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Involvement of Academic Heads of Department in the Procurement of School Goods and Services and Principles Effectiveness in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Laikipia West Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract
The aim of this research was to examine the connection between academic HoD engagement in the procurement of school goods and services and principals' general efficacy in secondary school administration. The contention of the article is that any organization's ability to succeed is based on both its leadership caliber and organizational structure. In secondary school administration, delegation of responsibility is a successful tactic. Heads of Departments (HoDs) are expected to support principals in managing the operations of their schools. Nevertheless, administrators frequently ignore the academic HoDs in their schools, which leads to inefficient administration, even in the face of explicit directives regarding their responsibilities.The study was based on the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership and used an ex post facto research approach. The target population consisted of 388 respondents, including one Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE), one Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), one representative of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), and 335 academic Heads of Departments (HoDs) in the 67 public secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-County of Laikipia County, Kenya. The study sample consisted of 298 HoDs from 59 secondary schools, chosen using a stratified selection procedure, and one representative from KNUT, SCDE, and QASO who were purposefully selected. A questionnaire for the HoDs and an interview schedule for the SCDE, QASO, and KNUT representatives were used to gather data. Quantitative data were evaluated descriptively using means and standard deviations, qualitative data were grouped into emerging themes and analyzed using frequencies and percentages. A.05. alpha level was used to evaluate hypotheses using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. Findings revealed that involvement of HoDs in procuring school goods and services (r=.815, *p*=0.00) was positively and statistically related to the principals' effectiveness in managing secondary schools. Fear of failure, fear of losing control, and short deadlines were found to be the biggest hindrance to the delegation of management responsibilities to HoDs. Sensitizing principals on the benefits of delegating management responsibilities and training HoDs on managerial aspects were identified as the best strategies for enhancing delegation of responsibilities to HoDs. The study suggests that HoDs be trained in financial management and procurement, among other areas, in light of the findings.

Key Words: Delegation; Head of Department; Procurement; School goods and services; School management

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1. Introduction

Delegation of responsibilities is an effective management strategy in any organization. Indeed, it increases levels of motivation among employees in assisting an organization and its management to deliver on its mandate (Senyuta, 2013). An organization also gains a competitive edge, increases productivity, expedites work completion, and accumulates expertise. Furthermore, managers can reduce functional loads, increase employee happiness, and foster a culture of trust and cooperation between them and their staff (Awawdeh, 2014). Therefore, delegation of responsibilities when applied in the school organizational management where the principal delegates specific responsibilities to the Heads of Department (HoDs) would be expected to strengthen the mental and physical efforts made by HoDs and principals in carrying out their duty.

According to a Rutherford and Boyle (2016) study on schools in the United Kingdom (UK), department heads are becoming more complex in their roles as they take on more duties within the senior management team, but the levels of power, support, and pay that go along with it are often insufficient. Inadequate time, curriculum stability, professional growth, vision, and communication were further highlighted by Rutherford and Boyle. However, Kinsella (2017) noted a number of factors that increase the need for school administrators to delegate some leadership duties to those in middle management positions. Student enrollment, marketing, parent management, salary and budgeting, hiring qualified instructors, growing unique programs and enhancing facilities, leadership succession, community connections, financing professional development, and governance were some of these facets.

Heads of Department (HoDs), Deputy Principals, and Principals make up the School Management Teams that oversee and administer schools in South Africa. HoDs are responsible for providing leadership in certain departments in South African schools. As a result, they directly affect how well those departments teach and learn (Department of Education, 2016). Additionally, the Employment of Educators Act, 64 (1998), which states that the job description of a Head of Department (HoD) is contingent upon the methods and requirements of a specific school, provides guidance for the work of HoDs and includes, but is not limited to, administration, teaching, hiring staff, organizing extracurricular activities, and facilitating effective communication within the school.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) Report of 2018 in Kenya titled "Role of Heads of Departments" states that HoDs were brought into the school system in the 1980s to help with the administration of public secondary schools. As a result, under the current system of school management, heads of department (HoDs) are senior teachers assigned to specific units or departments within public secondary schools. The unit may deal with a single topic or a group of related subjects, sports and games, boarding, guidance, and counselling. HoDs serve as a crucial conduit between a school's upper management and the teaching staff. HoDs play a crucial role in curriculum delivery and instruction as middle-level managers. Being a

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HoD might be a problem rather than an advantage at some public secondary schools, while in others, their presence is crucial (Wanyonyi et al., 2023).

