to address that knowledge vacuum by investigating the possible links between public day school truancy rates and the management and leadership styles of school administrators. Contributing to the larger conversation on educational administration and student attendance, this research seeks to provide light on the ways in which school leadership may help or hurt truancy rates..

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Students at public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya, are the target of this research, which aims to deconstruct the many causes of absenteeism in these institutions. Student absenteeism, which has a detrimental effect on both academic performance and student conduct, is the main problem. Principals' use of student leadership, peer counselor motivation, student mentoring programs, and communication channels with students are all aspects of school administration that this study intends to examine in relation to truancy rates. The research aims to provide significant insights into successful therapies by examining the function of various techniques in truancy, whether it's worsening or not..

Truancy, recognized globally for its detrimental effects on students, poses a significant challenge in many educational systems. Ideally, students should progress through their

education without frequent absenteeism; however, in various regions, including Mwingi West Sub County, truancy remains a persistent issue. There has been a concerning 19.7 percent rise in truancy charges in these public secondary schools during 2015, according to the Ministry of Education (MoE). The need of addressing the causes of this problem is shown by this trend..

Despite the critical nature of this problem, there is limited information on how principal management strategies specifically influence truancy in the study location. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by examining the impact of these strategies on student attendance, ultimately contributing to better management practices and reduced truancy in public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The main purpose of this study was to investigate influence of principal school management strategies on student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County.

1.5 Specific Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives :

- i. To establish how Principals' involvement of student leadership influences student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County.
- ii. To determine how Principals' motivation of peer counsellors affects student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County.
- iii. To examine Principals' use of student mentorship programs to manage student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County.

- iv. To determine the ways in which principals' channel of communication to students influences student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County.

1.6 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

- i. How does involvement of principals management strategies influence student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County?
- ii. To what extent does motivation of peer counsellors influence student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County?
- iii. How does mentorship programs influence student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County?
- iv. In what way does principals' channel of communication influence student truancy among public day student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The forthcoming research carried substantial implications for school administrators operating within Mwingi West Sub County. The forthcoming findings provided a platform for school principals and administrators to reassess their managerial approaches in light of the study's anticipated results. This information empowered them to make the necessary adaptations with the goal of diminishing truancy rates in their respective educational institutions. Through the application of strategies informed by the forthcoming research, they endeavored to establish a more supportive and engaging learning environment that fosters consistent student attendance.

Furthermore, the County Education Office in Kitui County is poised to derive significant benefits from the anticipated findings. This research equipped them with an in-depth comprehension of the truancy issues specific to day secondary schools in the

sub-county and the managerial tactics typically deployed by school leaders in this region. This acquired knowledge served as a valuable asset for the county education office, enabling them to formulate precise interventions and support systems to effectively combat truancy

Scholars and researchers interested in similar topics may find these study results to be an invaluable resource. These results may be used as a starting point for future studies that add to the current literature on public secondary school strategic planning and school administration.. This research established a pivotal reference point for future inquiries, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the intricacies surrounding truancy and its management within educational settings.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Some participants may be hesitant to reply or provide accurate answers since the information needed for this survey might be seen as sensitive. To get around this, we made sure the participants knew their information would be kept private and requested that they not sign the study forms..

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

Within the context of public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County, this research sought to examine the impact of principals' tactics for managing the school on student truancy.

Because of the large number of schools that were part of the target demographic and the limitations of the study's time frame, boarding schools and private schools were purposefully left out of the analysis. Accordingly, 36 educational institutions made up the study's intended sample.

Interviews and questionnaires were the two main research tools used to collect the required data in this study. These instruments were used to gather data, which was then

processed to provide important details about the truancy dynamics at the chosen public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County.

1.9 Basic Assumptions of the Study

If all the relevant factors were considered, it is reasonable to believe that the sample fairly represents the population at large. That is to say, in order to draw valid conclusions, it is believed that the sample will be a statistically valid representation of the population at large. It is presumed that the participants in this research were completely comfortable and eager to take part. To ensure the data obtained is reliable, they are required to be open and honest while providing information, without worrying about potential repercussions. The study assumes that all participants who receive questionnaires returned them within the stipulated timeframe. This timely response is crucial to ensure the efficient progress of the research.

The study assumed that individuals selected for interviews were accessible and willing to take part in the interview process. Moreover, it is assumed that they provided honest, accurate, and complete responses during these interviews, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the research subject.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Channels of Communication: All sorts of ways for getting the word out to teachers and students are part of this. Assembly announcements, barazas (community gatherings), class professors, student leaders, and memoranda are all examples of ways that students are expected to communicate..

Involvement of Student Leadership: In a public secondary school, this term describes the method of enlisting the aid of all pupils in the administration of punishment. The safety and atmosphere of the school depend on the students, who are expected to do their part..

Mentorship Programs: There are learning methods built into these programs, and students who are being mentored talk with teachers who have more experience. Because their teachers share their knowledge and experience, these exchanges help students learn important skills and ideals.

Motivation of Peer Counsellors: Principals of secondary schools use this term to describe the steps they take to urge peer counselors to help their fellow students with advice and counseling. Strategies are used to boost the confidence and dedication of peer counselors.

Principals' Management Strategies: As the name suggests, this idea includes all the different things that teachers do to make sure that students follow the rules and laws set by the school, both inside and outside of school.

Student Truancy Is when students are absent from school without their parents' knowledge or permission

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This part has a thorough review of the literature that is grouped based on the study goals. This part talks about research that has been done on how to use student leaders to cut down on student absences at public day secondary schools. It also looks at what happens when the director motivates peer counselors, how mentoring programs help lower the number of kids who skip school, and how contact lines help deal with the problem of kids skipping school. At the end of the chapter, the main points of the literature review are summed up, and research gaps are pointed out so that this study can fill them.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Involvement of Student Leadership on Student Truancy among Public Day Secondary Schools

Student absences from school are caused by a lot of different things happening in both the school and home settings. However, not much research has been done on how student leadership might help deal with the growing problem of students not following the rules.

Given the heightened expectations from various stakeholders in secondary education, principals are increasingly tasked with achieving higher performance standards and academic outcomes. In this context, it becomes imperative to reassess the practices of school principals in managing their institutions and to identify leadership practices, actions, and behaviors that can positively impact the attainment of school objectives. (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2016).

Research conducted in the United Kingdom by Durrant (2017) emphasizes that meaningful student involvement and commitment to education, community, and democracy can be achieved when students actively engage as partners in all aspects of institutional development. It is suggested that elected student representatives should assume a central role in school governance, serving as voices for student opinions and preferences in various governance matters.

Emmanuel and Peter (2005) point out that in countries like the United States of America (USA), Canada, Australia, and the Philippines different titles are used for identifying student representatives. These students are often given significant authority and responsibility in managing school operations.

Kabandize (2016) states the involvement of student leadership in school management encourages active and responsible learning by students. This includes the planning, resource mobilization, and execution of learning programs, facilities, and policies. Student leadership has many facets, including promoting the school's ethos, acting as role models, enforcing rules at school, and holding leadership meetings. Macky and Johnston (2015) found that when student leadership is integrated into school management processes, students are more involved in managing discipline and feel more ownership of the school.

World Bank (2016) has documented violent disturbances of students in secondary schools across Sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria. Alani et al. In 2016, Alani et al. argue that student leadership was important in preventing problems from escalating. The South African Schools Act, which was introduced in South Africa by the Republic of South Africa in 2016, established a democratic and decentralized school management system that allowed for various representatives to be elected, including students, into School Governing Bodies.

Student leadership is embedded deeply in Tanzania's school governance system. Students are encouraged participate in the creation of school rules and regulations. Kenya's government launched a program for children's leadership in 2008. The program aims to equip children with the knowledge, skills and attitude they need to develop positive traits. Students have more power in the schools, and a student leadership programme has been adopted.

These points of view bring to light the primary objective of learner engagement, which is to foster meaningful connections and communication among students in order to encourage significant contributions from the student population to the larger school community. Muriithi (2013) places a strong emphasis on the significance of communication and structure among the student body in order to cultivate an environment that is conducive to community building and to promote student-to-student dialogue. It is the duty of the student leadership to ensure that the students are kept well informed.

According to the findings of a research that was carried out by Obondo (2015), student leaders are not very often active in the administration of schools. The participation of students in the administration of the school is an essential component in lowering the number of occurrences of physical aggression, vandalism, and overall discontentment among the student body. In their recent research, Kosgei et al. The implementation of choices made by student councils has resulted in an increase in the efficiency of the organization in terms of both the curriculum and the administrative procedures. According to the findings of Marais and Meier (2017), student participation in the formulation of school policies and procedures is very uncommon. They emphasize the significance of student participation as a means of cultivating a stronger feeling of ownership and increased adherence to regulations.

Carnie (2015) identified a number of factors that contribute to truancy. These include a lack of support in the school culture, family dynamics and socioeconomic conditions. Truancy was associated with poor academic performance and wasted time in school, as well as increased poverty. This study is designed to show how student involvement in leadership can affect student truancy at public day secondary schools. It addresses a research gap within this field.

2.2.2 Principal's Motivation of Peer Counsellors and Student Truancy among Public Day Secondary Schools

According to Ambayo and Ngumi (2015), in a typical peer counseling session, one participant helps another participant in the group to change. At the individual level, it aims to alter things like behavior, beliefs, and attitudes by modifying people's knowledge. Changes in policies and programs may be achieved at the societal level via peer counseling, which transforms norms and stimulates collective action (Borders & Drury, 2017). Because of all the difficulties that kids face, peer counseling has become essential in many schools, according to Kamore and Tiego (2015). As a result of teacher counselors' increasing workloads, big student populations, and inability to address the unique challenges faced by today's tech-savvy youngsters, student peer counsellors are stepping in to help. The selfless work of student peer counselors is underappreciated and undermotivated, which is a shame (Duckworth, 2015)..

Decades of research have illuminated the challenges faced by school counselors, who are often burdened with responsibilities outside their defined roles and are responsible for a large number of students. Borders and Drury (1992) developed a model for a comprehensive school counseling program that delineated the counselor's role and how they should allocate their time to effectively promote student success. Along these lines, Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2017) voice their displeasure with the fact that

some secondary school peer counselors are unmotivated and lack proper training. According to Awan and Noureen (2017), one's intrinsic, self-directed forces serve to direct, stimulate, and regulate conduct. They argue that there is a significant link between the inspiration of peer counselors and a decline in secondary school student misconduct..

According to Okonkwo (2015), in many nations in Sub-Saharan Africa, students' actions are greatly influenced by the motivation of their peer counselors. According to Duckworth (2015), principals in South Africa may encourage good conduct by focusing on only one or two minor academic infractions at a time. After a pupil has mastered one habit, the focus may move on to another until they are ready for increasingly difficult activities. Furthermore, principals should source high-quality but reasonably priced material prizes for peer counselors, since they may get many awards within a week (Duckworth, 2015). Peer counselors, teacher counselors, and principals should model the desired behaviors for their students to emulate, according to research done in Tanzania by Galvin (2016). These behaviors include showing empathy, asking for forgiveness when wronged, sharing, and being appreciative..

With a focus on the Meru South District of Meru County, Kamore and Tiego (2015) investigated the elements that impede the efficacy of peer counseling programs in Kenyan high schools. The research analyzed and recommended four components—selection, training, supervision, and evaluation—that make up a strong peer counseling program. It turned out that there weren't any official selection criteria for the peer counseling programs, even though most secondary schools in Meru South Sub County had them. In addition, training was inconsistent, program assessment was rare, and peer counselors lacked proper supervision and mentorship. Peer counselors often lacked self-efficacy, faced criticism from peers, and struggled with role identity.

