Journal of Popular Education in Africa: ISSN 2523-2800 (online)
October, November & December 2025, Volume 9, Number 10, 11 & 12
Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya

By

[1]Joseph Muuo Gideon, [2]Dr. Paul Mwania, [3]Dr. George Ooko and [4]Dr. Judith Wafula

[1]Postgraduate Student, School of Business & Economics- Lukenya University
[2]Senior Lecturer, School of Business & Economics- Lukenya University.
[3]Lecturer, School of Business & Economics- Lukenya University.
[4]Senior Lecturer, School of Education and Social Sciences- Lukenya University

Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of stakeholder participation specifically involving parents, teachers, Boards of Management (BOMs), and the local community on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. The global shift towards decentralized and community-oriented school governance underscores the critical role of stakeholder participation in enhancing educational outcomes. Despite national policies mandating stakeholder involvement, its practical implementation and direct impact on student achievement in diverse local contexts remain empirically underexplored. This research addresses this gap by quantifying the relationship between various forms of stakeholder engagement and academic performance, providing evidence to guide school governance reforms. Grounded in Stakeholder Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires from a stratified random sample of 333 respondents from 113 public secondary schools. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with key education administrators and school leaders to provide explanatory depth. Academic performance was measured using KCSE mean scores, while stakeholder participation was assessed through perceptions of involvement in decision-making, resource mobilization, and policy review. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, ANOVA, and multiple regression. The findings reveal that stakeholder participation has a strong, positive, and statistically significant effect on academic performance. The correlation analysis showed a robust positive relationship ($r = .508$, $p < .001$). Descriptive data indicated high levels of agreement among school leaders that stakeholder involvement positively contributes to student performance ($M=4.20$) and that teachers are actively involved in policy formulation ($M=4.24$). However, the engagement of alumni ($M=3.52$) was perceived as significantly weaker. Thematic analysis of qualitative data illuminated the mechanisms of this influence, highlighting that active stakeholder engagement fosters a culture of shared accountability, enhances resource mobilization, and strengthens the home-school link. The study concludes that stakeholder participation is a potent strategic capability that directly drives academic improvement. It recommends that school leaders and policymakers move beyond tokenistic engagement to institutionalize structured, inclusive, and empowered participation frameworks for all key stakeholders.

Keywords: Stakeholder Participation, Academic Performance, School Governance, Community Engagement, Boards of Management (BOM), Machakos County, Kenya

Journal of Popular Education in Africa: **ISSN 2523-2800 (online)**
October, November & December 2025, Volume 9, Number 10, 11 & 12
Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya

By

[1]Joseph Muuo Gideon, [2]Dr. Paul Mwania, [3]Dr. George Ooko and [4]Dr. Judith Wafula

1. Introduction

The paradigm of school improvement has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades, evolving from a top-down, centrally managed model to one that emphasizes localized, participatory governance. Central to this new paradigm is the concept of stakeholder participation, which posits that educational institutions are more effective, accountable, and sustainable when they actively involve a broad spectrum of individuals and groups who have a vested interest in their success (Bryson, 2019). These stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, school administrators, Boards of Management (BOMs), community leaders, and alumni, form a complex ecosystem of influence that can collectively shape the direction and quality of education.

Globally, the move towards decentralization and school-based management has been a key driver for promoting stakeholder participation. Education systems in countries as diverse as Australia, Canada, and South Africa have empowered local school councils and governing bodies, granting them greater autonomy in decision-making and resource allocation (Bush, 2020). The underlying principle is that those closest to the teaching and learning process are best positioned to identify needs, formulate relevant strategies, and ensure accountability. The World Bank (2022) and UNESCO (2021) have consistently championed this approach, arguing that robust stakeholder engagement is a hallmark of resilient and high-performing education systems.

In Kenya, the importance of stakeholder participation is deeply embedded in the national education policy framework. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) and the Basic Education Act (2013) both mandate public participation in the governance of public institutions, including schools. This legal framework has institutionalized the role of Boards of Management and Parents' Associations as key governance bodies at the school level, tasked with responsibilities spanning strategic planning, financial oversight, and resource mobilization (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The ongoing implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) has further amplified the need for strong stakeholder collaboration, particularly between schools and parents, to support a more holistic and learner-centered educational experience.