The roles and responsibilities of Heads of Departments (HoDs) in secondary school education management are delineated in the School Management Guide. According to Kirui et al. (2015), these comprise personnel management for teachers and students, financial (Budgetary Process), curriculum and instruction, and people management. As part of curriculum and instruction, heads of department (HoDs) are in charge of curriculum and instruction, curriculum grasp, schemes of work formulation, records of work maintenance, lesson plans and notes, records of tests and examinations, and specifying subject syllabuses for each class. They also oversee the maintenance of student performance records by department personnel, the coordination of methodology and teaching methods review meetings, and the use of records of internal and external assessments to improve subject teaching and learning (Ataya, 2015).

Bastian and Henry (2015) observed that academic HoDs assume multiple functions; they are the major spokespersons for departments' staff and students. Further, secondary schools are increasingly depending upon departmental heads to execute and put into practice institution's policy and other responsibilities of the institution top administrators. Van Deventer and Kruger (2013) further observed that HoDs are representatives of top administration at departmental level. They articulate the requirements of the department to members on behalf of senior or top management and vice versa. Consequently, HoDs are a necessary link between the administration and staff at the department. It can therefore be argued that when HoDs fulfil their roles effectively, there is good and constructive communication between the administration and the department and conflicts and disputes are therefore avoided. When HoDs are not involved or are not effective in fulfilling their roles, then there is likely to be no harmony between the administration and the department because neither of the two would understand the necessities or viewpoints of the other (Oumer, 2015).

According to the Ministry of Education's circulars, academic HoDs' responsibilities in secondary schools are unambiguously defined. These duties encompass leading the curriculum, engaging with students, parents, and the community, contributing to the creation of a learning vision, and encouraging a responsible and supportive learning environment. Thus, in addition to being an administrator, the HoD also serves as a manager. In addition to doing regular and advisory work, HoDs take the lead in developing policies for the departments and also participate in their interpretation and implementation. Principals must delegate these responsibilities to the HoDs in order for them to manage the schools efficiently.

1.2 Objective and Hypothesis

This research sought to ascertain whether there was any relationship between principals' involvement of academic HoDs in the procurement of school good and services and their overall effectiveness in managing public secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-County, Kenya. The following hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance:

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant relationship between principals' involvement of academic HoDs in procurement of school goods and services and their overall effectiveness in management of secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-County, Kenya.

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2. Literature Review

2.2.1 Effectiveness of Principals in Management of Secondary Schools in Kenya

The principal has a major impact on the day-to-day operations of the school, which makes them a crucial part of the educational system. "Devolved administrative structure should allow school principals to become even better leaders while they create an environment that encourages smooth and effective learning" (Siddique, 2017, p. 54). According to Chaplain (2013), the principal and the senior management group are in responsibility of strategic planning, which includes deciding on the school's direction (leadership) and setting up the daily operations (management). Both aspects play a significant role in establishing and preserving an institution's seamless learning environment. Stated differently, the principle serves as a school's leader and needs to have a clear vision for the institution. According to Bernard and Goodyear (2010), the principle is a standard-setter who guides the creation of expectations and aspirations for both teachers and students to do well. He or she helps instructors with their issues and makes improvements to teaching strategies, resources, and assessments. As a result, the principle offers effective quality control. With principal support, educators can improve their assessment strategies and develop their ability to analyze and comprehend data. Principals need to possess a few key skills in order to perform their administrative responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

Delegation is the transfer of any power or responsibility to another person (typically from a boss to a subordinate) for the purpose of completing specific tasks. Delegation is one of the core concepts of management leadership (D'Souza, 2012). Within the realm of educational administration, principals assign teachers to perform teaching, learning, extracurricular, and administrative tasks in an effort to finish the work or assignment that has been given to them (Rwiza, 2016). Jackson (2010) views delegation as completing tasks via the assistance of others. Since schools are complicated organizations by design, delegation of tasks and responsibilities is inevitable.