Consequently, student peer counselors had low morale, impacting the effectiveness of peer counseling in addressing student indiscipline. The study employed questionnaires for data collection, including open-ended and closed questions concerning motivation, training, teacher counselor perceptions, challenges hindering efficiency, and peer counselor challenges in high schools. But the main emphasis of the current study—the connection between student absenteeism and the motivation of peer counselors—was not addressed.

The work of peer counselors in a few chosen secondary schools in Kenya is detailed in a study by Gatobu (2017). As an adjunct to classroom instruction, schools should employ certified student counselors. According to Gatobu (2017), one benefit of having peer counselors on staff is the opportunity for casual interaction with coworkers in a variety of settings, including hostels, games, and classes. The fact that they are within a few years of each other's ages, have a lot of interests, are trustworthy, and speak a similar language makes it simpler for them to work out any differences before they escalate.

Research conducted in Ugunja Sub-County, Kenya, Oguna and Thinguri (2017) undertook a study to explore the role of peer counselors in enhancing student discipline. This investigation was prompted by a notable rise in student unrest within Siaya County, even though guidance and counseling services had been in place for a substantial period. Oguna and Thinguri (2017) put forth the Theory that the upsurge in student unrest could be linked to the lack of alternative and effective approaches for managing student discipline, beyond the scope of guidance and counseling. The research revealed that peer counseling emerged as one of the most powerful methods for enhancing discipline among students. As a recommendation, the study proposed that school principals should acknowledge the pivotal role of peer counselors and

motivate them accordingly. Nevertheless, the research failed to evaluate the level of support and incentive provided by principals, other from defining the responsibilities of peer counselors. Also, there was no statistically significant correlation between the amount of peer counseling services and truancy rates among Ugunja Sub-County students. This research aims to fill a gap in knowledge by determining how much time and money will be required to improve peer counseling programs for secondary school students in Mwingi Sub County public schools..

2.2.3 Mentorship Programs on Student Truancy among Public Day Secondary Schools

According to Pita, Ramirez, Joacin, Prentice, and Clarke, a mentorship is an ongoing educational process that places an emphasis on personal connections that are mutually helpful and that place an emphasis on emotional support and accomplishment. During this process, seasoned mentors teach mentees new skills while also encouraging them to reflect on and adjust their own beliefs, attitudes, and ways of doing things. Principals and teachers play a crucial role in mentoring students, according to Thompson (2015). They should help students develop emotional resilience so that they can deal with difficult emotions like anger, frustration, and hopelessness, which can lead to truancy. This is especially important when dealing with issues like home poverty, socioeconomic status discrimination, and academic achievement disparities..

Despite these critical needs, there is limited involvement from the Ministry of Education in Kitui County in implementing mentorship programs for students. Consequently, school principals are urged to take the initiative and organize more mentorship programs at the school level. These programs aim to equip students with positive knowledge and motivation, enabling them to develop good character and a better understanding of themselves, ultimately reducing truancy rates.

Drawing from Germany, Grossman and Tierney (2015) highlight the effectiveness of mentorship programs in the business sector, where experienced superiors guide novices to avoid common pitfalls and temptations. They argue that educational managers and teachers should adopt a similar approach by mentoring and supporting programs that introduce students, starting from their first year, to various life experiences and how to navigate them successfully. With this advice in mind, kids will be better able to ignore social pressure, deal with frustrations in a healthy way, and maintain concentration on their schoolwork.

The authors Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbreton, and Pepper (2016) state that mentoring is a two-way street where mentors and mentees gain knowledge and wisdom from one another. For knowledge transmission to be successful, it is essential that the mentor and mentee establish a trusting connection. Herrera et al. (2016) stress that despite the mentor's role in coaching, teaching, and counseling, they should not exert authority over the mentee. Instead, mentors should allow mentees some autonomy while guiding them toward achieving their academic and professional goals.

Austria offers further insights, with Lewis and Sugai (2016) explaining the multifaceted benefits of mentorship programs for students. These programs help students identify and set career goals and provide guidance on the steps needed to achieve them, ultimately enhancing their career prospects.

In many Sub-Saharan African countries, mentorship programs are prevalent, serving various educational, spiritual, psychosocial, and professional purposes, as highlighted by Malone (2015). However, these programs have not always been effective in building students' confidence, supporting school completion, and facilitating transitions to higher education. Common topics include sexuality, substance misuse, and study skills. Mentoring in Ghana might include developing larger skill sets, such as collaboration,

according to Emmanuel, Kwame, Paul, and Peter (2015)., communication, interpersonal relationships, and leadership, which are crucial for career success but often overlooked in the standard curriculum.

Some schools in Kenya have found that student mentorship is an excellent way to help students achieve their academic and social objectives. Staying enrolled, doing well in classes, and being active in extracurriculars are all academic objectives (Pepe, 2016). Achieving social objectives entails learning important life skills including self-control, respect, and respect for others. They demonstrated resilience in the face of peer pressure and mob psychology, demonstrating the power of mentorship to help pupils develop self-discipline. Research by Wambua Kalai and Okoth (2017, Kenya) sought to determine the primary goal of student mentoring programs and to investigate any connections between mentoring programs implemented by school administrators and truancy rates among their mentees..

In several studies, the idea of participatory governance has been promoted (Kindiki 2009; Tikoko and Kiprop 2011). The goal of this research is to find out how secondary school administrators put mentorship programs for students to use. It zeroes in on Kitui County's Mwingi West Subcounty. According to Ludwig Bartalanffy's Systems Theory, which forms the basis of this research, there is a close relationship between the schools and their surrounding environments. They can influence other systems, but also be influenced by them. The challenge of meeting social and life goals in Mwingi West Sub-County highlights the need for principals to implement mentorship programs.

2.2.4 Channels of Communication on Student Truancy Among Public Day

Secondary Schools

Blum (2015) advocates for a variety of channels of contact between the school administration and the students in order to underline how important it is for good communication to exist between the two groups. The mediums include email, suggestion boxes, notice boards, school assemblies, and class meetings. Verbal communication, in which one must hear the message in order to comprehend it; written communication, in which one must read in order to comprehend it; and nonverbal communication, in which one must infer meaning by watching another person. Arnold (2015) suggests that memoranda and letters are effective means to communicate without requiring immediate engagement with the recipient.

Blum (2015) has out an inquiry into secondary schools in order to fulfill the requirements of the principles outlined in this study. According to the findings of the research, notes, announcements, and memoranda are all helpful tools for management. Blum found that schools that effectively used these channels and methods of communication witnessed a rise in their managerial effectiveness. Macky and Johnson (2005) conducted study that was quite comparable to this one in Austria. They brought attention to the significance of a variety of textual communication tools, including letters, papers, and electronic messaging, among others. The research emphasized the use of official and informal techniques to convey school decisions by secondary school administrators. Some examples of informal methods include the grapevine and informal rumor mills.

According to Toto (2016), one issue to take into consideration while selecting a communication strategy is the richness of the available media. The capacity of a medium to transmit meaning, clear up confusion, and transport a lot of information at once are some of the criteria that may be used to evaluate a medium's richness. It is

widely accepted that oral communication is richer than written communication due to the fact that it may transmit more information and gives opportunity to explain any message misunderstandings. According to Torubell and Omemu (2005), principals have a responsibility to choose a communication channel that is compatible with the message, the audience, and the demands for communication.

According to Obu (2015), communication is a critical component in the process of developing attitudes and perceptions of communities, organizations, and governments. It also has an effect on the manner in which individuals see themselves. It is absolutely necessary for the administration of educational programs and the management of human resources in academic institutions. When it comes to the regulation of conduct among teaching and support personnel, communication is very necessary.

A research was conducted by Katua Mulwa and Mungai to determine the impact that principals in Kisasi Sub-County secondary public schools had when they interact with their pupils via the use of assemblies. According to the findings of the survey, the majority of school administrators hold at least two school assemblies per week to address a variety of topics, including rule infractions in school, absenteeism, bad test results, and respect for teachers and student council members. The research, on the other hand, concentrated on communication coming just from the principal. On the other hand, the present research investigated communication through a variety of methods, including two-way communication, which enables students to voice their complaints and bargain for improved services.

Kiprop (2015) did research on the efficacy of communication in addressing the issue of student absenteeism in secondary schools in Kenya, with a particular emphasis on the Gilgil division. The rising number of allegations of student disobedience, including the destruction of school property, served as the impetus for the investigation. The major

approach that was employed in this research was the collecting of quantitative data via the use of questionnaires. According to the study, a lack of confidence in the school administration, disagreements, chaos, and misunderstandings were all caused by ineffective communication channels within the school community. Concerns about student discipline have prompted calls for more collaborative school leadership, more open lines of communication, and the addition of support services like guidance and counseling. Although this study primarily focuses on the Mwingi West subcounty, it is worth mentioning that the research was conducted in Gilgil as well.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Astin and Astin's (2015) Assertive Discipline Theory and Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. The former explains how people acquire and modify their beliefs, perspectives, and behaviors through observing, displaying, and communicating with their present situation and others. The latter also explains how people acquire and modify their perspectives and values. In 1977, Bandura.

2.3.1 Assertive Discipline Theory

The foundation of our current study draws inspiration from the Assertive Discipline Model (ADM), as articulated by Astin & Astin (2015). Astin & Astin's model is deeply entrenched in a student development theory that places paramount importance on the concept of student involvement, a critical factor in shaping academic outcomes (Astin & Astin, 2015). This model holds significant implications for the management of student truancy and its subsequent impact on educational achievement, mediated through the lens of student engagement.

According to the Assertive Discipline Model (Astin & Astin, 2015), student involvement encompasses both physical and psychological commitment that students dedicate to their academic journey. The level of student involvement becomes a pivotal aspect in understanding and addressing student truancy (Astin & Astin, 2015). Highly involved students are characterized by their extended presence at school, active participation in student groups, and frequent interactions with their peers. This active engagement in academic and extracurricular activities contributes to a positive educational environment.

Conversely, uninvolved students, as described by the ADM, exhibit tendencies to neglect their studies, spend minimal time on school premises, avoid participation in extracurricular activities, and have infrequent interactions with their peers (Astin & Astin, 2015). The lack of involvement may act as a precursor to truancy issues, highlighting the interconnectedness between student engagement and attendance patterns.

By adopting the lens of the Assertive Discipline Model, our study seeks to explore how principals' school management strategies align with or deviate from the principles of student involvement as outlined by Astin & Astin (2015). School administrators in Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya may benefit from this theoretical framework since it lays out a thorough explanation of the complex connection between student participation, truancy, and academic success..

It can take many forms, from broad involvement, like the overall student experience, to more detailed, as in preparing for an examination. It is important to note that the concept of involvement does not fit all. Students may display varying degrees of engagement with various objects. A student may also show different levels of involvement in various items at different times.

Quantitatively, it can be measured by factors such as the number of hours spent studying. It can be quantified by the hours of study. You can assess it qualitatively as well by looking at the student's engagement and understanding of their work. The extent to which students develop and learn is directly proportional with the quality and quantity in their involvement in educational programmes. The success or failure of educational policies and processes determines the extent to which student engagement may be enhanced. The notion highlights the significance of students being actively involved and self-aware throughout their educational journey. It is relevant to the present study because education institutions have rules and regulations, as well as a particular ethos, which students are expected to adhere. Students can be made compliant if the principals actively involve them in creating rules and consequences. Teachers and principals can influence the behavior of students and their engagement through practices such as peer counseling, mentoring programs, and open doors.