Despite this strong policy and legal foundation, the reality of stakeholder participation on the ground is often inconsistent and fraught with challenges. While the structures for engagement exist, their effectiveness varies significantly across schools and counties. In many contexts, participation remains tokenistic, with stakeholders being informed of decisions rather than being genuinely involved in making them (Kipng'etich, Njeru, & Chebet, 2021). Furthermore, factors such as low parental literacy levels, a lack of training for BOM members, and a school leadership culture that is not conducive to collaboration can severely limit the potential impact of stakeholder involvement (Kiptoo & Mutua, 2023).

This disconnect between policy intent and practical reality is particularly evident in regions like Machakos County. While the county is home to a diverse range of public secondary schools, there are persistent and wide disparities in their academic performance, as

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

measured by the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations (KNEC, 2022). These performance gaps suggest that while all schools operate under the same national policies for stakeholder engagement, the quality and impact of this engagement differ significantly.

This study, therefore, addresses a critical and timely problem. While the theoretical benefits of stakeholder participation are well-established, there is a significant lack of large-scale, localized empirical research in Kenya that quantifies the specific influence of stakeholder participation on academic performance. Most existing studies are either qualitative, based on small case studies, or do not statistically isolate the effect of stakeholder engagement from other school management practices. This empirical gap leaves a void in the evidence needed to guide the design of more effective school governance models and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this paper is to establish the influence of stakeholder participation on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

The investigation of stakeholder participation as a driver of academic performance is primarily grounded in two complementary theoretical frameworks: Stakeholder Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

Stakeholder Theory, first articulated in the field of management by Freeman (1984), provides the core conceptual lens. The theory's central tenet is that an organization's long-term success is contingent on its ability to manage and balance the interests of its various stakeholders. It moves beyond a narrow focus on shareholders (or, in this case, the Ministry of Education) to argue that any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives has a legitimate stake. In the context of a school, these stakeholders are numerous and diverse: students, teachers, parents, administrators, BOM members, alumni, local community leaders, and government officials. Stakeholder Theory posits that schools that actively identify, engage, and respond to the needs and expectations of these groups are more likely to garner the support, resources, and legitimacy necessary for sustained success (Muthoni & Musyoka, 2022). This study uses Stakeholder Theory to hypothesize that schools with more robust and inclusive practices for stakeholder engagement will demonstrate superior academic performance.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) complements Stakeholder Theory by providing a developmental framework for understanding *how* these different stakeholders influence a learner. Bronfenbrenner conceptualized a child's development as occurring within a set of nested environmental systems. The Microsystem includes the immediate environments of the child, such as the family, the school, and the peer group. The Mesosystem refers to the interactions between these immediate environments, such as the relationship between a parent and a teacher. The Exosystem includes broader social structures that indirectly affect the child, such as the school board's policies or a parent's workplace. The Macrosystem encompasses the overarching cultural values and beliefs of the society.

This theory is highly relevant to stakeholder participation because it highlights that a child's academic performance is not just a product of the classroom, but is shaped by the

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

quality of the connections between the different systems in their life. For example, strong stakeholder participation strengthens the Mesosystem. When parents are actively involved in the school (e.g., attending meetings, monitoring homework) and teachers communicate effectively with parents, this creates a coherent and supportive network around the learner, which has been shown to be a powerful predictor of academic success. Similarly, an engaged BOM (part of the Exosystem) can create policies that improve the school environment, indirectly benefiting the learner. Bronfenbrenner's theory thus provides the mechanism for understanding *why* stakeholder participation matters: it works by strengthening the web of supportive relationships and systems that surround a student.

The empirical literature provides consistent and compelling evidence for the positive influence of stakeholder participation on a range of educational outcomes, including academic performance.

Global and Regional Perspectives

On a global scale, research has consistently demonstrated that strong school-family-community partnerships are a hallmark of effective schools. A meta-analysis by Jeynes (2018) synthesized dozens of studies and found a significant and positive relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement across all grade levels and racial/ethnic groups. The forms of involvement with the greatest impact were those that involved high parental expectations and communication with children about school.