While bearing in mind that teaching is his main priority, the principal is responsible for supervising and administering every area of school operations. If school management handles all of the work by themselves, the school will not be able to achieve its aims and objectives (Muriu, 2011). Stated differently, it is impossible for one person to manage every department, take care of all correspondence, handle disciplinary matters, work every day of the week, teach every subject in the curriculum, and be in charge of every club and society. Instead of worrying that the other instructors may replace them, the principal should trust and have faith in them, allowing them to utilize their talents. Furthermore, by utilizing even the most difficult or resistant employees, the principal may gain their trust, and they will feel more wanted and motivated. Experience has shown that when teachers are heavily involved in utilizing the original plans of delegation, they are more highly motivated to achieve targets (Tunzo, 2014).

When delegation is done well, it will result in the creation of membership-based committees that span departments and are used to foster teamwork, plan events, and share information within the school community. According to Missik (2014), when all members participate in decision-making, delegation increases democratic leadership in the school while providing the principal with access to a range of viewpoints. In the end, it will serve to strengthen the bonds between the principal and the teachers as well as the instructors themselves, which will enhance school performance. Regular delegation of responsibilities achieves more than only relieving the principal of some of her workload. Successful delegation, in accordance with Khan (2012), can increase the degree of dedication that

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teachers and other community members have to the success of the school. Because they are more concerned in the school's success and are aware of the difficulties in preserving it, teachers with greater administrative responsibilities are more likely to be devoted. A principal's authority is not trampled upon when they assign a task to a committee or member of the staff.

Principals must constantly follow up with the people to whose responsibilities have been allocated while delegating, according to Ndaita (2015). Principals need to set up regular meetings with those who have been assigned tasks in order to successfully follow up. Moreover, they can design a progressive form that these responsibility holders must periodically complete, ask committees to maintain and distribute meeting minutes, or establish a procedure for these people to report back to them in order to facilitate their work. To find out how much principals have trusted and delegated to their academic HoDs, this study sought to ascertain the extent to which this may be enhanced for effective school management.

2.2.2 Role of HoDs in Procurement of School Goods and Services

Procedures for procurement are crucial for every organization that wants to acquire resources in an economical way. The Public Procurement and Disposal Act (PPDA), which was created by the government in 2005 in response to this requirement, was primarily created to streamline the process of obtaining goods and services in the public sector (Republic of Kenya, 2010). This Act outlined the processes and guidelines that must be adhered to in order to improve value for money and cost effectiveness in procurement. One of the six support services that will ensure the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan of 2006–2011 is implemented and services are delivered is procurement in secondary schools. Since public monies are used to pay their purchases, public secondary schools are classified as public entities.

The Public Procurement Manual for Schools and Colleges, 2009, the Public Procurement Regulations of 2006, and the PPDA of 2005 regulate procurement in these institutions. The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) created the latter document, which is sector-specific and serves as guidance on procurement and disposal issues concerning the aforementioned organizations. In order to further support the Act in guiding the procurement and disposal procedures, further PPRA documents should be included (Kenyanya et al., 2010).

Tendering is a common procurement method used in secondary schools, with open tendering being the recommended method. Restricted open tendering and selective tendering, however, are also used under certain circumstances. As permitted under PPOA, schools are permitted to use framework contracting, according to Kinyanjui (2012). It would be appropriate for secondary schools as a way to consistently acquire big amounts of products—the same thing—over time. The school would have to evaluate a list of providers if selective tendering was to be used.

Despite the laid down procedures for procurement by the government, several financial leakages have persisted in the public education institutions. Adan (2010) notes, in the year 2010, several education officials were suspended due to fraud in procurement process of educational goods and services. Kinyanjui (2012) adds that procurement corruption has gotten worse in the majority of Kenya's public schools. Gachomba (2012) brought up this issue as well, noting that school tendering committees have a reputation for being weak on authority. Their composition as per the Act (Kenya Gazette Supplement No.

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92, 2006) can cause conflicts between the committee and the school principal especially where either has vested interests. The principal, who serves as the school's financial manager, always takes over the final responsibility in procurement, where money is to be used, from the tendering committee.