2.3.2 Social Learning Theory,

Albert Bandura developed a thorough framework in psychology known as Social Learning Theory in 1977. It describes how people learn and change their behaviors, attitudes, and values by observing others, mimicking their actions, and interacting with their surroundings (Bandura, 1977). This theory posits that learning is not limited to direct experiences but is significantly influenced by observing the actions of others and the consequences that ensue (Bandura, 1977). This perspective broadens the scope of learning beyond personal encounters, emphasizing the role of social observation and the impact of vicarious experiences on the learning process.

According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, people pick up new habits, perspectives, and ways of thinking only by seeing how other people act and the results of that behavior (Bandura, 1977). The idea stresses the two-way street that is the link

between people and their social environments, drawing attention to the significance of social influences and role models in the educational process. Consequently, the theory offers a useful perspective from which to analyze how social dynamics impact student absenteeism in the classroom..

The study on the influence of principals' school management strategies on student truancy, Social Learning Theory becomes a pertinent theoretical framework. Principals, as influential figures within the school environment, serve as models whose behaviors and management strategies are observed by students. The consequences of these strategies, whether in the form of disciplinary actions or positive reinforcement, are likely to influence students' attitudes towards attendance and engagement. By integrating Social Learning Theory into our study, we aim to explore how principals' actions and interactions contribute to the observed patterns of student truancy within the schools of Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya.

At the center of Social Learning Theory is observational learning, which includes obtaining new ways of behaving or data by noticing and handling the activities and results of others (Bandura, 1977). This cycle can happen through different mediums, including direct perception, media openness, or computerized stages.

In the space of wellbeing advancement, Social Learning Theory illuminates' mediations pointed toward changing wellbeing related ways of behaving. For example, missions to lessen smoking or advance smart dieting frequently utilize displaying by exhibiting people who have effectively stopped smoking or embraced nutritious weight control plans. By noticing these models, people might be more disposed to stick to this same pattern, accepting that they can accomplish comparable results. Moreover, intercessions might consolidate support techniques, for example, motivators or awards to urge people to embrace and keep up with solid ways of behaving. Social Learning

Theory directs the plan of these projects to boost their effect on wellbeing conduct change.

Criminal science keeps on drawing on Friendly Learning Theory to grasp the securing of criminal ways of behaving and devise systems for wrongdoing avoidance and guilty party restoration (Akers and Merchants, 2004). In remedial settings, programs in light of this Theory expect to re-mingle guilty parties by giving favorable to social models and building up prosocial ways of behaving. By presenting people to positive good examples and giving open doors to expertise advancement, these projects try to diminish recidivism rates and advance fruitful reintegration into society.

People are more prone to mimic the actions of others they see modeled, according to Bandura (1977), especially if the modeled conduct is seen as competent, comparable, or important. Paying close attention to the model's conduct, remembering what you see, doing like, and having the drive to do so are all part of the modeling process.

In his Social Learning Theory, Bandura (1977) combines the concepts of reinforcement and punishment. The human tendency to seek out and participate in behaviors that bring about positive reinforcement and to shun those that bring about negative punishment is well-documented. When it comes to building habits, this is a crucial step. The theory is heavily dependent on the idea of self-efficacy. A person's self-efficacy may be described as their confidence in their ability to successfully complete a certain task or activity (Bandura, 1977).

A high sense of self-efficacy is linked to improved levels of desire, effort, and persistence when it comes to acquiring new habits and skills.

Bandura (1977) proposes the idea of reciprocal determinism, which suggests that behavior, environment, and personal characteristics are always interacting with one

another and influencing one another. The dynamic character of human conduct is brought out by the bidirectional nature of this interaction.

As it relates to the field of education, this theory emphasizes the significance of role modeling as well as the development of a constructive and interesting educational setting (Pajares, 1996). Educators have the ability to improve their students' learning experiences by fostering a sense of self-efficacy and giving pupils with positive examples to emulate.

The development of phobias, violent behaviors, and prosocial behaviors have all been examined through the lens of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). It offers insightful understanding into the ways in which behaviors may be learned, maintained, and altered.

According to Akers and Sellers (2004), the theory is used in the study of criminology to examine how criminal behaviors may be taught and reinforced via social interactions and exposure to deviant models. In this context, "criminal behaviors" refers to any activity that is considered to be illegal. This has repercussions for programs that aim to rehabilitate criminals and prevent crime.

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing human behavior and learning processes. Bandura was the first researcher to establish this theory. Its focus on observation, modeling, self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism, among other things, gives useful insights into the process by which people learn and adjust habits. This theory continues to have an impact in a variety of fields, and it helps to guide the development of effective treatments and tactics.

2.4 Conceptual framework of the research study.

A conceptual framework in a research study is a diagrammatic representation that illustrates the link between the independent and dependent variables..



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

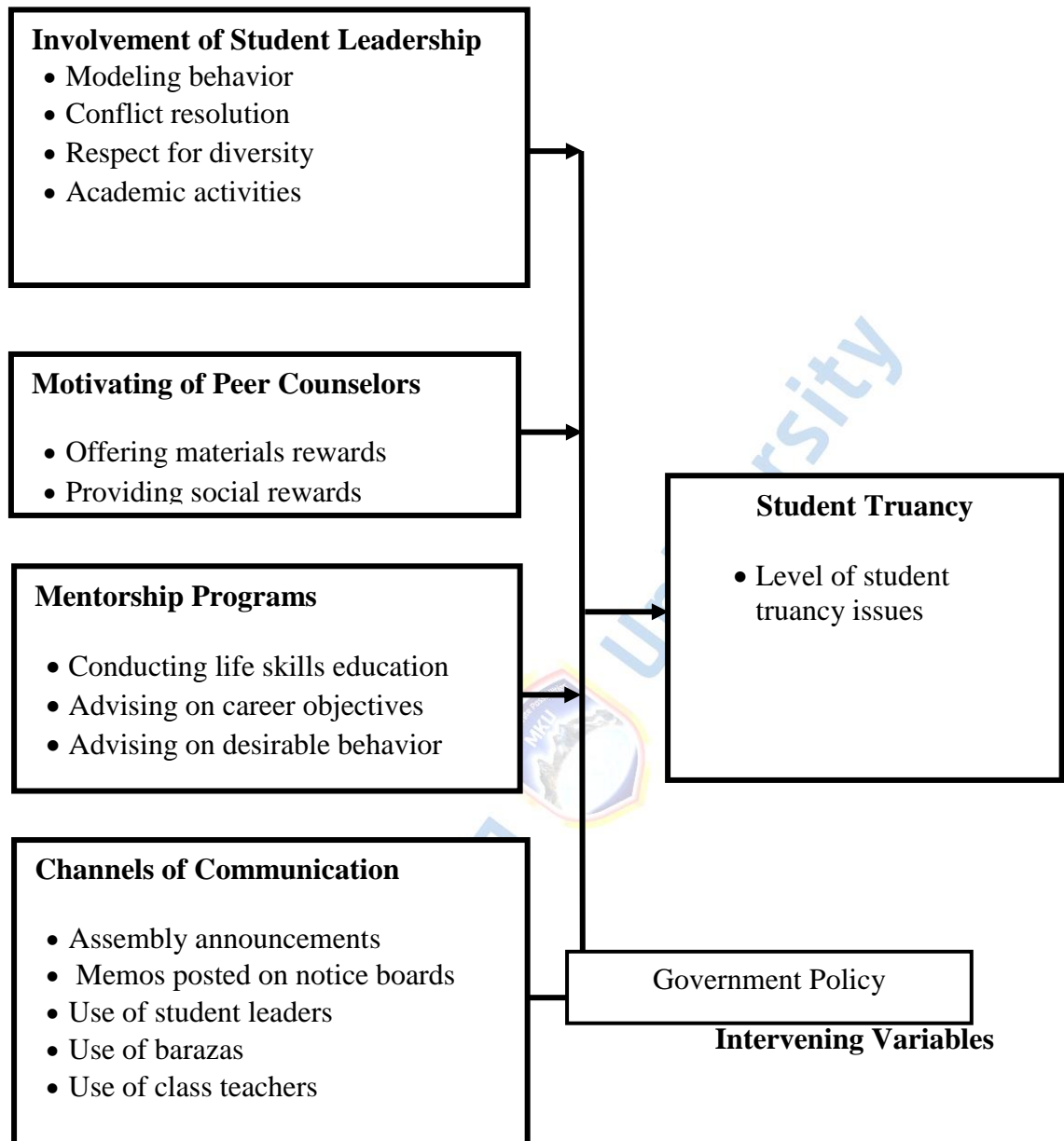


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (August 2023)

The link between the dependent variable, student truancy, and the independent variable, principal school management tactics, is shown in Figure 1. Within this study approach, principal school management practices are seen as independent variables that have the potential to favorably or adversely impact the incidence of student absenteeism. When principals employ management strategies that involve more active student participation

and engagement, it is expected that students developed a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities, leading to more mature and responsible behavior. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of negative actions such as truancy.

The involvement of students in the governance of their school creates a sense of ownership and responsibility among them. It enhances their competence in student governance matters and promotes a more orderly and effective channel of communication within the school community. When students are actively engaged in decision-making processes and their voices are heard, it contributes to a more cohesive and tranquil school environment.

In essence, Figure 1 encapsulates the Theory that principal school management strategies play a pivotal role in shaping students' behavior and, consequently, their propensity towards truancy. The nature of these strategies, whether participative or authoritarian, can significantly impact the level of student engagement and the overall school atmosphere.

The dependent variable, being level of student truancy was measured through reported data from the registration roll call data of the schools' administrations.

2.5 Summary of the Literature Review and Knowledge Gaps.

The literature review in this study has provided valuable insights into the factors that can affect student truancy among public day secondary schools. Several key themes have emerged from the literature, highlighting the significance of addressing truancy issues to ensure that students complete their secondary education successfully.

The literature focuses on the detrimental effects of student truancy, such as exposure to unsupervised and risky behavior, and the possibility that unhealthy behaviours can be initiated and maintained. In order to address these problems, effective school leadership has been emphasized. This includes a focus on students' involvement in decision

making. It has been examined the role of student involvement in school decision-making and how it impacts on organizational efficiency. It is clear that student councils are able to improve school management. However, literature indicates that they may have a limited impact in reducing student absenteeism.

Peer counseling is important and peer counselors are motivated to change students' behavior. Peer counselors can teach desirable behaviors like empathy, asking for forgiveness, sharing and appreciation by modeling them. The literature indicates that mentoring programs are valuable in enhancing career prospects for students, however they may not adequately address confidence building and the transition from high school to college. It is important to have effective communication with students and school administrators. Ineffective communication can cause chaos and confusion within the school.

The literature review has highlighted a research gap concerning the effectiveness of principals' management strategies in addressing student truancy. By examining the effects of principals' management techniques on student absenteeism, particularly in Mwingi West Sub County, Kenya, this research seeks to close this gap.. The review of existing literature has provided a thorough comprehension of the multitude of factors that contribute to student truancy and serves as the foundation for the current study's emphasis on the significance of principals' management strategies in mitigating this problem.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

An explanation of the research design used to carry out the study is given in this section, together with details on the selected research location, the demographic group being studied, and the techniques for sample selection and sample size calculation.. Furthermore, it elucidates the research tools utilized for data collection, addressing the pretesting procedure to ensure validity and reliability. Lastly, the chapter outlined the planned data analysis methods and outlines the logistical and ethical principles guiding the study's implementation.