In the context of school governance, studies on decentralized and school-based management have shown that empowering local stakeholders can lead to improved outcomes. A World Bank (2022) review of school-based management reforms in Latin America found that when local school councils (comprising parents, teachers, and community members) were given genuine authority over budgeting and school planning, it led to greater accountability and, in many cases, improved student test scores.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, where community ties are often strong, stakeholder engagement is seen as a particularly potent tool for school improvement. A study in Ghana by Kyei-Addo, Akyeampong, & Kushitor (2023) found that while decentralization policies had empowered local school management committees, their effectiveness was often contingent on the level of training and support they received. When properly empowered, these stakeholder bodies were effective at improving teacher attendance and mobilizing local resources.

The Kenyan Context

In Kenya, a significant body of research has explored the role of stakeholder participation. A seminal study by Ngware et al. (2006) in Nairobi's informal settlements found that schools with active parental and BOM involvement demonstrated higher levels of instructional support and significantly better student performance, even in the face of extreme poverty. This study provided powerful early evidence that stakeholder engagement can act as a buffer against socio-economic disadvantage.

More recent research has reinforced these findings. Mwikali, Ndolo, and Wekesa (2024) reported that when parents and local leaders in several rural counties were engaged in resource mobilization and academic planning, their schools were better equipped to deliver on learning outcomes. Korir and Sitienei (2022) found a positive and significant relationship between stakeholder participation and academic performance in public secondary schools in Kericho County, highlighting the role of engagement in fostering accountability.

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

However, the literature also points to significant challenges and gaps. A study by Kipng'etich, Njeru, and Chebet (2021) cautioned that stakeholder involvement in many Kenyan schools remains "tokenistic," with parents and community members invited to meetings but given little real influence over key decisions. This suggests a critical difference between the *presence* of stakeholder structures and their *functional empowerment*.

Furthermore, a significant methodological gap exists. While many studies have qualitatively explored the benefits of stakeholder participation or used descriptive statistics to show its prevalence, there is a lack of large-scale quantitative studies in Kenya that use inferential statistics to test the specific and unique impact of stakeholder engagement on academic performance while controlling for other factors. Most studies that do use regression analysis tend to combine stakeholder participation with other leadership variables, making it difficult to isolate its specific contribution. This study is designed to address this gap by providing a large-scale, mixed-methods analysis that specifically quantifies the influence of stakeholder participation on academic performance in Machakos County.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, grounded in a pragmatist philosophical stance. This approach was chosen to leverage the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study was conducted in the 377 public secondary schools of Machakos County, Kenya. The target population included all key administrative and governance stakeholders: 377 principals, 374 deputy principals, 1,353 Heads of Departments (HoDs), and 377 Board of Management (BOM) members, in addition to senior education officials.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select a representative sample. The schools were first stratified by category (National, Extra-County, County, Sub-County). Using Cochran's (1977) formula, a sample size of 333 respondents was determined to be sufficient for a 95% confidence level. These respondents were drawn from a randomly selected sample of 113 schools, with proportional stratified sampling used to ensure representation across the different stakeholder roles.

Data were collected using two primary instruments:

1. A structured questionnaire with 5-point Likert-scale items was administered to deputy principals and HoDs. The section on stakeholder participation included statements such as, Parents play an active role in academic-related decisions, and Involving stakeholders has contributed positively to student performance.
2. Semi-structured interview schedules were used with principals, BOM members, and education officers to gather in-depth qualitative data on the nature, challenges, and perceived impact of stakeholder engagement in their institutions.

A pilot study was conducted in 11 schools in the neighboring Makueni County to validate the instruments. The reliability of the questionnaire scales was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, with the Stakeholder Involvement scale achieving an excellent coefficient of 0.918.
Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (means, percentages) were used to summarize the data. To test the study's hypothesis, Pearson correlation and One-Way ANOVA were performed. Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes that could explain and enrich the quantitative results.

4. Findings

This section presents the study's findings on the influence of stakeholder participation. It integrates the quantitative results from the survey with the qualitative insights from the interviews.

The quantitative analysis aimed to measure the perceived level of stakeholder participation and its statistical relationship with academic performance.

Descriptive Analysis of Stakeholder Participation Practices:

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with several statements about stakeholder involvement in their schools. The results, presented in Table 1, indicate a generally positive perception, though with notable variations across different stakeholder groups.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Stakeholder Participation (N≈333)

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Teachers are involved in formulating and reviewing school policies.	4.24	0.89
Parents play an active role in academic-related decisions.	4.22	0.79
Involving stakeholders has contributed positively to student performance.	4.20	1.03
The school maintains constructive partnerships with the local community.	4.10	0.91
Alumni networks contribute resources and mentorship to support students.	3.52	1.01

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree
Source: Field Data 2025

The descriptive data reveal that internal stakeholder participation is perceived as being very strong. The statement that teachers are involved in policy formulation received the highest mean score (M=4.24), with 90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This suggests a healthy culture of distributed leadership within the schools. Parental involvement was also rated highly (M=4.22).