According to Koros et al. (2009), a number of head teachers of public secondary schools disregarded financial criteria related to managing their institutions, one of which calls for the participation of HoDs in the procurement process. The growth and expansion of instructional facilities in public secondary schools have been impeded as a result. According to Gachomba (2012), the procurement of inferior goods and services in public schools is a result of several factors, including the lack of inspection committees and receipts, a shortage of personnel to carry out the various duties outlined in the procurement Act, and a lack of involvement from other supplementary parties like HoDs in the planning of the procurement plans. Lack of human resources is one problem Kenyan secondary schools are facing, according to the Ministry of Education's 2006–2011 Strategic Plan. The secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-County were found to be wasting resources, according to Wanjiku (2014). The reason behind these wastes was unknown; it's possible that the principals didn't assign HoDs procurement responsibility. Ascertaining whether this was the case was the aim of this study.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study employed a theoretical framework that comprised of path-goal theory. The path-goal theory was developed by Robert House in 1971 (Russel & Cohn, 2012). The Path-Goal theory concentrates on determining a leader's style or conduct that best fits the worker and the workplace in order to achieve a goal. Enhancing an individual's motivation, empowerment, and happiness levels is crucial for their constructive contribution to the organization. The ability of a leader to support, encourage, and acknowledge the efforts of their team members is a key factor in determining employee satisfaction. The Path-Goal theory identifies directive, supportive, participatory, and goal-oriented actions in leaders. According to the principle, a leader can select multiple styles that complement each other and can be effective in a certain situation.

Each of these approaches will work in certain circumstances but not in others, according to the hypothesis. It continues by stating that the requirements, locus of control, experience, perceived ability, contentment, readiness to leave the company, and anxiety of the employee all have an impact on the relationship between a leader's efficacy and style. Workplace characteristics include things like team dynamics and task organization that are not within an employee's control. In a similar vein, non-routine jobs are far better suited for the participative style of work than routine ones. A supportive leadership style is required when team cohesiveness is minimal; on the other hand, a directive or possibly achievement-oriented style is more effective when performance-oriented team norms are present. In order to combat team norms that are in opposition to the stated aims of the team, leaders ought to employ a directive approach (Dare & Saleem, 2022).

The Path-Goal theory was relevant to this study since a school's principle is the leader responsible for directing the entirety of the organization towards accomplishing its objectives. This idea makes sense within the study's framework because it highlights how crucial it is for the principal to clearly define expectations for the subordinates, involve them in those expectations, and give them with the tools necessary to achieve those objectives. In various scenarios within the school setting, principals can apply the various leadership philosophies outlined in the path goal model. As a result, path-goal theory assisted the

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principal in realizing the crucial function academic HoDs play and the necessity of assigning responsibilities. In addition, the principle will assist his staff members in analyzing the workplace to detect obstacles and devise solutions. This can be accomplished through efficient instructional monitoring, which is impacted by the administrative background of principals. In terms of school management, the setting or atmosphere in which the principle and the administration work is equally significant and occasionally difficult.

3. Methodology

The study made use of the Ex-post facto research design: This type of study is quasi-experimental in nature and looks at the effects of an exogenous independent variable on a pre-study dependent variable. In the Laikipia West Sub-County, public secondary schools hosted the study's participants. Statistics from the Sub-County Education Office indicated that there were 67 public schools in Laikipia West Sub-County at the time of the study. This location was chosen for the study due to indications of inefficient management in the local public secondary schools. Wanjiku's (2014) investigation revealed resource waste in the region's public secondary schools, indicating problems with procurement and financial administration.

The Sub-County KNUT representative, the Sub-County QASO, the Sub-County director of education, and 335 HoDs from 67 public secondary schools in Laikipia West were the main subjects of the study (Ministry of Education, 2020). Table 3.1 displays the distribution of the target population.

Table 1: Target Population for the Study

Category of Respondents	Number
Academic Heads of Departments	335
Sub-county Director of Education	1
Sub-County QASO	1
Sub-County KNUT Representative	1
Total	**338**

Source: Field Data 2025

Purposive and stratified sampling methods were used in this investigation to create the sample. The SCDE, QASO, and KNUT representative were chosen by the use of purposeful sampling. Using a stratified sampling procedure, the academic HoDs were chosen. The categories used to stratify schools were national, extra-county, county, and sub-county schools. The schools were sampled as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 2: Sample Size for Schools According to Category

Category of Schools	Population (N)	HoDs Sample size (n)
National	5	5
Extra-county	40	40
County	70	70
Sub-county	220	180
Total	**335**	**295**

Source: Field Data 2025

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Consequently, 298 respondents—295 HoDs, 1 SCDE, 1 QASO, and 1 KNUT representative - made up the study's overall sample size.

Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaires were used to collected data from the academic HoDs. They comprised of Likert items that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed with the statements that characterized the incident. Each of the five levels—strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and extremely agree—was given a score between one and five. The purpose of the interview schedule was to collect data from the SCDE, QASO, and KNUT representative. The primary topics of discussion during the interview schedule were the difficulties in assigning managerial duties to HoDs and the methods for overcoming them. In addition to the data acquired from the HoDs, the interview schedule was also utilized to enhance the information from questionnaires.

Qualitative data was organized into emergent themes and frequencies and percentages were utilized to analyze the data. Quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics like means and standard deviations. At the alpha level of .05, Karl Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (1948) was employed to assess the hypotheses. Version 24.0 of the SPSS software was employed for the analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

There was a 73.5% response rate because 219 of the 298 respondents who were targeted completed the survey. Robbins and Dawson (2020) recommended a 70% average response rate for surveys intended for educators, yet this survey's response rate is far higher.

4.1 Respondents Profile

The study sought to establish the profile of the HoDs in terms of the number of years they have worked in their current schools as well as the number of years they have served as HoDs. Table 4.2 summarizes this information:

Table 3: Respondents' Profile

Profile	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Years working in current school	1-5 years	21	9.7
	6-10 years	106	49.1
	11-15 years	67	31.0
	Above 16 years	22	10.2
	Total	**216**	**100.0**
Year served as HoD in current school	1-2 years	44	20.4
	3-4 years	98	45.4
	5-6 years	52	24.1
	Above 6 years	22	10.2
	Total	**216**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data 2025

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According to Table 3 results, 49.1% of the respondents had worked for the current school for six to ten years, 31% for eleven to fifteen years, 10.2% for sixteen years or more, and 9.7% for fewer than five years. According to the findings, more than 90% of the participants had been employed by their present school for a minimum of five years. This result suggests that the majority of HoDs had enough knowledge about their participation in school administration and the efficiency of school management. According to the data, over 80% of the participants had been Head of Departments (HoDs) in their respective schools for a minimum of three years. Consequently, most respondents were privy to sufficient information regarding involvement of HoDs in school management.

4.2 HoDs Involvement in Procurement of School Goods and Services

HoDs' engagement in the purchase of supplies and services for schools made up the study's second independent variable. A set of twenty statements that evaluated the respondents' level of involvement in the purchase of supplies and services for schools were given to them. The percentage distribution of the sampled HoDs is shown in Table 4.3 when they are categorized based on how much they value their participation in the purchase of supplies and services for the school.

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Table 4: HoDs Involvement in Procurement of Goods and Services

S/N	Statement In my school, the principal involves me in:	1	2	3	4	5
1	Developing the list of requirements for procurement	4.2	24.1	15.1	41.3	15.3
2	The tendering process for school goods and services	5.6	21.8	10.6	40.3	21.8
3	Evaluating supplier options	5.6	25.2	9.7	48.9	10.6
4	Negotiating contracts with selected suppliers	4.2	19.9	22.3	31.4	22.2
5	Determining the best price and specific delivery terms for goods that school orders for my department	3.2	16.2	26.3	41.0	13.2
6	Assessment of the quantity and quality of goods that have been delivered to the school	5.1	20.4	17.3	36.9	20.4
7	Overseeing the payment for goods and services delivered to the school	4.6	19.4	16.4	35.9	23.6
8	Ensuring that the procured goods are stored at the right places	3.7	20.4	27.3	25.9	22.7
9	Supervising the usage of goods and services procured in my department	5.1	19.0	27.3	27.3	21.3
10	Ensuring early procurement of goods in my department before they depleted	4.2	20.4	25.9	27.3	22.2
11	Assessing the quality of school goods and services procured	3.7	20.4	17.3	35.5	23.1
12	Ensuring that procurement is done on the right time to ensure smooth running of the school	2.3	34.3	5.6	37.0	20.8
13	Selecting a consistent and reliable supplier	4.2	24.1	14.3	41.8	15.7
14	Accompanying development of written agreement for procurement transactions.	5.6	41.8	10.2	20.7	21.8
15	Addressing complaints related to the procurement process.	10.6	34.7	19.7	29.8	5.1
16	Ensuring that procurement is done in line with school budget	4.2	19.9	20.5	35.2	22.2
17	Enforcing compliance with procurement regulations set by the government in the school	5.1	20.4	36.9	17.8	19.9
18	Ensuring there is transparency and accountability of procurement funds	4.6	19.4	23.6	28.7	23.6
19	Ensuring that the goods and services procured by the school are of good quality	3.7	20.4	16.4	36.9	22.7
20	Ensuring timely payment of procured goods and services	5.1	19.0	24.1	31.0	20.8