3.2 Research Design

It used a detailed explanation and a descriptive research methodology on the variables to provide a thorough analysis of the phenomena under investigation. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), the design provides the researcher with the chance to examine and characterize the current phenomenon of interest.

According to Creswell (2014), research design includes the particular steps involved in conducting the study, such as data collecting, data processing, and writing the research report. The main goal of research design is to organize the data such that each of the project's key components is presented in detail. A descriptive research approach was used for this investigation. According to Sekaran (2013), the goal of a descriptive design is to provide an account of the existing state of affairs. Descriptive studies extend beyond mere fact-finding, often yielding valuable insights into fundamental principles and solutions to significant problems.

Sekaran (2015) further elucidates that the descriptive research design involves gathering information through interviews or the administration of questionnaires to a

selected group of individuals. This approach ensures that the findings of the research are well-defined and conclusive, as it facilitates the researcher in soliciting new perspectives from respondents and gaining deeper insights into the issues being studied. This particular design was chosen because it enabled the researcher to collect data for a comprehensive assessment of existing managerial strategies with the aim of identifying opportunities for improvement.

3.3 Location of the Study

The research was conducted within the geographical area known as Mwingi West Sub-County, which is situated in Kitui County. As Descombe (2012) explains, a research site is the specific location chosen by the researcher to investigate ideas that have arisen from the research data, particularly in areas where control issues are recognized to be significant. In this case, the chosen research site is Mwingi West Sub-County, which falls within the broader administrative region of Kitui County.

With a population estimated at 124 736, Mwingi West Sub-County is 577,5 square kilometers in size. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics estimates that this corresponds to a population density of 216 persons per square kilometer. Because it is pertinent to the study's topic and has a high frequency of control-related issues, this specific sub-county was selected as the research location. The researcher chose this location because there is no literature or published studies on principal school management strategies that affect students' truancy within this area.

3.4 Population of the Study

According to Bryman & Bell (2012), a "population" is a collection of people or components that have at least one thing in common, or it might be a set of humans, things, or objects that have been measured. The target demographic for this research consists of 360 student leaders, 180 instructors, and 36 principals. 360 student leaders

are also included in this project. The 36 secondary schools in Kitui County's Mwingi West Sub-County chose these people..

Sampled populations are a subset of the population targeted. Sample included 17 principals, 54 class teachers and 108 student leaders. This study includes 17 principals and 54 teachers in class, as well as 108 student leader. These individuals were chosen for their invaluable insights into school management and leadership strategies.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

Out of the 36 schools that were available, a proportional stratified selection procedure was used to choose the schools for the study. This approach ensures that there is no bias in the representation of participants based on geographical regions or gender. Subsequently, within the selected schools, proportionate stratified sampling was used to choose 108 student leaders from the target of 360 student leaders. These student leaders encompassed various roles such as school captains, class monitors, compound prefects, laboratory prefects, and dining prefects, selected from different schools that the researcher visited.

A proportionate stratified method was employed to select 54 class teachers from the pool of 180 teachers. As for the 17 principals, they were automatically included in the study as they come from the previously sampled schools. The rationale for using proportionate stratified sampling is to provide each potential respondent with an equal opportunity to participate in the study, thereby eliminating any potential biases that might arise from the researcher's selection process. This approach ensures fairness and impartiality in participant selection.

3.5.2 Sampling Size

Yamane (1967) provides the following formula for calculation of sample size.

Where n = is the sample size.

N = is the population size.

e = is the level of precision or sampling error (0.05)

$$n = N/1+N (e)^2$$

$$n = 576/1+576 (0.05)^2$$

$$=179$$

Table 1: Sampling Framework

Category	Population Size	Sample Size	Percentage
Principals	36	17	47
Class Teachers	180	54	30
Student Council	360	108	30
Total	576	179	

Source: Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County (2023)

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

According to Maxwell (2012), the procedure of data collection is defined as a methodical and planned approach to the gathering and measurement of information about certain variables. The researchers are able to answer important study questions and conduct thorough evaluations of the outcomes thanks to this technique of data collecting. In order to gather data for this research, the instruments that were employed is going to be questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussions.

A questionnaire is a tool used to gather data that consists of a list of inquiries and instructions for respondents to reply to.. The researcher decided to utilize questionnaires because they enable participants to provide comments in an individual capacity. In order to guarantee that all relevant information is gathered, we came up with two different sets of questions. Since they are the ones in charge of running the schools on a daily basis, the first set of questions was created with them in mind. The

survey questions were created with the study's objectives in mind to ensure that the information gathered from them directly contributes to the research goals..

Interview guides were utilized for class teachers and student leaders. These interview guides were also carefully structured in accordance with the study's objectives. A well-rounded approach to data collecting is made possible by the use of both questionnaires and interview guides, which guarantees that the study collects pertinent insights from a range of important stakeholders in the educational setting. A document analysis guide was also used in this research since the information gathered from the questionnaires completed by the student leaders and class instructors was also supported by records like discipline books and class registers..

3.7 A Pilot Study

Evaluating the appropriateness and efficacy of the research instruments is the main objective of this investigation. Ten percent of the sample, or 17 schools from the Mwingi West sub-county, which were not included in the initial research sample, were included in the analysis. Throughout the pilot project, the researcher used interviews and questionnaires to gather data at these schools. The primary goal of this endeavor is to detect any possible shortcomings or problems with the research tools. It acts as a means to guarantee that the instruments are clear, free from ambiguity, and aligned with the study's objectives. The responses gathered during the pilot study was invaluable in refining the research instruments. If any questions are found to be unclear or confusing to the respondents, adjustments can be made to enhance the clarity and ensure that the questions align with the intended research objectives. Ultimately, the pilot study helps in fine-tuning the research tools to ensure they are of high quality and capable of yielding accurate and reliable data in the main study.

3.7.1 Validity of Instruments

By ensuring that the research instruments' questions sufficiently addressed each of the study's goals, content validity was guaranteed.. Additionally, content validity was established through the assessment and expert judgment of the instruments by supervisors in the field of education. Any feedback and suggestions provided by these supervisors were incorporated into the final version of the instruments.

3.7.2 Reliability

Creswell (2014) defines reliability as the consistency of results or data obtained from a research tool when it is tested repeatedly. The Test Re-test Technique was used in this study. This technique involves administering the exact same test at different times to the same respondents. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Formula is used to calculate the reliability index. The higher the positive correlation coefficient (closer to 1 such as 0.7, or 0.80), the greater is the validity and reliability of a research instrument.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Mount Kenya University provided an introductory letter to the researcher. This letter is a requirement for obtaining a permit from NACOSTI. The researcher then approached all participants and principals to ask for their permission to take part in the study.

Armed with both the introductory letter and the necessary permit, the researcher then presented these documents to the principals and all other participants. Once the required permissions are granted, the researcher proceeded to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents. To ensure that respondents have an adequate amount of time to complete the questionnaires, they were given a one-week period.

In order to increase response rates, a reminder email was sent at the end of the second day to prompt respondents to fill out the forms if they haven't already done so. Once the

questionnaires have been completed, they were collected, and each questionnaire was assigned a sequential number for identification purposes.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Sekaran (2013) defines data analysis as the process of organizing and evaluating collected information to allow for an effective communication of findings. After all the data have been collected, this step is crucial for understanding them. The type of data to be analyzed depended on its nature. Before the responses are processed, completed questionnaires undergo a review to ensure consistency and completeness. The data then was coded to make computer formatting easier. Data cleaning, coding and entry was performed using SPSS Version 21.0.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Below are the logistics

3.10.1 Logistical Considerations

The researcher needed to obtain permissions from the data collection site. The permissions required include the following: securing funding from the NACOSTI, receiving authorization from Mwingi West Sub County, getting authorization from Kitui County Commissioner, and securing authorization from Kitui County Director of Education.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

As per Siegel (2014), ethics encompasses the norms that govern human behavior and profoundly impact human well-being. Research ethics, in essence, consists of a set of principles that serve as guidelines for researchers when conducting ethical studies. In this study, several ethical considerations were adhered to, The researcher asked for permission from the Mwingi West Sub-County in Kitui County to ensure compliance

with ethical standards. Selected respondents received a formal letter of consent to help build their confidence and trust in the study.

In order to protect respondents' confidentiality, names are not disclosed on the questionnaires. To make sure the respondents are willing to engage in the study, the investigator asked for their informed permission. They were made aware of the goal and possible advantages of the research prior to making a choice.

This is a completely volunteer research project. By doing this, it is ensured that participation is voluntary. Participants' and responders' privacy was safeguarded by stringent confidentiality guidelines. Researchers abstained from plagiarism and other study misconduct, according to strict ethical guidelines. These ethical guidelines and procedures served as the researcher's guidance in carrying out a study that safeguards and advances the rights and welfare of all parties concerned.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The research results and comments based on the study's goals are presented in this chapter. Surveys and interviews are among the study tools used to gather data, which is then evaluated to provide insights into how principals' leadership styles affect student absenteeism in public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County. The chapter specifically discusses four main goals: student leadership participation, peer counselor motivation, student mentoring program execution, and principals' communication channels' usefulness..

4.2 Response Rate

With 157 out of the 179 given questionnaires being filled out and returned, the research had an 87.71% response rate. The high response rate suggests that the intended respondents were highly engaged and participated, which guarantees that the results are representative of the sample population..

4.3 Demographic Study

This section highlights the age, gender and highest level of education.

4.3.1 Gender

Table 2 presents the gender distribution of the respondents in the study. Out of the 157 participants, 70 (44.6%) were male, while 87 (55.4%) were female. This indicates a higher participation rate among female respondents compared to their male counterparts.

Table 2: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	70	44.6	44.6	44.6
	Female	87	55.4	55.4	100.0

Total	157	100.0	100.0
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4.3.2 Age

Table 3 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents. The majority of participants, 94 (59.9%), were aged 21 years and below, making this the largest age group in the study. Additionally, 22 (14.0%) fell within the 21-30 years age bracket, followed by 30 (19.1%) in the 31-40 years category, and 11 (7.0%) in the 41-50 years group.

Table 3: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 21 years and bellow	94	59.9	59.9	59.9
21 - 30 years	22	14.0	14.0	73.9
31 - 40 Years	30	19.1	19.1	93.0
41 - 50 years	11	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	157	100.0	100.0	

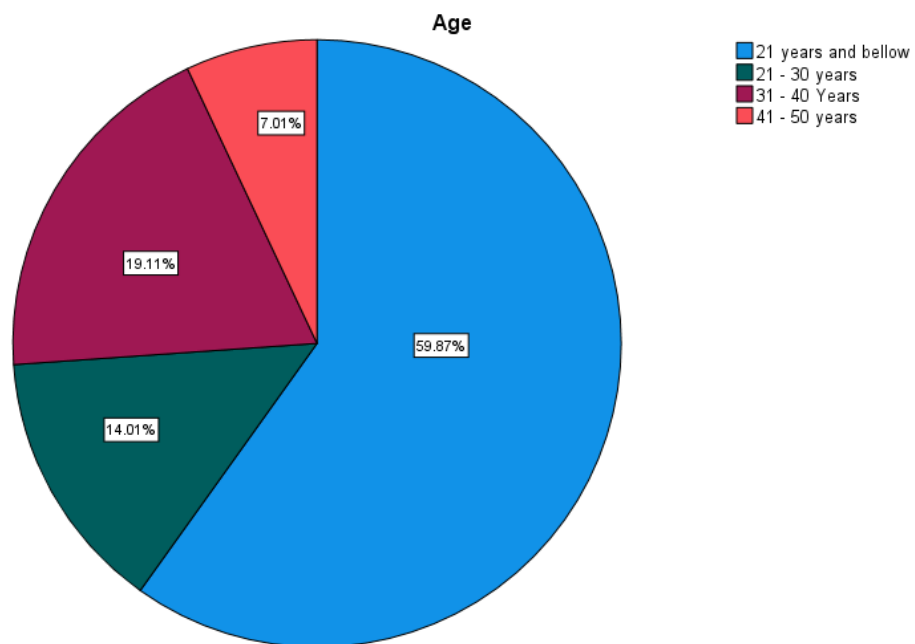


Figure 2: Age

4.3.3 highest level of education

The respondents' greatest degree of education is shown in Table 4. 65 (41.4%) of the biggest group had obtained a Diploma, followed by 43 (27.4%) with a Certificate. Furthermore, of the responders, 42 (26.8%) had earned an undergraduate degree and 7 (4.5%) had finished graduate work. The educational distribution of the participants indicates a varied variety of academic credentials, with the majority of respondents holding either a diploma or certificate..