However, the engagement of external stakeholders was perceived as weaker. While community partnerships were rated positively (M=4.10), the contribution of alumni networks received the lowest mean score (M=3.52). A significant plurality of respondents (32.0%) were neutral on this point, suggesting that alumni engagement is an underdeveloped and inconsistent resource in many schools.

Inferential Analysis: The Relationship with Academic Performance

To test the hypothesis that stakeholder participation has a significant effect on academic performance, both a Pearson correlation and a One-Way ANOVA were conducted.

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong, positive, and highly statistically significant relationship between the stakeholder participation index and academic performance.

Table 2: Correlation Between Stakeholder Participation and Academic Performance (N=113 schools)

		Academic Performance
Stakeholder Participation	Pearson Correlation (r)	.508*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*
Source: Field Data 2025

The correlation coefficient of r = .508 indicates a strong positive relationship. This means that schools with higher levels of perceived stakeholder participation also tend to have better academic performance. The relationship is highly statistically significant ($p < .001$), confirming its robustness.

A One-Way ANOVA was also conducted, and the results were highly significant ($F(3, 109) = 55.543$, $p < .001$). This confirms that there are statistically significant differences in academic performance among schools with varying levels of stakeholder engagement. Based on these highly significant results from both correlation and ANOVA, the null hypothesis (H_{02}: There is no statistically significant effect of stakeholder participation on academic performance) is rejected.

The thematic analysis of interviews with principals, BOM members, and education officers provided rich, contextual explanations for the quantitative findings. Four primary themes emerged: (1) The BOM as a Governance Anchor, (2) Parents as Co-educators and Resource Mobilizers, (3) The Untapped Potential of Alumni and Community, and (4) The Challenge of Meaningful Engagement.

Theme 1: The BOM as a Governance Anchor
Interviewees consistently highlighted the crucial role of a functional and engaged Board of Management in providing strategic oversight and ensuring accountability. Principal 3 noted:

> A good BOM is the backbone of the school. They are not just there to rubber-stamp the principal's decisions. Our BOM is active. They scrutinize the budget, they help us develop the strategic plan, and they hold me accountable for the KCSE results. Their involvement brings a level of professionalism and community trust that is invaluable (Principal 3, High-Performing School).

Theme 2: Parents as Co-educators and Resource Mobilizers
The role of parents was seen as twofold. First, as co-educators who reinforce discipline and monitor academic progress at home. Second, as a vital source of resource mobilization. Principal 5 noted:

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

> We cannot succeed without the parents. We have regular academic clinics where parents come to discuss their child's progress with the teachers. This creates a strong home-school partnership. Also, when we have a project, like building a new lab, it is the parents who contribute through fundraising. The government funds are never enough (Principal 5, Improving School)

Theme 3: The Untapped Potential of Alumni and the Community

This theme directly explains the lower quantitative score for alumni involvement. Leaders acknowledged that this was a major area of missed opportunity. Principal 7 said:

> We have a very weak alumni association. We know there are successful people who came from this school, but we have not been strategic in engaging them for mentorship or financial support. It is a resource we have failed to tap. The same goes for local businesses. We need to build those partnerships (Principal 7, Low-Performing School).

Theme 4: The Challenge of Meaningful Engagement

Despite the recognized benefits, several leaders spoke of the difficulty of moving beyond superficial or "tokenistic" participation, particularly with parents from low-income or low-literacy backgrounds. Education Officer 1, noted:

> We call parents for meetings, but many do not come because of work. And for those who come, many are not confident enough to speak up or challenge the school's decisions. So, participation exists on paper, but genuine, empowered engagement is still a challenge. We need to find better ways to reach and empower all our parents (Education Officer 1)

5. Discussion

The triangulated findings of this study provide compelling evidence that stakeholder participation is a powerful strategic capability with a significant and positive influence on academic performance in the public secondary schools of Machakos County. The quantitative analysis establishes the statistical strength of this relationship, while the qualitative data illuminates the complex mechanisms through which this influence is exerted.