Source: Field Data 2025

Out of the 20 statements used to evaluate HoD's engagement in school goods and services procurement, results in Table 4 demonstrate that over 50 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with 18 of them. In particular, over 50% of respondents agreed that their principals involve them in: developing the list of requirements for procurement, tendering

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process for school goods and services, evaluating supplier options, negotiating contracts with suppliers, and determining best prices and specific delivery terms. Similarly, the HoDs are involved in: assessment of the quantity and quality of goods delivered to their schools, overseeing the payment of suppliers, ensuring that procured goods are stored in the right places, supervising the usage of procured goods, and ensuring timely procurement of goods or services needed the school. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that principals in the majority of secondary schools do work with Heads of Departments (HoDs) to evaluate the caliber of the goods and services the school purchases, choose dependable and consistent suppliers, handle complaints pertaining to procurement, enforce procurement laws and regulations, encourage accountability and transparency, and make sure suppliers are paid on time.

These results suggest that the majority of study region school principals involve HoDs in most aspects of goods and service procurement. This include creating demand lists, putting out bids for school supplies and services, looking at potential suppliers, making sure that supplies are acquired on schedule, and guaranteeing the caliber of the products that are delivered. This result is consistent with the Wanjala (2021) survey, in which 69.4% of participants felt that principals confer with HoDs prior to budgeting and acquiring departmental needs. The findings also support the study of Moruri (2015), which found that most of the tendering committees in the public secondary schools in Nyamache Sub County were composed of six HoDs. This implies that HoDs' opinions are given a lot of weight when making procurement decisions at Kenya's public secondary schools.

Less than 50% of the participants concurred with statement 14, which suggested that House of Deputies (HoDs) had a responsibility to guarantee that procurements are accompanied by a written agreement. This result implies that HoDs have not been given this function in the majority of the research area's schools. This result is in line with the observations made by Moruri (2015), who noted that the secretary of the tendering committee, who is typically the head of the procurement unit, also referred to as the storekeeper, handles the majority of the documentation work associated with school procurement. In a similar vein, less than 50% of the participants concurred with statement 17, which put out the idea that HODs are responsible for guaranteeing adherence to government regulations. This result suggests that HoDs are not actively involved in enforcing compliance with procurement laws and regulations in the majority of the study areas' schools.

The results align with those of Wanjala (2021), who noted that the majority of public secondary school tendering committee members lack sufficient training in procurement-related matters. Consequently, they may not have complete knowledge of all government regulations that govern school procurement. In addition, Moruri (2015) observed that tendering committee members in most public secondary schools have little voice vis-à-vis the principal and; consequently, most of the decisions are made in line with the wishes of the principal. This implies that HoDs may have minimal power to enforce compliance with government regulation in situations where noncompliance has been sanctioned by the principal.