Table 4: highest level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Certificate level	43	27.4	27.4	27.4
	Diploma	65	41.4	41.4	68.8
	Undergraduate Level	42	26.8	26.8	95.5
	Postgraduate	7	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	157	100.0	100.0	

4.3.4 work experience

Table 5 presents the work experience of the respondents. The largest group, 57 (36.3%), had 6-10 years of experience, followed by 40 (25.5%) with 1-5 years. Additionally, 39 (24.8%) had been working for 11-15 years, and 18 (11.5%) had 16-20 years of experience. Three people, or 1.9% of the total, have been in the workforce for more than 20 years. Based on the data, it seems that the bulk of respondents are in the middle of their careers, with 6–15 years of experience being the sweet spot..

Table 5: work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 - 5 years	40	25.5	25.5	25.5
	6 - 10 years	57	36.3	36.3	61.8
	11 - 15 years	39	24.8	24.8	86.6
	16 - 20 years	18	11.5	11.5	98.1
	above 20 years	3	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	157	100.0	100.0	



Figure 3: work experience

4.4 Involvement of Student Leadership

The study sought to establish how principals' involvement of student leadership influences student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County. The findings revealed that principals moderately involve student leaders in modeling positive behavior, as indicated by a mean score of 3.5860, reflecting a SD of 1.60546, suggesting some variability in responses. However, regular participation in student leadership activities was less frequent, with a mean of 2.9299 and a SD of 1.39649, indicating moderate variation in the extent of engagement. There was a moderate belief among principals that student leadership activities positively impact school discipline, reflected in a mean score of 2.7771 with a SD of 1.38026, again pointing to varying perceptions. The influence of student leaders in promoting a positive school environment was also moderate, with a mean of 2.6115 and a SD of 1.25907, indicating that while leadership involvement exists, its impact on truancy reduction could be strengthened. Furthermore, the study revealed that student

leadership involvement had a moderate effect on regular attendance, with a mean of 2.5987 and a SD of 1.31977. Student leaders were found to be moderately effective in addressing truancy-related concerns, with a mean of 2.7070 and a SD of 1.56591. These findings suggest that increasing the involvement and empowerment of student leaders could have a more significant impact on managing student truancy, though the variability in responses indicates differing practices across schools.

Table 6: Involvement of Student Leadership

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I involve student leaders in modeling behavior.	157	1.00	5.00	3.5860	1.60546
We regularly participate in student leadership activities.	157	1.00	5.00	2.9299	1.39649
We believe that student leadership activities positively impact school discipline.	157	1.00	5.00	2.7771	1.38026
Student leaders have significant influence in promoting a positive school environment at the school.	157	1.00	5.00	2.6115	1.25907
We are more likely to attend school regularly due to our involvement in student leadership activities.	157	1.00	5.00	2.5987	1.31977
Student leaders effectively address student concerns and grievances related to truancy at the school.	157	1.00	5.00	2.7070	1.56591

4.5 motivation of peer counsellors

The study sought to determine how principals' motivation of peer counsellors affects student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County. The study found out that principals recognize the work done by peer counsellors, with a relatively high mean score of 3.8344, reflecting a SD of 1.47998, suggesting consistent recognition practices during school gatherings. The study found out that the motivation of peer counsellors through material rewards was also prevalent, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.7452 and a SD of 1.51448, indicating moderate variability in the use of rewards.

The study found out that the principal's use of written communication (e.g., letters, notices) to convey messages to students showed a mean of 3.5350, with a SD of 1.65455, highlighting moderate variability in this approach. The study found out that the use of digital communication channels (e.g., emails, social media) to interact with students was less frequent, with a mean of 3.1911 and a higher SD of 1.72884, suggesting significant differences in the use of such platforms across schools. The study found out that the communication style of principals influenced students' understanding of school rules and policies, as reflected in a mean of 3.5350 and a SD of 1.63898. The study also found out that the principal's ability to address student concerns through various communication channels had a mean score of 3.7197 and a SD of 1.45371. These findings suggest that motivating peer counsellors and using effective communication strategies can play an important role in managing student truancy. Nonetheless, there is room for enhancing the consistency of these practices across schools to better address truancy challenges.

Table 7: motivation of peer counsellors

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
During school events, I make sure to acknowledge the efforts of student peer counselors by	157	1.00	5.00	3.8344	1.47998

applauding them.					
I provide real rewards to student peer counselors in order to inspire them.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7452	1.51448
The principal effectively uses written communication (e.g., letters, notices) to convey messages to students.	157	1.00	5.00	3.5350	1.65455
The principal frequently uses digital communication channels (e.g., emails, social media) to interact with students.	157	1.00	5.00	3.1911	1.72884
The principal's communication style influences students' understanding of school rules and policies.	157	1.00	5.00	3.5350	1.63898
The principal addresses student concerns and issues well through various communication channels.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7197	1.45371
Valid N (listwise)	157				

4.6 student mentorship programs

The study sought to examine how principals' use of student mentorship programs manages student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County. The study found out that students are mentored on the importance of avoiding absenteeism, as reflected by a mean score of 3.5541 and a SD of 1.57462, indicating a moderate level of mentorship on this issue. The study found out that mentoring students on healthy living practices had a lower mean score of 3.0318 and a SD of 1.31276, suggesting that this aspect of mentorship is less emphasized. The study found out that

principals ensure the facilitation of mentors or resource persons from outside the school, with a relatively high mean score of 3.9745 and a SD of 1.18186, indicating strong engagement with external mentors. The study found out that the encouragement of class teachers and prefects to mentor students at the class level on good discipline had a lower mean score of 2.3185 and a SD of 1.25084, highlighting a need for improvement in this area.

The study also found out that students are often mentored during school assemblies on maintaining good discipline, with a mean score of 3.7516 and a SD of 1.34286, suggesting that assemblies are a key platform for mentoring students on discipline. These findings suggest that while certain aspects of student mentorship programs, such as engaging external mentors, are well implemented, there is room for improvement in areas like class-level mentorship to better manage student truancy.

Table 8: student mentorship programs

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students are mentored on the importance of avoiding absenteeism	157	1.00	5.00	3.5541	1.57462
Students are mentored on healthy living practices	157	1.00	5.00	3.0318	1.31276
I make sure that individuals outside sources our school may serve as mentors or resource people.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9745	1.18186
Class prefects and teachers should serve as role models for pupils in maintaining order in the classroom.	157	1.00	5.00	2.3185	1.25084
Students are often mentored during school assemblies on how to maintain good discipline.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7516	1.34286
Valid N (listwise)	157				

4.7 Channel of Communication to Students

The study sought to determine the ways in which principals' channels of communication to students influence student truancy among public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County. The study found out that principals frequently communicate about student issues during school assemblies, as indicated by a mean score of 3.7771 and a SD of 1.49185, suggesting a significant reliance on assemblies for addressing student matters. The study found out that communication through memos and circulars posted on notice boards is also common, with a mean score of 3.9108 and a SD of 1.46924, indicating a slightly higher level of use for official communication.

The study found out that communication through barazas, where students are encouraged to freely express their views, had a mean score of 3.7962 and a SD of 1.58413, reflecting a moderate use of more open forums for student engagement. The study found out that communication through student leaders is also employed often, with a mean of 3.8217 and a SD of 1.52123, indicating that student leaders play a notable role in the communication process. The study found out that principals frequently communicate through class teachers, as shown by a mean score of 3.9172 and a SD of 1.39579, suggesting a high level of trust in class teachers as intermediaries in communication. The study found out that the use of suggestion boxes to encourage student feedback had a mean score of 3.9618 and a SD of 1.43172, indicating that this channel is also frequently used to gather student concerns and suggestions. These findings highlight the diverse communication channels utilized by principals, with each method contributing differently to managing student truancy. Effective communication through these multiple platforms plays a crucial role in keeping students informed and addressing issues that may lead to truancy.

Table 9: channel of communication to students

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I address student concerns at school assemblies.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7771	1.49185
Posting memos and announcements on notice boards is how I share information.	157	1.00	5.00	3.9108	1.46924
I reach out to my pupils by holding	157	1.00	5.00	3.7962	1.58413

barazas, where they are all encouraged to freely express their opinions on various topics.					
In my secondary school, I communicate often through student leaders'	157	1.00	5.00	3.8217	1.52123
I communicate through class teachers	157	1.00	5.00	3.9172	1.39579
I encourage students to make use of suggestion box	157	1.00	5.00	3.9618	1.43172
Valid N (listwise)	157				

4.8 Performance

The purpose of the research was to look at public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County and see how different forms of school administration affected truancy rates. The study found out that principals' involvement in student leadership has contributed to a moderate reduction in truancy, with a mean score of 3.6815 and a SD of 1.48081, indicating variability in the effectiveness of leadership involvement across schools. The study found out that the motivation of peer counsellors by principals also leads to a decrease in truancy, with a mean of 3.7580 and a SD of 1.48238, reflecting a positive impact but with some differences in how this practice is implemented. The study found out that student mentorship programs implemented by principals frequently result in a reduction of truancy, with a mean of 3.7325 and a SD of 1.50377, suggesting a moderately consistent effect of mentorship on addressing absenteeism. The study found out that principals' communication channels are often effective in reducing truancy, with a mean of 3.6688 and a SD of 1.54997, indicating that while communication is a key strategy, its impact varies among different schools. The study also found out that combined school management practices, including leadership involvement, peer counsellor motivation, mentorship programs, and effective communication, frequently result in lower student truancy, as shown by a mean score of 3.7516 and a SD of 1.46172. Lastly, the study found out that the strategies implemented by school management are often successful in addressing student truancy,

with a mean score of 3.7707 and a SD of 1.48009. These findings highlight that a comprehensive approach involving multiple management strategies can significantly reduce student truancy, although the variability suggests that consistent implementation across schools is crucial for greater impact.

