

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24297/ijrem.v14i.9372>

## Towards Attainment of Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education: Role of School Culture in Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

Empirical research revealed that Kenya is experiencing poor performance in the Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education (KCSE) within the context of subsidized secondary education adopted in 2008. School culture has been considered a central concept that changes how schools operate, improve educational results and is heavily influenced by its institutional norms and history which could be an obstacle to over all performances. The purpose of the study therefore was to determine school culture and its influence on KCSE attainment in Nandi Central Sub County Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives: To establish form(s) of culture(s) that is/are practiced. To determine the relationship between school motto, vision, mission statement, to determine the relationship between school rules, regulations and the attainment of KCSE in public secondary schools in Kenya and to establish the relationship between Internal assessment exams and attainment of KCSE in public secondary schools in Kenya. This study adopted convergent triangulation mixed method research design; Pragmatic philosophical paradigm was employed. This study was guided by dual factor theory by Fredrick Herzberg 1957. The study was conducted in Nandi Central Sub-County, Nandi County involving 20 secondary schools. There were 352 respondents comprising of 20 principals, 81 form four class teachers and 251 form four students selected using simple random, stratified sampling and purposive technique.. The data from the study was collected using questionnaires, interview, document analysis and direct observation. Data generated from this study was both quantitative and qualitative. Analysis of quantitative data involved, use of inferential statistical analysis where data was coded and entered into a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. In qualitative approach, data was analyzed thematically by organizing themes corresponding to the study objectives. The study revealed that, there was a statistically significant relationship between forms of cultures practiced and attainment of KCSE in Kenya ( $p=0.019<0.05$ ). School motto, vision and mission statement is statistically significantly associated with attainment of KCSE in Kenya ( $X^2=93.572$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). School rules, regulations, policies are statistically significantly associated with attainment of KCSE in Kenya ( $X^2=16.083$ ,  $p=0.003<0.05$ ). Regular internal assessment exams are statistically significantly associated with attainment of KCSE in Kenya ( $X^2=14.821$ ,  $p=0.005<0.05$ ). The study concluded that forms of culture practiced in schools include; equal distribution of educational resources and learning opportunities, made students and staff feel emotionally and physically safe, high concern for staff/students combined with strong performance expectations and being centered on performance with little regard for staff and students. School motto, vision, mission statement should spell out the purpose of the school, create a new and deeper relationship among students and staff and consist of a new-defined ideology of the school, for example fundamental values and beliefs. Set rules and regulations direct student's social and academic discipline that translates into performance by guiding student's behaviors. The study recommends that schools should ensure that their school motto, vision, mission statement spell out the purpose of the school and this would create a new and deeper relationship among students and staff.

### INTRODUCTION

The study of school culture has received a great deal of attention among researchers in many fields of study. Researchers from the social science-based view school of thoughts believe that school culture is an important explanatory variable of any organizational performance (Triwahyuni, Abdullah & Sunaryo, 2014).

The education for sustainable development and global citizenship by 2030 is to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development through education for sustainable development and sustainable life styles, human rights, gender equality and promotion of culture of peace, (Global Campaign for Education, 2020) as cited in (Aryani & Fatmasari 2021). Organizational culture is a pattern of shared values, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs over time that produce behavioral norms that are adopted to guide day-to-day activities within an organization (Hassan, Jambulingam & Halbusi, 2020). Organizational culture has been reviewed variedly by researchers and scholarly writings and suggests ten essential dimensions that color and shape our experiences in schools; Environment, structural, safety teaching and learning relationship; sense of school community; morale; peer norms; school home mutual support and ongoing communication (Kools & George, 2020).

There is never one commonly agreed upon list of essential dimensional elements that shape up school culture since it is a wide and multidimensional concept that one cannot hope to deal with in its entirety in a single study, (Veeriah & Siaw, 2017). Further, culture is divided into two major aspects in Sociological studies. The two major aspects of culture are material and non-material cultures. Material culture is overt an explicit such as product industry, technology, art, that is

every visible or concrete acquisition of man in society artifacts such as bridges, ports, hoes, houses, handcrafts (Arogundade,2020).

The non-material aspect of culture consists of the knowledge, philosophy, morals, motivation, language, attitude, values, and norms shared and transmitted in society, Ethics, ideology and other behavioral traits exhibited at work. These are sometimes referred to as covert or implicit aspects of culture acquired by members of society. They are not visible or tangible, but they are manifested through the psychological state and behaviour of the people. The focus of this study is on the non-material aspects of culture. Here, school culture is treated as independent variable while academic attainment is treated as the dependent variable (Evans & Kelley, 2022).

School culture in secondary schools continues to be a matter of great concern globally. Findings in America indicate that school culture promotes meaningful students' learning (Wang & Degol, 2016). Learning activities like community services and debates enhanced the learning environment by providing students with opportunities to actively participates in the learning process and construct their own knowledge of social and government systems. When such activities are presented in a supportive and collaborative environment, they encouraged students to build upon one another's ideas and projects, (Batty & Baker, 2018). According to Mohammadi & Najafi, (2021), organizational culture has an attempt to create the larger part in the excellent performance of students. In every organization there is always a unique type of behavior.