The strong positive correlation ($r = .508$) and the highly significant ANOVA results unequivocally confirm that schools with higher levels of stakeholder engagement tend to achieve better academic outcomes. This finding provides robust, localized evidence to support the central tenets of Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), which argues that organizational effectiveness is enhanced when the interests of all key stakeholders are integrated into strategic decision-making. The schools in Machakos that actively involve parents, teachers, and their BOMs are, in effect, creating a broader and more resilient base of support, resources, and accountability, which translates into better performance.

The qualitative findings are crucial in explaining *how* this process works, aligning perfectly with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The themes of the BOM as a governance anchor and parents as co-educators illustrate the power of a strong Mesosystem the connection between the home and school environments. When the BOM provides effective oversight (an Exosystem influence) and parents are actively engaged in their children's learning (a Microsystem factor), they create a coherent and mutually reinforcing

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

support system around the learner. This "developmental redundancy," where the same positive messages about the importance of education are communicated at home and at school, is a powerful driver of student motivation and achievement.

The descriptive statistics offer a nuanced picture of which stakeholders are most effectively engaged. The very high mean score for teacher involvement in policy (M=4.24) suggests a healthy internal democratic culture in many schools. This is a critical finding, as it points to a form of distributed leadership where teachers are empowered as professional partners. This internal engagement likely fosters greater teacher motivation and ownership of school improvement initiatives.

However, the study also highlights significant areas of weakness, particularly the untapped potential of alumni and the community. The low mean score for alumni involvement (M=3.52) represents a major missed opportunity. Alumni can provide invaluable resources in the form of financial contributions, mentorship for current students, and professional networks. The failure to strategically cultivate these relationships means that schools are neglecting a potentially powerful asset. This finding suggests a need for school leaders to move beyond a narrow focus on parents and teachers to develop a broader strategy for community and alumni relations.

The qualitative theme of the challenge of meaningful engagement provides a crucial, sobering counter-narrative to the otherwise positive findings. The education officer's comment about tokenistic participation is a vital insight. It suggests that the quantitative measures of participation (e.g., meeting attendance) may not fully capture the quality or depth of that engagement. This aligns with the critique by Kipng'etich, Njeru, and Chebet (2021) and points to a critical challenge for school leaders: how to move from passive consultation to genuine, empowered co-creation with all stakeholders, especially those from marginalized backgrounds.

In summary, the discussion reveals that stakeholder participation is a multi-layered and dynamic process. The formal structures of governance, such as the BOM, provide an essential framework for accountability. The engagement of parents and teachers creates the immediate supportive ecosystem around the learner. However, the full potential of stakeholder engagement remains unrealized due to the underutilization of external stakeholders like alumni and the persistent challenge of ensuring that participation is not just present, but also meaningful and empowered.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that stakeholder participation has a strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County. The active engagement of internal stakeholders, particularly teachers in policy formulation and parents in supporting their children's learning, creates a robust foundation for academic success. These practices foster a culture of shared accountability, enhance resource mobilization, and strengthen the crucial home-school partnership. However, the study also concludes that the full potential of stakeholder engagement is not yet realized. The involvement of external stakeholders, such as alumni and the broader community, remains an underdeveloped resource. Furthermore, significant challenges persist in moving beyond tokenistic forms of participation to create genuinely inclusive and empowered governance structures, especially for parents from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, while stakeholder participation is a powerful strategic capability, its effectiveness is contingent on

the ability of school leaders to cultivate deep, authentic, and broad-based partnerships across the entire school ecosystem.

Based on the study's findings, the following targeted recommendations are proposed:

1. For School Leaders (Principals and BOMs):
    (i) Institutionalize Structured Stakeholder Engagement: It is recommended that schools move beyond ad-hoc meetings to create a formal, annual calendar of stakeholder engagement. This should include regular academic clinics for parents, structured consultations with the BOM on the strategic plan, and forums for community feedback.
    (ii) Develop a Strategic Alumni and Community Partnership Plan: Principals and BOMs should proactively develop a strategy to identify, cultivate, and engage alumni and local businesses. This could involve creating an alumni database, launching mentorship programs, and seeking targeted sponsorships for academic initiatives.
2. For Policymakers (Ministry of Education):
    (i) Strengthen Capacity Building for BOMs and Parents' Associations: It is recommended that the Ministry of Education develop and roll out a mandatory, standardized training program for all BOM and PA members upon their election. This training should focus on their roles in strategic planning, financial oversight, and fostering effective community engagement.
    (ii) Develop and Disseminate Best-Practice Guidelines: The Ministry should create and distribute a practical toolkit for schools on "Effective Stakeholder Engagement," providing templates, case studies, and actionable strategies for building strong school-community partnerships.
3. For Future Research:
    (i) A qualitative case study comparing a school with very high stakeholder engagement to one with low engagement could provide a rich, in-depth understanding of the cultural and leadership factors that facilitate or hinder participation.
    (ii) An action research project where researchers work with a school to design and implement a new stakeholder engagement strategy and measure its impact on both participation levels and academic outcomes would be highly valuable.