Table 10: Performance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
We observe a reduction in student truancy as a result of the principal's involvement in student leadership.	157	1.00	5.00	3.6815	1.48081
The motivation of peer counsellors by principals often leads to a decrease in student truancy.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7580	1.48238
Student mentorship programs implemented by principals frequently reduce incidents of student truancy.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7325	1.50377
Principals' communication channels are often effective in reducing student truancy.	157	1.00	5.00	3.6688	1.54997
Combined school management practices (leadership, peer counsellors, mentorship, communication) frequently result in lower student truancy.	157	1.00	5.00	3.7516	1.46172
The strategies implemented by the	157	1.00	5.00	3.7707	1.48009

school management	
often successfully	
address student	
truancy.	
Valid N (listwise)	157

4.9 Inferential Statistics

4.9.1 Regression

Table 11. A modest positive association between the independent variables (school management techniques) and the dependent variable (student truancy) is suggested by the model's correlation coefficient (R) of 0.235. The R Square value of 0.055 shows that the model can account for around 5.5% of the variation in student absenteeism, which reflects the impact of the school management strategies taken into consideration. The Adjusted R Square score of 0.030 suggests that these management strategies explain for almost 3% of the variability in truancy after correcting for the number of factors in the model. The average separation of the observed values from the regression line is shown by the Standard Error of the Estimate, which is 8.28806 in this case. Despite the relatively small overall influence of the management techniques, the R Square Change of 0.055 and the F Change of 2.224 indicate that the factors included in the model contribute to the explanation of student truancy. This model shows that while truancy policies in schools have an impact on students' absences, there may be other major contributing variables as well..

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.235 ^a	.055	.030	8.28806	.055	2.224	4

a. Dependent Variable: Student Truancy
b. All requested variables entered.

4.9.2 ANOVA

The study further analyzed the impact of principals' management practices on student truancy using an ANOVA test, as shown in Table 12. The Regression Sum of Squares is 611.141, indicating the variation in student truancy explained by the independent variables: principals' channels of communication, involvement, motivation of peer

counsellors, and use of student mentorship programs. The Residual Sum of Squares is 10441.165, representing the variation in truancy that is not explained by the model.

The mean square for the regression is 152.785 and for the residual is 68.692, with 4 df for the regression model and 152 df for the residual. Although the model is barely outside the typical threshold of 0.05, the F-value of 2.224 and the p-value (Sig.) of .069 indicate that the model approaches significance. This suggests that while not statistically significant at the 5% level, the combined influence of the four predictor variables (principals' involvement, peer counselors' motivation, use of student mentorship programs, and communication channels) on student truancy is nearly significant, suggesting some influence on truancy reduction..

Table 12: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	611.141	4	152.785	2.224	.069 ^b
	Residual	10441.165	152	68.692		
	Total	11052.306	156			

a. Dependent Variable: Student Truancy

b. Predictors: (Constant), principals channel of communication, Principals involvement, Principals motivation of peer counsellors, Principals use of student mentorship programs

4.9.3 Coefficients

The study examined the influence of various school management practices on student truancy using regression analysis, as shown in Table 13. The Constant has an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 14.150, which represents the predicted level of student truancy when all the independent variables are held constant. The t-value of 4.098 and the p-value (Sig.) of .000 indicate that this constant is highly significant.

The unstandardized coefficient for Principals' involvement is -0.204, with a t-value of -1.143 and a p-value of .255, suggesting that this variable has a negative, but not statistically significant, impact on student truancy. This indicates that higher

involvement of principals in student leadership slightly reduces truancy, but the effect is not significant. For Principals' motivation of peer counsellors, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.040, with a t-value of 0.349 and a p-value of .727, indicating that this variable has a very small and non-significant positive effect on student truancy.

The Principals' use of student mentorship programs has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.557, a t-value of 2.305, and a p-value of .023, indicating a significant positive relationship with student truancy. This suggests that as principals increase their use of mentorship programs, truancy rates tend to decrease significantly. The Principals' channel of communication has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.069, with a t-value of 0.837 and a p-value of .404, showing a small, non-significant positive effect on truancy.

Table 13: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.150	3.453		4.098	.000
	Principals' involvement	-.204	.179	-.126	-1.143	.255
	Principals' motivation of peer counsellors	.040	.116	.030	.349	.727
	Principals use of student mentorship programs	.557	.242	.272	2.305	.023
	principals' channel of communication	.069	.082	.067	.837	.404

4.9.4 Correlations

The study found out that Principals' involvement had a significant positive correlation with Principals' motivation of peer counsellors ($r = 0.213$, $p = 0.008$), indicating a weak but statistically significant relationship between these two variables. This suggests that as principals become more involved, they also tend to be more engaged in motivating peer counsellors. The study found out that Principals' involvement had a stronger positive correlation with the use of student mentorship programs ($r = 0.696$, $p < 0.001$),

indicating that higher involvement is closely associated with greater use of mentorship programs. The study also found out that Principals' motivation of peer counsellors was significantly correlated with the use of student mentorship programs ($r = 0.402$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that when principals are actively motivating peer counsellors, they are also likely to be implementing student mentorship programs. The study found out that the Principals' channel of communication did not have significant correlations with the other variables, as the Pearson Correlation values were low and non-significant (e.g., $r = 0.068$ for involvement, $r = 0.132$ for motivation, and $r = 0.099$ for mentorship programs).

Table 14: Correlations

		Principals' involvement	Principals' motivation of peer counsellors	Principals use of student mentorship programs
Principals involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.213**	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.000
	N	157	157	157
Principals motivation of peer counsellors	Pearson Correlation	.213**	1	.402**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		.000
	N	157	157	157
Principals use of student mentorship programs	Pearson Correlation	.696**	.402**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	157	157	157
principals channel of communication	Pearson Correlation	.068	.132	.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.395	.099	.219
	N	157	157	157

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.9.5 Reliability Statistics

As shown in Table 15, the research used Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the variables pertaining to the management practices of

principals. There was considerable internal consistency among the four items tested, as shown by the Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.501. A little improvement to 0.595 was seen in Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items when standardized items were taken into account. While these values are below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for strong reliability, they suggest a fair level of consistency. Given that the number of items (N of Items) is four, the lower alpha value may indicate that the survey items need refinement or that additional related items could improve the reliability.

Table 15: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.501	.595	4

4.9.6 ANOVA with Friedman's Test

Table 16 displays the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) using Friedman's test on the relationship between student truancy and the school management strategies (principals' engagement, motivation of peer counselors, utilization of mentoring programs, and communication channels)..

The Between People Sum of Squares was 9403.022 with 156 degrees of freedom (df), indicating the total variability observed between the respondents. The Within People Sum of Squares for the differences between the items (management practices) was 4900.567, with 3 degrees of freedom and a Mean Square of 1633.522. The Friedman's Chi-Square value of 121.671 and the p-value of .000 indicate a statistically significant difference between the management practices in terms of their effect on student truancy.

The Residual Sum of Squares was 14069.933, with 468 degrees of freedom, reflecting the unexplained variability within the people for the items. The Total Sum of Squares for all the data was 28373.522, with 627 degrees of freedom. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) was 0.173, indicating a low level of agreement among the respondents regarding the relative ranking of the management practices. While the results are statistically significant, the low W value suggests that the strength of the agreement between the different practices' effectiveness in managing truancy is modest.

Table 16: ANOVA with Friedman's Test

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Friedman's Chi-Square	Sig
Between People		9403.022	156	60.276		
Within People	Between Items	4900.567 ^a	3	1633.522	121.671	.000
	Residual	14069.933	468	30.064		
	Total	18970.500	471	40.277		
Total		28373.522	627	45.253		

Grand Mean = 19.6465

a. Kendall's coefficient of concordance $W = .173$.

4.10 Discussion of Findings

4.10.1 Involvement of Student Leadership

Findings from the research on the effects of principals' participation of student leadership on truancy in public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County are consistent with the literature on student leadership and its effects on school governance and discipline. Durrant (2017) found that when students are actively involved in school governance, they significantly impact the growth of the institution, highlighting the significance of meaningful student participation in governance. This aligns with the study's finding that principals moderately involve student leaders in modeling positive behavior (mean score 3.5860, SD 1.60546), suggesting that while there is some engagement of student leaders, the involvement could be more robust to have a greater impact on truancy reduction.

Macky and Johnston (2015) argue that student leadership, when integrated into school management, increases students' ownership of school discipline and encourages responsible learning. This view correlates with the study's results, which show that

student leadership involvement had a moderate effect on promoting a positive school environment (mean score 2.6115, SD 1.25907) and regular attendance (mean score 2.5987, SD 1.31977). These moderate levels of influence indicate that student leadership is somewhat effective in addressing truancy but needs further empowerment and involvement to make a more substantial impact.

Obondo (2015) and Kosgei et al. (2017) emphasize that active participation of student leaders in school administration can reduce incidents of vandalism, aggression, and discontent. The study's findings, however, show only moderate participation in student leadership activities (mean score 2.9299, SD 1.39649) and a belief in their positive impact on school discipline (mean score 2.7771, SD 1.38026). This suggests that, while student leaders do play a role in discipline management, their involvement is not consistent or comprehensive enough to fully address the challenges of student truancy.

The literature from Emmanuel and Peter (2005) points out that student leaders in countries like the USA, Canada, and the Philippines hold significant authority, which positively influences school operations. Similarly, Kabandize (2016) argues that student leadership encourages active learning and discipline management. The study found that student leaders were moderately effective in addressing truancy-related concerns (mean score 2.7070, SD 1.56591), reflecting that student leadership is underutilized in Mwingi West Sub County. Increasing their role and authority, as seen in other countries, could help reduce truancy more effectively.

the research by Carnie (2015) on the factors contributing to truancy, such as lack of support in school culture and socioeconomic issues, aligns with the study's findings that suggest a moderate but inconsistent impact of student leadership on truancy. The study indicates that stronger, more consistent leadership practices, such as involving students in leadership more regularly and empowering them to take on greater

responsibilities, could address these underlying issues and reduce truancy rates more effectively.

4.10.2 motivation of peer counsellors

The research found that student truancy in public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County is influenced by principals' motivation of peer counselors, which aligns with the literature on peer counseling and its function in influencing student behavior. Peer counseling, according to Ambayo and Ngumi (2015), may drive personal and social transformation, especially when it comes to changing attitudes and behaviors. A mean score of 3.8344 and a standard deviation of 1.47998 indicate that administrators actively appreciate the work of peer counselors during school meetings, which is consistent with the study's results. This suggests that peer counseling is being used to address student concerns like absenteeism. Kamore and Tiego (2015) noted that the increased responsibilities of teacher counselors make peer counselors a necessity, a sentiment reflected in the study's finding that material rewards for peer counselors are prevalent, with a mean score of 3.7452. This aligns with Duckworth's (2015) suggestion that principals should motivate peer counselors by providing affordable rewards to foster positive behavior among students. The study highlights that this recognition and reward system helps maintain the motivation of peer counselors, contributing to a decrease in truancy. However, both Kamore and Tiego and the current study point out that there are gaps in mentorship and support for peer counselors, which could affect the long-term effectiveness of these programs in addressing broader student issues.

With a mean score of 3.5350 for principals' written communication (e.g., letters, notices) skills, peer counselors play an essential role in conveying school rules and policies, lending credence to Oguna and Thinguri's (2017) claim that peer counseling is

one of the most effective methods for improving discipline. The study indicates that motivated peer counselors can effectively assist in managing student behavior, including truancy, as they help disseminate rules and ensure understanding among their peers. However, the study also reveals variability in the use of digital communication channels (mean score of 3.1911), suggesting that while peer counselors and traditional communication methods are effective, there is room for improvement in adapting to modern communication tools, as advocated by Awan and Noureen (2017). The study found that the principal's communication style influences students' understanding of school rules and policies, with a mean score of 3.5350, which ties in with the findings of Galvin (2016). Galvin's research in Tanzania emphasizes the importance of modeling desirable behaviors like empathy and respect, which peer counselors can facilitate. The recognition and motivation of peer counselors, as found in the study, serve to reinforce these positive behaviors, helping reduce student truancy by fostering a more disciplined and engaged student body.