This indication of behavior clearly demonstrates that an organization is not a function of formal expectations but simply of individual needs and motivation. Organizational elements are dynamic and people within a given organization bring to the work place unique values, belief, needs, goals and expectations, (Nannicelli, 2019). Such individual features shape up aspects of organizational life. In the course of time through interaction, a collective sense of identity emerges that transforms a simple aggregate of individuals into a distinctive work place.

In South Africa, there has been a drive to improve the culture of teaching and learning particularly in secondary schools (Bush & Glover, 2016). As studies reveal principals in South African schools are faced with two major challenges namely; handling a greater variety of school-based decisions than before and creating conducive and sound culture of teaching and learning in which effective education can take place (Madigan & Curran 2021). The South African government embarked on curriculum reform and general drive to enhance the culture of teaching and learning in schools. The restoration of the culture of teaching and learning has been one of the most important factors to improve the quality of education in South African schools (Durowaiye & Khan, 2017).

The principal controls all the programmes of a school and the impact that he or she creates a conducive environment for teaching and learning and were crucial in the process of building sound culture of learning and teaching. According to Guesalaga & Scaraboto (2016) the poor results of the past number of years, lack of learner discipline, low teacher morale as well as other educational problems in some of the schools in South Africa had led to a general drive to improve the culture of teaching and learning and the rural quality of schools in the country. The South African government embarked on curriculum reform and general drive to enhance the culture of teaching and learning in schools (Robinson, 2017). Mawonedzo, Tanga, Luggya and Nsubuga (2020) asserts that principals in South African schools are faced with two major challenges namely; handling and managing greater variety of school-based decisions than before and creating a sound culture of teaching and learning in which effective successful education can take place. Mawonedzo et al., (2018) further reinforces that unless head teachers in Uganda are well equipped with knowledge and skills in management, leadership and implicit organizational culture, they will not improve school performance significantly.

In Kenya, many efforts have been put in place to make education system more responsive to the country's needs, demands and aspirations. Kenya government commitment to education for all and attainment of united nation millennium goals by 2015, provided quality education training science and technology (National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018). These efforts among others are the National Education Commissions (Republic of Kenya 1964) that proposed an education system that would foster national unity and development, The National Committee on Educational objectives and policies (Republic of Kenya, 1967) which focused on reforming the structures of education. One of the keys to understanding why the schools perform as they do is to study cultural factors (Nyakado, 2019). Interest in the study of school culture is prompted by the recognition that there is a link between a school's culture and its Academic attainment. By assessing school culture and its influence on academic achievement, the researcher hopes to gain insight on how the organization works and learns.

In Kenya, there exist studies that have examined student attainment in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) as influenced by school culture (Oyoo & Anyona, 2020). The Ministry of Education (MOE) therefore expects good performance in Kenya certificate of secondary education (KCSE) and other stakeholders demand for good grades which would enable their children at the end of secondary education to attain university education which have become universal benchmark across all schools. Thus, school culture in Kenya is an important aspect, if schools have to achieve their set goals in examinations. One of the most powerful statements in Kenya on the connection between school culture

and issues affecting education is student's attainment at national examinations. This study sought to determine the influences of school culture on the attainment of KCSE in Kenya.

### Statement of the Problem

The global goal of education system is geared towards nurturing the growth of the whole person through an integrated development of the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions (Burnett & Felsman, 2012; UNESCO, 2015). The Kenyan government and the citizens have attached a lot of importance to passing national examinations. This has been supported by education for sustainable development Goals and global citizenship aim at ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead to productive lives, make informed decisions and assume an active role locally and globally (Global Campaign for Education, 2020). The laws of Kenya make education a fundamental right which relevant agencies must seek to enforce (Vandekemp, 2013). However, these goals of educational system and individual fundamental rights to education as embodied in the Kenyan legislation are far from being realized in Nandi Central Sub County. Education improves literacy levels, but its overall aggregate impact is low because the greatest return in terms of being a means of improving people's welfare and minimizing inequality is measured against secondary level attainments (Deloitte, 2014).

Previous studies on academic attainment in Kenya and Nandi County in particular have focused on leadership styles, school physical environment, hidden cost on students and school facilities. Simiyu, Wanyama, & Aliata (2022) studied on influence of head teacher's leadership styles in Nandi County, Richard (2013) studied on factors affecting performance of students in KCPE in primary schools in Kenya, a case study of Nandi County, and Tuwei (2013) studied on effects of hidden cost on student's grade to grade transition rates in secondary schools in Nandi County.

School culture as an important aspect influencing attainment in KCSE has not been empirically investigated in Nandi Central Sub County yet it constitutes school practices that impact on learner's attainment in the national exams (Al-amin, 2018, Kimeto, 2018, Nyakado, 2019, Oyoo & Anyona, 2020). This study empirically attempted to fill this gap as it sought to investigate on the influence of school culture on the attainment of KCSE in public secondary schools in Nandi Central Sub County, Kenya.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To establish forms of culture(s) that is/are practiced in public secondary schools on attainment of KCSE in Nandi Central Sub County.
- ii. To determine the relationship between school motto, vision, mission statement and the attainment of Kenya certificate for secondary education in Nandi Central Sub-County.
- iii. To determine the relationship between school rules, regulations and the attainment of KCSE in public secondary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County.
- iv. To establish the relationship between regular internal assessment examinations and attainment of KCSE in Nandi Central Sub-County, Kenya.