4.3 Effectiveness of Principals in the Management of Schools

The study's dependent variable was the principals' efficacy in running their schools. HoDs were encouraged to estimate the success of principals in their schools based on how well they handle a set of twenty managerial activities that were included in the questionnaires in order to gauge this efficacy. A five-point evaluation system was used: 1 represented

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ineffectiveness, 2 below average, 3 average, 4 above average, and 5 very effective. The results are shown in Table 4.4:

Table 5: Effectiveness of Principals in Managing Schools

S/N	Statement How effective is your principal in handling the following tasks:	1	2	3	4	5
1	Resolution of conflicts in school	15.3	20.4	20.4	38.9	5.1
2	Managing cases of school unrest	1.9	19.4	19.9	38.0	20.8
3	Handling of discipline cases in the school	1.4	19.9	19.9	38.0	20.8
4	Handling of financial mismanagement in the school	1.9	19.4	19.9	19.9	38.9
5	Improving the academic performance of the school	10.2	17.1	15.7	35.6	21.3
6	Running of school calendar of activities	12.5	15.3	14.4	23.1	34.7
7	Appraising the performance of staff	10.6	17.6	14.4	36.1	21.3
8	Ensuring participation of the school in sports activities	3.2	18.1	20.4	40.3	18.1
9	Facilitating participation in of the school in drama	24.1	27.5	2.8	26.9	18.8
10	Enabling participation of the school in music festivals	16.9	37.9	7.8	27.8	9.7
11	Maintaining active school clubs	19.4	35.8	2.8	24.7	16.4
12	Implementing a student's award schemes in the school	28.7	33.6	2.8	19.6	15.3
13	Implementing a teachers' award scheme in the school	22.2	33.3	2.8	21.8	19.9
14	Ensuring students' involvement in school decisions	25.9	28.8	5.9	20.8	18.5
15	Facilitating teachers' involvement in decision making	4.6	37.0	18.1	38.9	1.4
16	Supporting the adoption of effective teaching strategies	2.8	25.0	13.4	37.0	21.8
17	Enabling students' active participation in daily running of the school	25.5	33.8	1.4	19.0	20.4
18	Aiding effective classroom management by teachers	18.5	19.4	3.2	18.1	40.7
19	Creating a stress-free environment within the school	5.9	27.4	26.9	19.0	20.8
20	Ensuring effective curriculum implementation by the academic staff	2.3	26.9	12.0	37.5	21.3

Source: Field Data 2025

Table 5 results indicate that, on 10 of the 20 managerial duties, the majority of respondents gave their principals positive ratings. The favourably rated tasks include: managing of school unrest, handling discipline cases, handling financial mismanagement in schools, improving academic performance, appraising the performance of staff, running the school calendar of activities, ensuring school participation in sports activities, supporting the adoption of effective teaching strategies, aiding effective classroom management, and ensuring effective curriculum implementation. The findings suggest that principals in most of the schools have been effective in performing these tasks. The findings are consistent with Ombasa (2021), who found that secondary schools in Laikipia County had adopted various strategies of managing indiscipline including guidance and counselling, manual punishment, and expelling delinquents. These strategies have been regarded as effective. The findings are also congruent with Kongori (2019) who found that Laikipia County has recorded a positive trend in the academic performance as indicate in the county mean scores for the five years between 2013 and 2018.

However, the vast majority of the HoDs reported unfavourable ratings to their principals with regards to facilitate participation of the school in drama and music festivals,

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maintaining active school clubs, implementation of a students' and teachers' award scheme, ensuring students involvement in school decisions, and enabling active participation of students' in daily running of the school. These results imply that principals in the majority of the Laikipia West Sub-county's schools have not carried out these duties in an efficient manner. The findings align with the study conducted by Muthike et al. (2017), which discovered that co-curricular activities in secondary schools located in Central Kenya have little administrative backing, leading to a negligible impact of these activities on the holistic growth of students. The findings also support those of Marakis (2021), who found that there was little teacher and student involvement in secondary school decision-making in Mombasa County, Kenya.

4.4 Relationship between HoDs Involvement in Procurement of School Goods and Services and Principals' Effectiveness in Managing Schools

Finding out whether there was a significant correlation between the general efficacy of principals in managing public secondary schools in Kenya's Laikipia West Sub-county and their usage of academic HoDs in the purchase of supplies and services for the school was the second purpose of the study. A hypothesis (H02) that stated there was no statistically significant correlation between the academic HoDs' involvement in school supply purchases and the principals' general efficacy in supervising and managing public secondary schools in Kenya's Laikipia West Sub-County was created in order to explore this relationship. Additionally, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to investigate this link. Table 4.5 displays the outcomes.