Citation: Muuo, J. G; Mwania, P; Ooko, G & Wafula, J. A. (2025). The Influence of Stakeholder Participation on Academic Performance of public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa,* 9(10), 284 - 295.

References

Barney, J. B. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management, 17*(1), 99–120.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.

Bryson, J. M. (2019). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement* (5th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Bush, T. (2020). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Chikoko, V., & Mthembu, T. T. (2021). Decentralized school leadership in South Africa: Potentials and tensions. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 49*(1), 35–53.

Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Davies, B., & Davies, B. J. (2004). Strategic leadership. *School Leadership & Management, 24*(1), 29–38.

Ferreira, J. J. M., Fernandes, C. I., & Ferreira, F. A. F. (2022). What makes organizations unique? Looking inside the box. *Journal of Business Research, 139*, 664–674.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman.

Fullan, M. (2014). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. Jossey-Bass.

Jeynes, W. H. (2018). The relationship between parental involvement and student achievement: A meta-analysis. *Harvard Educational Review, 88*(3), 391–414.

Kafu, P. A., & Simiyu, J. (2020). School leadership and academic achievement in Kenyan public secondary schools. *International Journal of Education and Research, 8*(4), 55–65.

Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). (2022). *KCSE national examination performance report*. KNEC.

Kipng'etich, T., Njeru, E., & Chebet, S. (2021). The illusion of participation: An analysis of stakeholder involvement in Kenyan school governance. *Journal of African Education, 2*(3), 45-62.

Kiptoo, B., & Mutua, J. (2023). Transforming learning through technology: A Kenyan perspective. *African Journal of Educational Technology, 5*(2), 88–102.

Korir, E. K., & Sitienei, C. S. (2022). Stakeholders participation and academic performance in public secondary schools in Belgut Sub-County, Kericho County, Kenya. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 24*(11), 30–37.

Kurzhals, C., Graf-Vlachy, L., & König, A. (2020). Strategic leadership and strategic foresight: A state-of-the-art review and future research agenda. *European Management Journal, 38*(2), 241-253.

Kyei-Addo, E., Akyeampong, K., & Kushitor, A. (2023). Improving school quality in junior high schools in Ghana: Teachers' myth and reality of a decentralization policy. *SAGE Open, 13*(2).

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. The Wallace Foundation.

Ministry of Education. (2023). *Framework for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in junior secondary schools*. Government of Kenya.

Muthoni, J., & Musyoka, P. (2022). The role of stakeholder theory in public school management in Kenya. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy, 9*(1), 78-94.

Mwikali, L., Ndolo, V., & Wekesa, E. (2024). Resource mobilization and community engagement in rural Kenyan schools. *Journal of Educational Development in Africa, 7*(1), 19-35.

Ngware, M. W., Ciera, J., Musyoka, P. K., & Oketch, M. (2012). The influence of classroom learning environment on students' academic achievement in Kenyan primary schools. *Education and Urban Society, 44*(6), 707–727.

OECD. (2021). *Education at a glance 2021: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing.

Republic of Kenya. (2013). *The Basic Education Act, No. 14 of 2013*. Government Printer.

Republic of Kenya. (2018). *National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018–2022*. Ministry of Education.

Sahlberg, P. (2015). *Finnish lessons 2.0: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* Teachers College Press.

Schleicher, A. (2020). *PISA 2018: Insights and interpretations*. OECD Publishing.

UNESCO. (2021). *Global education monitoring report 2021: Non-state actors in education*. UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO. (2022). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO Publishing.

World Bank. (2022). *World development report 2022: Finance for an equitable recovery*. The World Bank Group.