### Hypotheses of the Study

Answering quantitative research questions for the study, the following hypothesis were tested.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between school motto, vision, and mission statement and attainment of KCSE in Nandi Central Sub-County. ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between school rules, regulations, policies and attainment of KCSE in Nandi Central Sub-County ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between regular internal assessment exams and attainment of KCSE in Nandi Central Sub-County ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

School culture and attainment of KCSE that was not addressed by previous studies were widely addressed by this study. Literature reviewed for this study revealed that, several studies has been conducted on influence of school culture on attainment of KCSE (Al-amin, 2018, Basemate, 2014, Irine, Chepkonga & Mochama, 2020, Nyakado, 2019). However, school culture as an important aspect of enhancing quality teaching and learning of the school has received minimal empirical investigation in Nandi Central Sub County Kenya yet it could be contributing to below expectation attainments in the KCSE.

The study findings of this study would add to the existing literature on attainment of KCSE in secondary schools in Kenya. The main purpose of the study was to find out whether school culture influences students' attainment in KCSE.

The findings from this study would lay a vast useful information that would enhance an understanding of how aspects of school culture interact to influence the attainment of KCSE in public secondary schools in Kenya.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

This study embraced the following assumptions: Each public secondary school under investigation upholds specific form(s) of Organizational culture, school motto, vision and mission have influence on student attainment in KCSE, school rules, regulations and policies influence students' attainment in KCSE, teacher's interpersonal relationship have influence on students' attainment in KCSE, regular internal examinations have influence on students' attainment in KCSE and both quantitative and qualitative data will provide different information.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research findings would be of benefit because it would enable school head teachers to realize good cultures which fit to their school and thus help to boost school results, teachers would understand the importance of a school culture and meaningfully work towards maintaining and strengthening it. It would also provide a strong foundation for further research in the sub county. Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) would also benefit as it would use the findings from this research to identify the training needs of teachers and head teachers on development of effective school cultures.

Understanding and building appropriate school culture would acts as stepping stone towards education for sustainable developments which would aim at ensuring that all learners acquire knowledge and skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead to productive lives (Global Campaign for Education, 2020). Additionally, Government through the legislature, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Teachers Service Commission could use the findings from this research to formulate cultural policies that could enhance and support academic achievement. Future researchers on instructional leadership could use the findings from this study to design approaches to their studies that would help improve knowledge on school culture.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This study was guided by the two-factor theory or the dual factor theory by Fredrick Herzberg of 1959. Herzberg and his associates Maunser, Peterson and Capwell (1957), began their initial work on factors affecting motivation in the mid-50s. This theory postulated that motivation factors are needs that motivate people at work. Intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth seem to be portion of job satisfaction. Extrinsic factors, such as company policy and administration, supervision, work conditions, salary status, security and interpersonal relations causes' dissatisfaction. These factors are also known as dissatisfies, Hygiene factors, maintenance factors or job content factors. Herzberg adopted the term hygiene and maintenance to describe these factors as they help prevent occurrence of undesirable consequences.