Table 6: Correlation between HoD involvement in Procurement of Goods and Services and Principals' Effectiveness in Managing Schools

		Effectiveness of Principals in Managing Schools score
Involvement of HoDs in Procurement of Goods and Services	Pearson Correlation	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	216

Source: Field Data 2025

The findings shown in Table 6 indicate a robust and affirmative correlation between the performance of principals in managing schools and their involvement in the purchase of goods and services (r=.815, n=216). This suggests that administrators' ability to manage schools would be significantly enhanced by increasing the engagement of HoDs in the purchase of goods and services. At the 0.05 level of significance, the p-value indicates that this link is not statistically significant (p<.05). The study's hypothesis is rejected as a result of this finding, which leads to the conclusion that there is significant correlation between principals' involvement of academic HoDs in procurement of supplies and services for the school and their general efficacy in managing public secondary schools in Kenya's Laikipia West Sub-County.

The idea that HoD involvement enhances resource allocation provides a reasonable explanation for the high positive correlation shown between HoDs' involvement in the procurement of goods and services and principal effectiveness in the overall management of the school. HoDs are more knowledgeable about the particular demands and specifications of their departments. By including them in the purchase of goods and services for schools,

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principals can acquire their knowledge and apply it to improve resource allocation. It guarantees that the school only acquires supplies and equipment that each department deems essential, improving departmental performance and, ultimately, the efficacy of the school's management as a whole.

Budget control and cost reductions are possible outcomes of including HoDs in the purchasing of supplies and services for schools. HoDs are more aware of the financial effects of the supplies and services their departments need. By involving them in the purchase of these products and services, the principals are able to find more affordable options and bargain for lower rates. The savings can then be transferred to other high-priority areas, improving the overall efficacy of the school's management. Furthermore, buying appropriate and high-quality goods and services for schools is facilitated by incorporating HoDs in the procurement process. HoDs have first-hand knowledge of the desired quality standards and functionalities of goods and services needed in their departments. Their involvement ensures that the procured goods and services are of the highest quality and suitable for the intended purposes. When every department receives appropriate and high-quality supplies and services, the principal's overall efficacy in overseeing the school is enhanced.

From the Context, Input, Process, Output (CIPO) Systems theory of education, involvement of HoDs may have contributed to overall effectiveness of principals in managing schools by enhancing the acquisition of inputs needed to run the school system effectively. There are inputs are vital to optimal running of the school including teaching and learning materials, food stuffs for school meals, electricity, security services, and water supply among others. Involving HoDs in procurement may have led to enhanced acquisition of these input leading to overall effectiveness in the management of the schools. Involvement of HoDs may also have led to streamlined and more accountable procurement processes. Involvement of HoD may have enhanced compliance to procurement procedures including competitive bidding. It may also have increased the transparency of the procurement process by HoDs acting as "eyes" and "ears" of the principals in the procurement transactions. Enhanced delivery of inputs and streamlined procurement process might have eventually led to better school outputs including better academic achievement and improved performance in sports and other co-curricular activities.

From the Path-Goal theory perspective, involvement of HoDs in procurement of school goods and services may have cultivated a unified vision within the schools. Principal's effectiveness in managing schools is enhanced because they are able to work together with HoDs towards common goals and priorities. The HoDs and the principal get to agree on which goods and services to prioritize and those than can be given low priority during the allocation of resources. This approach creates a sense of ownership in the procurement decisions made by the school management. Consequently, the HoDs develop stronger commitment towards the implementation of the procurement decisions.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that principals' efficacy in overseeing public secondary schools is strengthened when they involve HoDs in the procurement of supplies and services for the school. Including HoDs in the purchase of products and services tends to increase openness and accountability, which promotes effective use of school resources. Including HoDs in the procurement process also allows for the inclusion of diverse viewpoints and skills, which improves decision-making.

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The findings led to the recommendation that HoDs ought to get training on topics pertaining to procurement, including the policies and practices of government procurement. The HoDs' involvement in the purchase of supplies and services for schools will be strengthened by this training. HODs will be able to contribute greater value to the school procurement process if they are aware of the regulations and procedures around procurement.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the findings, subsequent investigations could potentially conduct more research in other sub-counties and counties around the nation to see if the same correlation holds true. To make comparisons easier, similar research should be conducted at private secondary schools in future studies. The external validity of the study findings will be improved by repeating the investigation in different contexts.

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