4.10.3 student mentorship programs

The results of the research on public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County are in line with the literature on mentoring and its function in decreasing truancy. Pita et al. (2016) describe mentorship as a dynamic process characterized by supportive relationships, which is reflected in the study's finding that students are mentored on avoiding absenteeism, with a moderate mean score of 3.5541. This suggests that mentorship is contributing to managing truancy, as Thompson (2015) emphasizes the importance of emotional resilience and support in helping students cope with challenges that may lead to truancy. Additionally, the study's finding that principals ensure the involvement of external mentors, with a high mean score of 3.9745, aligns with Grossman and Tierney's (2015) argument that guidance from

experienced individuals can help students avoid negative behaviors and stay focused on their studies. The study also found that mentorship on healthy living practices and class-level mentorship on discipline had lower mean scores of 3.0318 and 2.3185, respectively. This suggests that these aspects of mentorship are not as emphasized, despite the literature, such as Herrera et al. (2016), advocating for comprehensive mentorship that includes fostering values like discipline and autonomy. The gap in class-level mentorship also contrasts with the participatory governance models suggested by Kindiki (2009) and Tikoko and Kiprop (2011), who argue for the involvement of various stakeholders, including teachers and prefects, in the mentorship process. The study found that students are often mentored on maintaining discipline during school assemblies, with a mean score of 3.7516, reflecting Wambua Kalai and Okoth's (2017) findings that mentorship can promote social and academic goals such as discipline and self-control. However, while the use of assemblies and external mentors appears to be effective, the literature and the study suggest there is room to improve mentorship at the class level and in areas like healthy living. This indicates that a more integrated approach to mentorship, as suggested by Ludwig Bartalanffy's Systems Theory, could strengthen the overall impact on student truancy.

4.10.4 Channel of Communication to Students

The study's conclusions about the impact of principals' channels of communication on student truancy in Mwingi West Sub County are well supported by the literature research.. Blum (2015) emphasizes the use of multiple communication channels between school administration and students, such as emails, suggestion boxes, and assemblies, which directly aligns with the study's findings that principals frequently rely on school assemblies (mean score of 3.7771, SD 1.49185) and memos or circulars (mean score of 3.9108, SD 1.46924) to address student issues. This demonstrates the

importance of diverse communication methods, as highlighted by Blum, in managing student matters effectively, including truancy.

Arnold's (2015) argument that written forms of communication like memoranda and letters are effective for conveying information without immediate engagement correlates with the study's finding that written communication via memos and notice boards plays a critical role in keeping students informed. Furthermore, Blum's distinction between verbal, written, and nonverbal communication is evident in the study's findings, where both verbal channels like assemblies and written methods such as memos are employed to manage student truancy.

Additionally, Katua Mulwa and Mungai's emphasis on the significance of school assemblies as a tool for managing discipline is reflected in the study, which found that assemblies are frequently used to address issues like absenteeism and rule violations. However, the study also expands on this by incorporating two-way communication through barazas (mean score of 3.7962, SD 1.58413) and suggestion boxes (mean score of 3.9618, SD 1.43172), allowing students to voice their concerns, thus aligning with Blum's recommendation for more interactive communication strategies.

Macky and Johnson (2005) highlight the importance of informal communication networks, such as student leaders, which is supported by the study's finding that principals often communicate through student leaders (mean score of 3.8217, SD 1.52123), indicating that peer leadership is a key part of the communication process. This use of both formal and informal channels strengthens the school's ability to manage student truancy.

Toto's (2016) theory of media richness, which suggests that oral communication is richer and more effective, is supported by the study's finding that principals often use assemblies and barazas to directly interact with students, clarifying issues and reducing

truancy. However, the study also shows that written communication, while less rich, is still effective in certain contexts, particularly for conveying official messages through memos and suggestion boxes. Kiprop (2015) found that ineffective communication contributed to disputes and misunderstandings in schools, a concern that the current study addresses by highlighting the importance of using multiple, effective communication channels to manage truancy. Both studies underscore the critical role of clear, consistent communication in reducing student misbehavior and absenteeism.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this part is to provide a synopsis of the study's main points about the relationship between student leadership and principal engagement in relation to truancy in public day secondary schools in Mwingi West Sub County. It does a good job of summarizing the key findings, drawing implications from the study goals, and providing policy and practice suggestions..

5.2 summary of findings

5.2.1 Involvement of Student Leadership

The study found that principals moderately involve student leaders in modeling positive behavior, with a mean score of 3.5860 and a SD of 1.60546, suggesting some variability in the level of involvement. Regular participation of student leaders in leadership activities was less frequent, reflected by a lower mean score of 2.9299 and a SD of 1.39649. Principals believe that student leadership activities moderately impact school discipline, with a mean score of 2.7771, indicating that student leadership has a positive but limited effect on managing truancy. Furthermore, student leaders' influence in promoting a positive school environment and improving regular attendance was moderate, with mean scores of 2.6115 and 2.5987, respectively. These findings suggest that while student leadership is involved, its potential to significantly reduce truancy could be enhanced by increasing student leaders' participation and empowerment.

5.2.2 motivation of peer counsellors

The study revealed that principals recognize the work of peer counselors, as reflected by a relatively high mean score of 3.8344 and a SD of 1.47998, indicating that peer

counselors are often acknowledged during school gatherings. The motivation of peer counselors through material rewards was also prevalent, with a mean score of 3.7452 and a SD of 1.51448, suggesting that rewards contribute to peer counselor effectiveness in managing truancy. The mean score for principals' use of textual communication to pupils was 3.5350, but the mean score for their use of digital communication channels—like social media and emails—was lower at 3.1911. The study found that motivated peer counselors play an important role in reducing truancy, though there is room for improvement in the consistency of recognition and motivation practices across schools.

5.2.3 student mentorship programs

The study found that mentorship programs focusing on avoiding absenteeism had a moderate impact, with a mean score of 3.5541 and a SD of 1.57462. Mentoring students on healthy living practices was less emphasized, as shown by a mean score of 3.0318. Principals facilitated the involvement of external mentors or resource persons in mentorship programs, with a high mean score of 3.9745, suggesting that external mentors play a significant role in supporting students. With a mean score of 2.3185, the motivation of prefects and class instructors to coach pupils on excellent discipline was, however, lacking.. Assemblies were found to be a key platform for mentoring students on maintaining discipline, with a mean score of 3.7516, indicating that while mentorship programs are somewhat effective, there is a need to expand mentorship efforts, particularly at the class level, to better manage student truancy.

5.2.4 Channel of Communication to Students

With a mean score of 3.7771 and a SD of 1.49185, the research discovered that administrators often discussed student concerns during school assemblies, demonstrating that assemblies serve as a major forum for communication. With a mean

score of 3.9108, the usage of memos and circulars displayed on notice boards was also prevalent. Barazas, where students are encouraged to express their views, had a moderate mean score of 3.7962, suggesting that open communication forums are used but could be further developed. Communication through student leaders was also prevalent (mean score 3.8217), and class teachers were trusted as intermediaries in communication (mean score 3.9172). The use of suggestion boxes to gather student feedback was another frequently employed method (mean score 3.9618). These findings suggest that while a variety of communication channels are used by principals, there is a need for greater consistency in their application across schools to improve student engagement and reduce truancy.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that while principals involve student leaders in modeling positive behavior and promoting school discipline, this involvement is moderate and inconsistent. Increasing the frequency and depth of student leadership participation could significantly enhance their influence on reducing student truancy.

The study concluded that motivating peer counselors through recognition and material rewards plays an important role in managing student truancy. However, there is variability in the application of these motivational strategies across schools, suggesting the need for more consistent recognition and support for peer counselors to improve their impact on truancy.

The study concluded that mentorship programs are moderately effective in addressing student truancy, particularly through the involvement of external mentors. However, the lack of emphasis on class-level mentorship and healthy living practices limits the overall effectiveness of these programs, indicating that expanding mentorship efforts in these areas would enhance their impact on truancy reduction.

The study concluded that principals use a variety of communication channels to address truancy, including assemblies, memos, barazas, and student leaders. However, the inconsistent use of these channels, particularly digital communication, suggests the need for more structured and consistent communication strategies to effectively engage students and reduce truancy.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

- i. (i) Principals, according to the research, should have more student leaders participate in important school governance tasks. One way to do this would be to provide student leader's greater chances to be involved in making decisions and getting leadership training. Doing so would foster a sense of ownership and accountability among student leaders, helping to reduce truancy.
- ii. The study recommended that principals should implement structured and consistent reward systems for peer counselors, including both material and non-material incentives such as certificates and public recognition. Additionally, schools should offer regular training and professional development opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of peer counselors in managing student truancy.
- iii. The study recommended that principals should expand mentorship programs by involving class teachers and prefects more actively in mentoring students, particularly focusing on discipline and healthy living. External mentors should continue to be engaged, but class-level mentorship needs to be strengthened to ensure broader and more consistent support for students, leading to a reduction in truancy.
- iv. The study recommended that principals adopt a more structured and consistent approach to communication with students. Principals should make greater use of digital communication channels like social media and emails to involve students more effectively, even when conventional techniques like memos and assemblies are frequently employed. Furthermore, open forums like barazas and suggestion boxes should be used regularly to ensure students' voices are heard, contributing to a reduction in truancy.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

- i. i. Additional research should be conducted to determine the impact of student leadership training programs on student behavior, disciplinary, and truancy rates, according to the study's recommendations. The impact of leadership development on student results over the long term could be the subject of future research..
- ii. The study recommended further investigation into the effectiveness of peer counseling programs in various school environments, such as rural versus urban or public versus private schools. This would help to better understand how contextual factors influence the success of peer counseling in reducing truancy.
- iii. iii) Additional research on the impact of digital communication channels on truancy prevention and student participation should be conducted, according to the report. These channels include emails, social media, and mobile applications.. This could help to identify effective technological solutions for schools looking to modernize their communication strategies.
- iv. The study recommended further research into the impact of class-level mentorship programs, particularly focusing on the involvement of class teachers and prefects, on student truancy. Understanding how mentorship at the class level influences behavior and attendance could provide valuable insights for enhancing these programs.
- v. The study recommended further research to compare student leadership involvement in school governance across different regions or counties. Such studies could identify regional best practices and unique challenges, helping schools tailor leadership programs to better address truancy in specific contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

Mount Kenya University is where I study for my Master of Education with an emphasis on Educational Administration. In order to fulfill my requirements for graduation, I'm conducting a study entitled " The Impact of Principals' School Management Strategies on Student Truancy in Public Day Secondary Schools within Mwingi West Sub County ". If it is okay with you, I would want to conduct this study at your school. Rest assured that your school's name will not appear in the final paper and that every detail was used only for academic research..

We really value your help and collaboration..

Yours faithfully,

Kavunduu Emily Mwendu.

Appendix II: Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I'd like to ask you to take part in a research proposal called (**INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON STUDENT TRUANCY AMONG PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MWINGI WEST SUB COUNTY, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA.**): I'm writing my master's proposal while I'm enrolled at Mount Kenya University's (MASTER OF EDIUCATION) program. The investigational goal of the study is to: (**The influence of Principals' School Management Strategies on Student Truancy among Public Day Secondary Schools in Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya.**)

Participation in this research is totally voluntary and at your discretion. Just leave the fields blank if you don't want to answer any of the questions. There are no known hazards connected with participation, except from the risks of everyday life. Your feedback is confidential and will remain unidentified. We will only disclose the aggregate sum of this study's findings, and we will keep all individual results secret. The researchers are the only ones who will have access to the details of your questionnaire answers. There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this research. Having said that, you may find it interesting to talk about the study's problems, and doing so might benefit the industry, consumers, and anyone else who faces similar worries in the future.