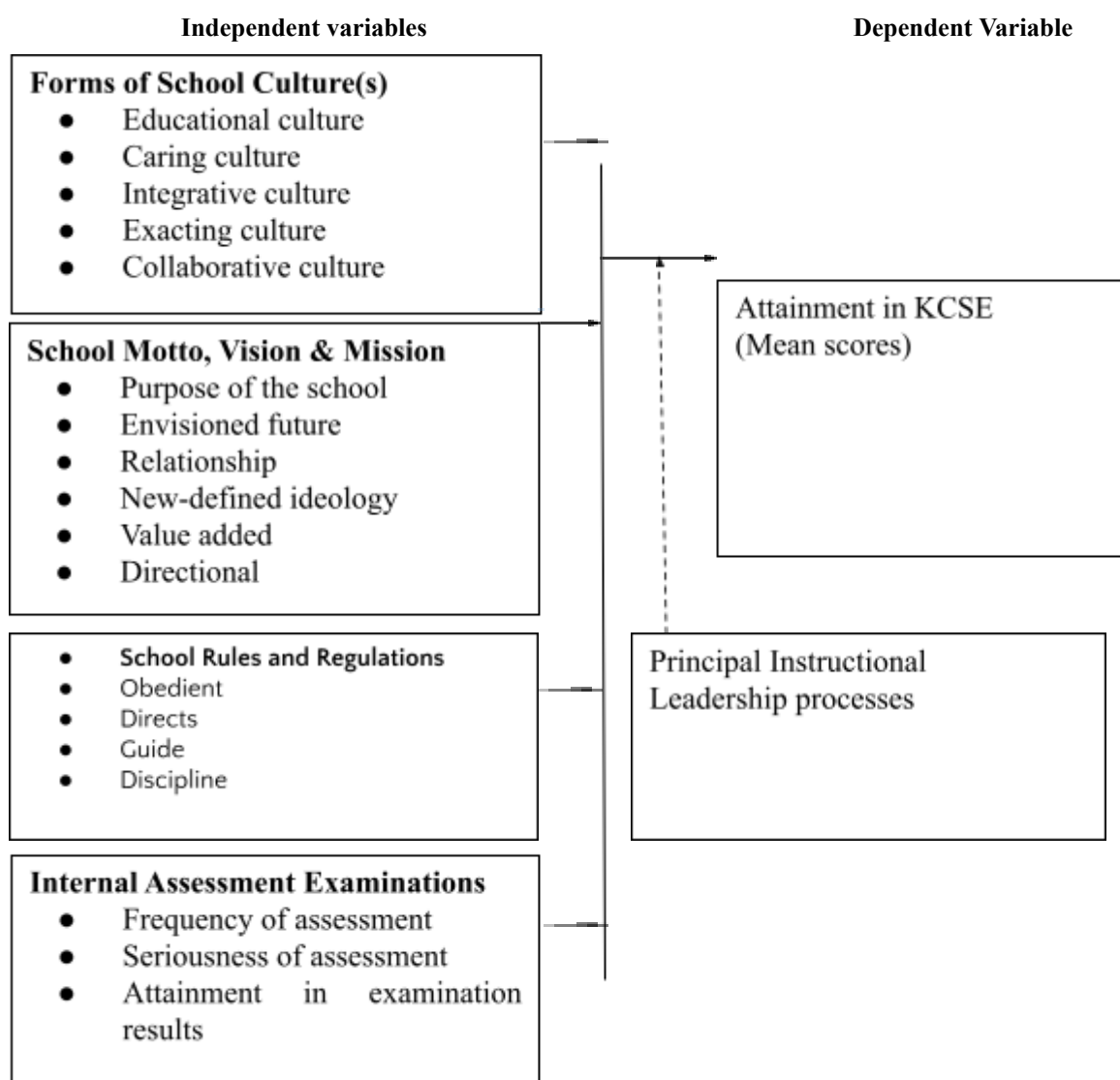
According to Herzberg, (1957), satisfaction is affected by motivators and dissatisfaction by hygiene factors. This theory has been adopted for this study because Principals through their leadership process must motivate teachers in their schools and for effective motivation, both satisfiers and dissatisfies must be observed. A Principal through its instructional leadership should provide satisfiers by creating a positive school culture which energizes hard work and thus good attainment in KCSE hence motivating teachers. This achievement of producing learners who have passed in examinations is a motivator. The principal then recognizes the good achievement by writing recommendation letters and praising them. In a positive school culture, the work of every teacher is to motivate. The principal should improve hygiene factors of teachers by removing dissatisfaction from their minds. Principal does this by improving working conditions of the school, school policy and administrations, interpersonal relations and security within the school.

This theory was suitable for this study in the sense that, it guided the researcher in the identification of an in-depth explanation of the forms of the school culture which are practiced in the schools under study. Besides that, the theory aided the study to make generalizations of the findings in relation to other public secondary schools in the country. The theory advocates for universalization which focuses on rules, regulations, policies and procedures of relationships in an organization hence suitable for the study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is a system of hypothesized graphical model giving the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables (Orodho 2012). The purpose of this mixed methods research was to provide a more complex understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2018).

The variables have been illustrated in Figure 1



## RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of School Culture

According to Tamir & Ganon-Shilon (2021), culture is a dynamic phenomenon that surrounds people all times, being constantly enacted and created by their interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior. In educational settings, the key to sustaining a positive culture involves identifying and protecting shared values, reflective dialogue, and celebrations which support the culture of engagement (McKinney & Labat, 2015). In every organization, there is always a unique type of behavior and therefore, people within a given organization bring to the work place unique values, belief, needs, goals and expectations which shape up aspects of organizational life (Muhsen & Hameed, 2021)

### School Culture and Attainment in KCSE.

Fisher (2012), culture is a dynamic phenomenon that surrounds people all times, being constantly enacted and created by their interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior. Several researches have been done to determine the influence of school and attainment of KCSE. Nyambuoro, (2012) in a study done in selected secondary schools in Homa-bay district, Kenya, indicated school culture as a totality of all that goes on in a school. He noted that school climate, values, norms, beliefs, traditions, symbols were artifacts that were subsets of school culture which affected performance of students academically. It is a set of internal characteristics that distinguished one school from another and influenced the behavior of one another. According to

Klinger & Hussain, (2015) school's culture can be improved by getting the relationships right among the school management, teachers, students and parents. Once this is attained, there shall be a better motivated team that will deliver on greater success in terms of student performance.

Oyoo, Piliyesi, & Anyona, (2020) asserted that the concept of school culture can offer a permanent solution to improved performance in national examinations in secondary schools in Kenya. Its findings include, school culture and the roles played by head teachers, teachers, students and parents influence the level of performance of each school in national examinations. In new schools, creating a unique school culture would be an important component of high performance. The culture of a school and inherent characteristics of performing schools could hence be considered as one of the tools for improving schools and performance of students in national examinations. Edmond (2011) states that the principal must be able: to develop teachers' abilities and skills in strategic planning and development, to enhance the effectiveness of school self-evaluation in school; and to develop a quality culture for school self-evaluation for school improvement

Moreover, there are many other studies revealing the relationship between school culture and academic achievements, (Basemate, 2014; Njogu 2012; Hamida 2018). Most of these researchers found out common features of such school's cultures, its aspects and how it influences the academic performance. The key to the success of school education depends on a good quality school culture, because school culture influences what people pay attention to (focus), how they identify with the school (commitment), how hard they work (motivation), and the degree to which they achieve their goals (productivity) (Peterson & Deal, 2002).

### **Forms of Culture(S) Practiced in Schools**

The key to good performance in a school organization is a strong culture (Soomro & Shah, 2019). Soomro & Shah (2019) have reported a school improvement case study in which four relatively successful and four relatively unsuccessful primary schools participated. Soomro and Shah (2019) found higher ratings of school spirit, frequent student monitoring and evaluation and more frequent teacher discussions in the successful schools. School culture is the set of shared values, beliefs and norms that influence the way employees think, feel and behave in the work place (Nikpour,2017) and it has four functions: gives members a sense of identity, increase their commitment, reinforces organizational values and serves as a control mechanism for shaping behavior (Padhi, 2017).

Gardiner and Tenuto (2014) on his hand, reminded us that school principals are responsible for establishing a prevalent school culture of teaching and learning in each school. The first major purpose of a school is to create and provide a culture that is hospitable to human learning (Guffey & Higgins, 2013). This was in agreement with Deal & Peterson, (2016) stating that, schools at deeper levels improve performance by fostering a shared system of norms, folkways, values and traditions. These infuse the enterprise with passion, purpose and a sense of spirit". Investigations of compelling schools hence building up various social components that appear to have some effect on student academic attainments. Educators and researchers over the last two decades recognized that there are a set of elements that shapes school culture:

### **Relationship Between School Motto, Vision, Mission Statement and the Attainment of School Performance**

School performance is a hot topic in education, with many educational reforms being implemented in an effort to enhance student learning. Individual schools create unique mission statements to guide policies and procedures and opportunities for all students. Schools with effective educational programs have mission driven with clearly stated educational purposes that strongly influence how things occur (Manning & Schuh, 2012).

School mission statements outlines a school's values and objectives, give clear overview of the overall ethos of the school and explains what the school is currently doing to achieve its vision (Bear, Drew, Zuckerman, & Phelps, 2020). Additional desirable characteristics for mission statements include being clear and sharply focused, providing direction, matching the organization's competence, and inspiring personnel.

Although a mission statement should specify the results the constituents should expect, it is not the same as a goal statement. Goal statements are much more specific and provide measurable benchmarks. For example, the mission statement of a secondary school might include preparing students for postsecondary education. Clear mission statement acts as a set of discriminative stimuli that guides the behavior of organizational members. Secondly, a clear mission statement also functions as a motivating operation (Laraway, Snyerski, et.al, 2014). That is, the specific outcomes specified in the mission statement are established as reinforces for organizational behavior so that organizational members are motivated to obtain these outcomes and are not satisfied unless these outcomes are produced.

Articulating and nurturing widely shared ownership and commitment to purpose in organizations has long been identified as essential to effective, strategic planning for organizational improvement (George, Walker, & Monster,2019). Further stated, "Clarifying purpose can eliminate a great deal of unnecessary conflict in an organization and can channel discussion and activity productively", Unity of purpose, or mission, within an organization provides a means by which organizational members can work together toward a common set of objectives.

Development of a clear school mission, shared vision, articulated values, and specific goal statements has also been more specifically to the fundamental processes of school improvement focused on increased levels of learning for all students (Stemler et al.2011). Yet, despite a longstanding and consistent admonition in the literature regarding the purpose and power in developing these foundational statements, the practice of clearly articulating such statements continues to be effectively ignored by many school leaders (Allen, Vella-Brodrick, & Waters, 2018)

Stemler, et.al, (2011) conducted a comprehensive content analysis of high school mission statements and noted that, despite the presence of an allegedly unifying school mission statement, the reasons that stakeholders assign for a school's existence may vary widely from school to school, and even among stakeholders within the same school. This was supported by Stemler et al., (2011) stating that faculty and other community members may perceive the mission of a school as ranging from preparing students to function as mature civic, emotional, cognitive, and social adults to preparing students to assume vocational functions, physically healthy habits, and even local and global integration.

Research done by Basemate (2014) in Nairobi County found out that school values have a significant influence on KCSE performance. These findings were in agreement with the views of Greenwood, (2017) and Bruwer, & Bruwer, (2017) who express the same view. School values as described by the Business dictionary are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. In this respect, the importance in determining the key mission statements that have a direct impact on performance has been recently highlighted (Houston & McIntire, 2016). on the attainment of KCSE.

### **Relationship Between School Rules, Regulations and the Attainment of KCSE**

According to Doğan and Adams (2018), schools' rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct of students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behaviour and obedience to school authority. Also on admission, schools especially at secondary level, students are given prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations which include compliance with rules and regulations. Amina (2021) focused on an exploratory study of students' indiscipline at Islamic University in Uganda. The study employed survey research design particularly cross-sectional survey design. Questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection in addition to interview guide and document review. The researcher found that despite rules and regulations specifying what school members should do and what they should not do, this expectation, in most secondary schools, students broke the rules and regulations with wide spread indiscipline acts such as escaping from schools, taking of alcoholic drinks, participating in frequent strikes with closure of schools and suspension of students.