If you are willing to participate in this study, we ask that you fill out the questionnaire as accurately as possible. It ought should take about seven minutes to finish. Kindly return the questionnaire at your earliest convenience so that I can complete the project report..

Please feel free to contact the INVESTIGATOR if you have any queries regarding this proposal. Please contact the Ethics Review Committee, Mount Kenya University. P.O Box 342-01000-Thika. Email: cgsr@mku.ac.ke. Tel: 254709153000, if you have any inquiries concerning your rights as a study participant.

I appreciate your help with this crucial project.

CONSENT

I have read the content, understand it, and have been given an opportunity to inquire about it. I understand that there are no strings attached to my participation and that I am free to withdraw at any time and for any reason. I understand that I will get a hard copy of this authorization form. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary..

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____



Appendix III: Principals' Questionnaire

Please be sure you check (√) Kindly reply to everything..

SECTION A: General Information

Question	Response Options
1. What is Your Gender?	Male { } Female { }
2. What is Your Age in Years?	Below 21 years { } 21 - 30 years { } 31 - 40 years { } 41 - 50 years { } 51 years and above { }
3. What is Your Highest Level of Education?	Certificate level { } Diploma level { } Undergraduate level { } Postgraduate level { } Masters level { } PHD level { }
4. What is Your Professional Working Experience?	Up to 3 years { } 4 - 6 years { } 6 - 9 years { } 9 - 12 years { } 12 - 15 years { } 15 years and above { }
5. How long have you been a Principal?	Below 3 years { } 4 - 6 years { } 6 - 9 years { } 9 - 12 years { } 12 - 15 years { } 15 years and above { }
6. How long have you been a Principal in this school?	Below 3 years { } 4 - 6 years { } 6 - 9 years { } 9 - 12 years { } 12 - 15 years { } 15 years and above { }

SECTION B: INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Rate how often you include student leaders in school administration on a scale of 1 to 5.

Very Often (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2) never (1)

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I involve student leaders in modeling behavior.					
3	We regularly participate in student leadership activities.					
4	We believe that student leadership activities positively impact school discipline.					
5	Student leaders have significant influence in promoting a positive school environment at the school.					
6	We are more likely to attend school regularly due to our involvement in student leadership activities.					
7	Student leaders effectively address student concerns and grievances related to truancy at the school.					

SECTION C: MOTIVATION OF PEER COUNSELLORS

How would you rank the following on a scale from 1 to 5: on principals motivate peer counsellors to reduce student truancy; Very Often (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2)

Never (1)

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I always make a point of complimenting the student peer counselors at school events to show my appreciation for all their hard work.					
2	By providing tangible rewards, I encourage my student peer counselors to do their best work.					

3	The principal effectively uses written communication (e.g., letters, notices) to convey messages to students.					
4	The principal frequently uses digital communication channels (e.g., emails, social media) to interact with students.					
5	The principal's communication style influences students' understanding of school rules and policies.					
6	The principal addresses student concerns and issues well through various communication channels.					

SECTION D: MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Please evaluate the frequency with which administrators implement student mentoring programs as a means of addressing truancy from 1 to 5.; Very Often (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2) Never (1)

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Students are mentored on the importance of avoiding absenteeism					
2	Students are mentored on healthy living practices					
3	I ensure facilitation of mentors/resource persons from outside our school					
4	The best way to promote excellent behavior among students is for instructors and class prefects to set an example for the rest of the class.					
5	Students are often mentored during school assemblies on how to maintain good discipline.					

SECTION E: CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

How do you think principals can impact student truancy via the usage of communication channels? Please grade this on a ranking system from 1 to 5.; Very Often (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2) Never (1)

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I address student concerns at school assemblies.					

2	Posting memos and announcements on notice boards is how I share information.					
3	I reach out to my pupils by holding barazas, where they are all encouraged to freely express their opinions on various topics.					
4	Through student leaders, I am able to speak often at my secondary school.'					
5	I communicate through class teachers					
6	I encourage students to make use of suggestion box					

SECTION F: STUDENT TRUANCY

Give these strategies a total score from 1 to 5 for how effective they are in lowering truancy rates among students.

Very Often (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2) Never (1)

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	We observe a reduction in student truancy as a result of the principal's involvement in student leadership.					
2	The motivation of peer counsellors by principals often leads to a decrease in student truancy.					
3	Student mentorship programs implemented by principals frequently reduce incidents of student truancy.					
4	Principals' communication channels are often effective in reducing student truancy.					
5	Combined school management practices (leadership, peer counsellors, mentorship, communication) frequently result in lower student truancy.					
6	The strategies implemented by the school management often successfully address student truancy.					

Appendix IV: Interview Guide for Class Teachers' and Student Leaders

Dear respondent,

Welcome and thank the class teacher for participating in the interview.

The purpose of this study is to better understand how class teachers in Mwingi West Sub County's public day secondary schools deal with chronic absenteeism. Protect student privacy by assuring the teacher that their identity will remain anonymous in the final report.

1. Can you briefly describe your role as a class teacher in this school?

2. . In what period of time have you been teaching students at this school?

3. What grade levels or classes have you taught during your tenure as a class teacher?

4. In your experience, how prevalent is student truancy in this school?

5. What are the common reasons or factors that contribute to student truancy that you have observed?

6. How do you typically identify students who are frequently absent or truant?

7. What strategies or measures do you personally take to address student truancy in your class?

8. Have you collaborated with the principal or other staff members to address truancy issues? If so, please describe the nature of this collaboration.

9. Can you share any successful interventions or practices you've implemented to reduce student truancy?

10. How does the principal support class teachers in managing student truancy?

11. Have you received any training or guidance from the principal regarding truancy prevention and management?

12. In your opinion, how does the principal's leadership style impact efforts to reduce truancy in this school?

13. How do you communicate with parents or guardians when a student is frequently absent?

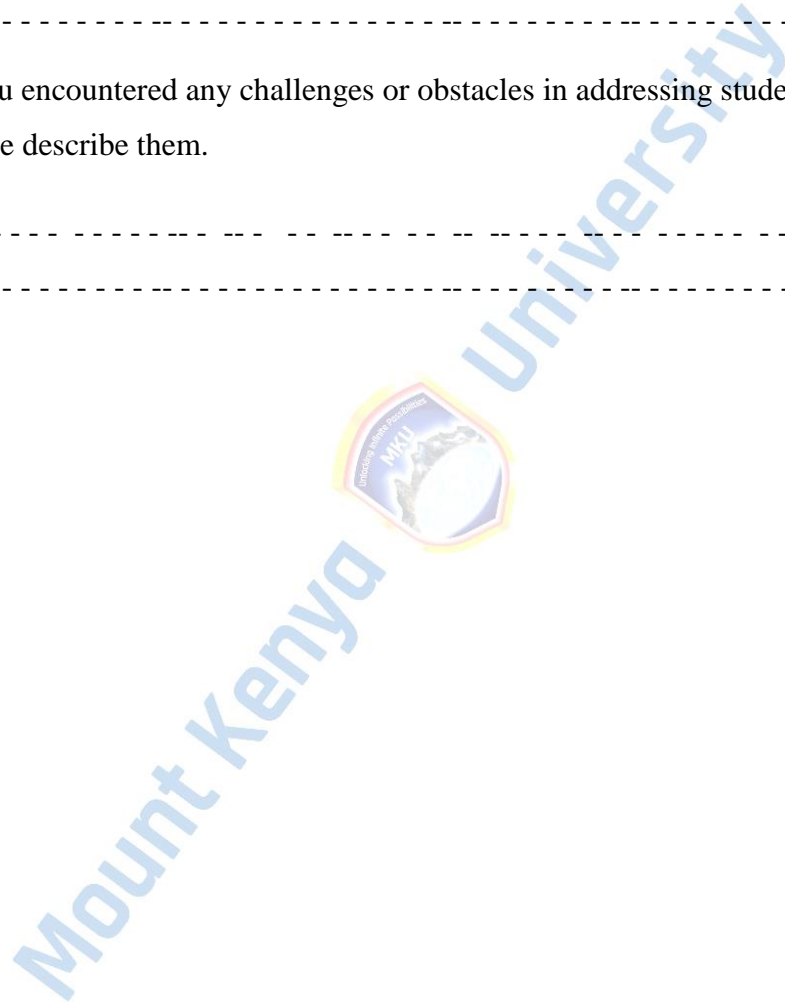
14. What reporting mechanisms do you follow when documenting instances of student truancy?

15. How do you collaborate with other teachers and the school administration to address truancy cases?


16. Can you describe the communication channels you use to inform the principal about truancy issues in your class?

17. How can school dropout prevention and management be made more effective? What modifications or modifications would you suggest?

18. Have you encountered any challenges or obstacles in addressing student truancy? If so, please describe them.



Appendix V: ERC Letter

**Mount Kenya University**

REF: MKU/ISERC/4348 Date: 06 September 2024
TO: KAVUNDUU EMILY MWENDE
REG: MED/2020/61134

Dear Sir/Madam,

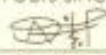
RE: INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL'S SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON STUDENT TRUANCY AMONG PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MWINGI WEST SUB COUNTY, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA

This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **3068**. The approval period is **06/09/2024 - 05/09/2025**.


This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,


Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE
P. O. Box 342 - 01000,
THIKA**

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika.
Cell: +254 709 153 000 | +254 709 153 200
Email: info@mku.ac.ke | Web: www.mku.ac.ke

Appendix VI: Introduction Letter



Mount Kenya University

DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MED/2020/61134

6th September, 2024

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki, Upper Kabete
P.O Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: KAVUNDUU EMILY MWENDE- REGISTRATION NO. MED/2020/61134

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Education** in the **Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies** in the **School of Education**.

The title of the research is **"Influence of Principal's School Management Strategies on Student Truancy Among Public Day Secondary Schools in Mwingi West Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya."** It has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **September, 2024 and November, 2024**.

Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.


Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D
Director, Graduate Studies
Enc.

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika
Cell: +254 709 153 000 / +254 709 153 200
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke
Chartered and ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified Institution.
Unlocking Infinite Possibilities

Appendix VIII: Field Authorization Letter



KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Ministry of Education
State Department of Basic Education



Email: info@kitui.go.ke
Telephone: 0702615888
When replying please quote:

County director of Education
P. O. Box 694 – 90200
Kitui

23rd September, 2024

REF: KITUI/CTY/EDU/RESEARCH/GEN/64/VOL.IV/88

KAVUNDU EMILY MWENDE
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
MED/2020/61134

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

The county director of education is in receipt of your letter dated 15TH September 2024 and a copy of your research license from NACOSTI Ref: **507239** of License Number **NACOSTI 15/9/24/** requesting for authority to carry out research on **“INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL'S SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON STUDENT TRUANCY AMONG PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MWINGI WEST SUB COUNTY, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA”**.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research for the period ending 15TH September 2025 as requested.

You are kindly advised to deposit a copy of the final research report to this office.

KITUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
23RD SEP 2024
P.O. BOX 694-90200,
KITUI


Paul Kilonzo
County Director
KITUI

Appendix IX: Similarity Index

MWENDE KAVUNDUU

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL'S SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON STUDENT TRUANCY AMONG PUBLIC DAY SE...

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