Wekesa and Atenya (2021) observed that, rules and regulations are enforced through prefect bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers and involvement of parents. Nkarichia (2019) also argued that the best results could be obtained through vigilantly reminding students about rules and regulations of the school and monitoring their compliance with them. However, it has become normal in many secondary schools for students to break school rules and regulations with impunity, showing lack of respect to school authority, damaging of school property, beating up their teachers, rioting at any slightest opportunity and even inflicting harm on one another to the extent of using acid as a means of defense. The consequences from such undisciplined behaviours may result into poor students' academic performance.

Alabi and Saidu (2019) discovered the wide spread violence and misbehaviour that existed in many secondary schools. This lack of discipline, which interfered with the teaching and learning process, manifested itself in various ways including bullying, vandalism, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, truancy, inability or unwillingness to do class work at home. Some of these students lost their lives, and others lost their sight. In another secondary school, a 19-year-old boy committed suicide after fighting with another student over a borrowed plate. These were due to students disrespecting the formulated school rules and regulations that could assist them guide their behaviours at school. However, these researchers concentrated on discipline in secondary schools without focusing on how effective the existing rules and regulations were in enhancing discipline.

Evans, Landl, and Thompson (2020) noted that effective school rules and regulations is a way of minimizing unwanted students' behaviour in schools. However, since most school rules and regulations are set without students' participation, students tend to resist them and at times break them leading to indiscipline acts that could result into suspension and dismissal of students. Nkarichia (2019) noted that, responsiveness to school rules can become a consequence of how teachers view them.

According to Adeyemo (2005), who carried out a study on the level of discipline in secondary schools in Nigeria, established that, there was wide spread violation of school rules and regulations which was capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system. This argument was also supported by Mukharjee (2005), who carried out a study on the standards of discipline in secondary schools in Mexico and noted that certain changes signaling maturity in the course of growth and development of students in secondary schools tend to make students misbehave by faulting school rules and regulations. These researchers however only attempted to establish the level of discipline in schools without studying how effective the rules and regulations were in enhancing discipline and this called for this study. The question is how effective are the school rules in enhancing discipline in secondary schools? A critical analysis

of the above studies did not provide a clear answer. Much as the researchers had studied the way school rules and regulations control the students' behaviour in schools, a gap remained undiscovered on how the administration of rules and regulations was effective in enhancing discipline. This study therefore investigated the existing relationship between the effectiveness of school rules and regulations and discipline enhancement.

According to Hallinger and Murphy (2012) instructional leadership is an influence process through which leaders identify a direction for the school, motivate staff, and coordinate school and classroom-based strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning hence high performances. Instructional leadership is the degree to which the principal influences classroom instruction and student learning during the management and delivery of the school's goals, curriculum, instructional practices, resources, assessments, professional development, and learning culture (Day & Sammons, 2016)

Instructional leadership is arguably the most commonly used concept or label in contemporary organizational research; however, while leadership is an explanatory category has been embraced by dominant, organizational and paradigm perspectives, the scholarly value of leadership as a concept remains to be seen (Eacott, 2015).

In order to produce such a cohesive and Meaningful school, the pivotal role of the head teacher is required (Lee & Woods, 2017). Day et al (2016) observe that effective instructional leadership results to improvement of infrastructure, and enhanced welfare and raised aspirations of staff, students and communities necessary for teaching and learning, and likely to improve student achievement. Hallinger (2011) add that instructional leadership practice requires that head teachers to continuously work with teachers in implementing curriculum and instruction, while improving the school work environment, which directly affect the academic performance of students.

Having a successful school instructional leadership, schools become effective incubators of learning places where the students are not only educated but challenged, natured and encouraged (Sudiarta, 2018). For the school to move beyond operational management and achieve its goals, instructional leadership must promote respect rather than popularity, establish clear goals, listen to inputs from staff, led by example, provide regular and constructive feedback and delegate responsibilities which supports achievement of goals (lee, 2020).

Several studies have been carried out worldwide revealing the impact of instructional leadership on school academic performance. A study performed in New York city on how school performance relates to the characteristics of school principals, Clark, (2009) found that, there was a positive relationship between principal's experience and school performance, implying that schools led by inexperienced principals would reveal poor performance. Day & Sammons, (2016) conducted a study on the impact of school instructional leadership on student outcome carried out in sampled 20 primary and secondary schools in London. The findings revealed that actions taken by heads of schools to set, renew, and review the vision and direction of their schools had a significant impact on their schools', culture, approach to learning, leadership of teaching and learning, and above all on student attainment and progress.

A study done in Kenya by Magut, Chumba & Kindiki, (2017) holds that the head teacher is significant in determining the quality of the schools hence good academic attainment. Various studies have reported relationship between instructional leadership and academic attainment. Kimacia, (2010) on his study found out that head teachers rated as being democratic had high mean performance index than autocratic head teachers. This is supported by Mwaura (2014 and Thinguri & Mwangi, (2014), all confirmed that leadership styles influence students K.C.S.E. attainment. They further noted that autocratic head teachers score high in KCSE than their democratic counterparts. However, Okoth (2018) contradicts this through the findings which indicated that, democratic head teachers had higher mean-scores compared to autocratic head teacher's leadership styles on students KCSE performance.

### Research Study Gap

Findings from this study would bring new knowledge as to whether school culture influences KCSE attainment. Various, similar researches have been done. Basement (2014), did similar research in Nairobi County which is an urban setting and use different aspects of culture and different objectives. Oyoo, Piliyesi, & Anyona, (2020) did a similar study in Awendo sub county Migori. The study had different research objectives and purposive sampling was used in the study. Nyambuoro (2012) did similar study in Homa-bay which is a peri urban District. The research objectives were different. The researcher used questionnaires only. Hamida (2018) did similar research in Mombasa County which is an urban setting and use different aspects of culture (school routine, norms and its strategies).

These reviewed researches showed that most studies used different aspects of culture and mostly in urban setting, used post positivist (Nyambuoro, 2012, basement, 2014, Denson, 2021, Oyoo, Piliyesi, & Anyona, 2020)) with different aspects of culture. This study will fill the gap in research as it were done in rural and urban setup and its findings of the mentioned researchers cannot be generalized. Thus, this study aimed at generating further knowledge on influence of school culture on student's attainment in KCSE.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study (Creswell, 2018). This study adopted a pragmatic approach. This is a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies, not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality (Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2018) hence gave the researcher a liberal ground to draw assumptions from both quantitative and qualitative data.

Mixed method research was used to develop a more complete understanding of the relationship between the phenomena under study. Quantitative approach was used to measure relationship among variables in question (Punch, 2009) while qualitative approach helped to explain the phenomena in question more deeply and exhaustively, attempting to make sense of it in terms of the meaning people bring. This research paradigm was guided by epistemological assumptions. Epistemology is the study of the nature, scope, and production of knowledge, consisting of two strikingly different approaches: positivism and constructivism. Positivism approach will engage on searching for patterns and relationships among the variables of culture and attainment in KCSE and give the possible predictions guided by correlational design. Post-positivists believe that social phenomena are multi-layered and deserve multiple interpretations (Creswell 2014 & Pardede, 2019).

### Research Design

Research designs are procedures involved in the research processes: data collection, data analysis and report writing (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted the mixed method research design that comprised of concurrent triangulation, correlational survey to address the four specific objectives. In a concurrent triangulation approach, the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyses and then compares the two databases to determine if there is comparison as confirmation, disconfirmation, cross-validation, or corroboration (Creswell, 2009, Creswell, 2018). In the concurrent triangulation design, both the quantitative and the qualitative phases took place at approximately the same time and were measured equally.

Creswell (2009, 2014) posited that it is more manageable to generate both quantitative and qualitative data at roughly at the same time, rather than to revisit the field multiple times for data collection. The purpose of concurrent procedures is that the researcher was able to converge quantitative data and qualitative data to give a clear analysis of the study objectives. The basic rationale for this type of design was that it enabled the researcher to collect the data sets quantitatively by use of closed ended questionnaires and qualitatively by use of open-ended questionnaires hence triangulation of databases and produces corroborated valid conclusions. The researcher assessed and determine the trends and relationship between the variables under study and thus the design was appropriate for the study as it enabled the researcher to determine statistically significant relationships between variables under study. School culture as a complex multidimensional phenomenon was well explored better when several methods are used together (Bahar & Esin 2013, Juliana, 2014) and thus the design was appropriate.

Correlational survey research design was used in this study to determine the statistical relationship that existed between variables under study. Survey has been appropriate for the study as it had the ability to collect a large amount of data that allows for analysis, comparisons and correlations within a reasonably short period, hence efficient (Orodho, 2009).

### Data Collection Instruments

This being mixed research the nature of the data that was collected was both quantitative and qualitative. Instruments for data collection were questionnaire, structured interview, observation and document analysis. Questionnaire, structured interview and observation were used for the purpose of collecting primary quantitative and qualitative data while document analysis was used to collect secondary data. The objectives of this research necessitated use of measuring instruments to determine influence of both independent and dependent variables. In this study, structured questionnaires (closed ended) and structured interview were constructed with the items mainly based on the objectives of the study.

According Creswell (2012), closed ended questionnaire is of beneficial as it is easy to administer, analyze and also economical in terms of time utility. Questionnaires were dropped and later collected after allowing appropriate time the respondents. Principals structured interview were developed by paying special consideration to all the objectives of the study and making keen observations to all the respondents.

### Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used for the purpose of collecting primary quantitative data. Furthermore, the questionnaires were used for the following reasons: It has potential in reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time, it is able to give the respondents adequate time to respond to the items, it offers a sense of anonymity to the respondent and it is an objective method hence no bias resulting from the personal characteristics as in an interview guide (Owens, 2002). The researcher used two sets of questionnaires; students and class teacher's questionnaires.

## Interview Guides

Interview guide, according to Welsh (2006), is an instrument that can be used to collect present data on persons, events, activities, feelings, motivations and concerns. Interviewing involves asking questions and obtaining responses or answers from participants in a study (Kothari, 2004). And are of forms that includes individual, face-to-face and focus group interviewing. An interview is one way of investigating a group's attitudes and opinions. The interview guides will contain items covering all the objectives of the study.

Semi-structured interview guides were conducted with the principals as the key informants, to gather their beliefs, values and standards regarding school culture and how it influences the attainment of KCSE. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to obtain data on the respondent's views. This structured interview guides enabled them express themselves freely on the subject matter. Structured interviews were used since it could aid to produce valid and rich information because of their flexibility and more room for probing further.

## Document analysis

This research utilized document analysis to obtain records relating to KCSE attainments from the previous year's thus aiding the researcher to gain insight into the extent of influence of school culture on KCSE attainments and hence making successful resolutions. Documents analyzed were KCSE performance for the past four years within the year 2017 and 2020 found in education sub county office Nandi.

## Ethical Considerations

Research involves collecting data from people, about people (Creswell, 2018) and therefore researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust with them; promote the integrity of research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions; and cope with new, challenging problems (Kessio, 2019, Changach & Kessio, 2020). Research proposal approval was sought from the graduate School of Education and Authority to carry out the study was sought from National Council for Science and Technology (NACOST) who issued research permit and introductory letter to the schools. The study yielded a variety of ethical issues both relating to primary and secondary data,

Informed consent was sought at all stages as respondents voluntarily participated, and were assured of their confidentiality, anonymity with information solicited and that strict confidence would be applied to all information given during the data collection process. For the sake of beneficence, Identities of students, class teachers and key informants were disassociated by coding the information into SSPSS) and synthesizing it for analysis hence maximum benefit with minimal harm. This practice is acceptable in social sciences research (Nabiswa, 2018, Saunders & Townsend, 2018). Interviews for the key informants were conducted in privacy

## FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study findings revealed that 67(89.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that School rules and regulations direct student's social and academic discipline. Further, the study results also showed in terms of mean and standard deviations that School rules and regulations direct student's social and academic discipline (mean=4.01, standard deviation=0.74). This supports the findings of Dike et al., (2020) study, which found that character education can be implemented through both internal and external strategies, with internal strategies focusing on learning activities in the classroom and external strategies forming a physical or school environment that supports school performance.

Furthermore, the study findings noted that, 34(45.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that school rules and regulations guide student's behaviors. However, 39(52%) of the respondents disagreed. Further, the study results also showed in terms of mean and standard deviations that School rules and regulations guides student's behaviors (mean=2.99, standard deviation=1.22). This supports the findings of Zainuddin (2017) study, which found that character values that are supposed to be strong to keep all students feel unable to deal with the onslaught of the times. Strengthening character education is one of the efforts to improve the condition of the world of education today with the hope that in the future education were the frontline in improving the condition of the societies.

The study further revealed that 27(36%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the KCSE outcomes of the students reflect the expected academic outcomes of the school rules and regulations. However, 38(50.7%) of the respondents disagreed. Further, the study results also showed in terms of mean and standard deviations that the KCSE outcomes of the students reflect the expected academic outcomes of the school rules and regulations (mean=2.97, standard deviation=1.11).

The study results show that there is a positive relationship between regular internal assessment exams and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. This implies that Students obeys the laid down school rules and regulations. Also, School rules and regulations direct student's social and academic discipline that translates into performance. Further, School rules and regulations guides student's behaviors. Finally, the KCSE outcomes of the students reflect the expected academic outcomes of the school rules and regulations.

The study results also concur with Ngutu and Kavindah (2019), in Nairobi County who found out that school values have a significant influence on KCSE performance. These findings were in agreement with the views of Githaiga (2021) who express the same view. School values as described by the Business dictionary are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. In this respect, the importance in determining the key mission

### Inferential Statistics

This section consists of chi square analysis. The section was meant to achieve both general and specific objectives in establishing the relationships that exists between the study variables. The research hypotheses were tested using the significance level of the coefficients  $p < 0.05$ . The research focused to test the hypothesis with an aim of failing to reject the relationship between independent and the dependent variables. The research hypothesis for the study included;

$H_{01}$ : There is a statistically significant relationship in line with objective one and attainment of KCSE in Kenya

Association between Forms of school Culture and attainment of KCSE in Kenya

		Low performance	Average performance	High performance	Total	$\chi^2$	p-value
Culture	Disagree	10(50.0%)	3(15.0%)	0(0.0%)	13(65.0%)	11.796 <sup>a</sup>	0.019
	Undecided	1(5.0%)	3(15.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(20.0%)		
	Agree	0(0.0%)	2(10.0%)	1(5.0%)	3(15.0%)		
Total		11(55.0%)	8(40.0%)	1(5.0%)	20(100.0%)		

The  $H_{01}$  stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between forms of cultures practiced and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. The Chi square results in Table 4.22 indicated that there was significant association between forms of school culture and attainment of KCSE in Kenya ( $X^2=11.796$ ,  $p=0.019 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between forms of cultures practiced and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. This is shown that, out of the total 20 schools, majority 11(55%) of the schools had low performance for the last four years while 1(5%) had high. According to this study findings, the low performance was noted among those respondents 10(50%) who disagreed that forms of cultures are practiced in public secondary schools in Nandi Central Sub County. On the other hand, the high performance was noted among the respondents agreed that forms of cultures are practiced in public secondary schools in Nandi Central Sub County 1(5%). This concurs with the study done by Oyoo et al., (2020) which suggest that positive school culture has strong bearing on the performance of secondary schools. The study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between forms of cultures practiced and attainment of KCSE in Kenya as indicated by Pearson's chi-square probability value of ( $p=0.019 < 0.05$ ).

$H_{02}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between school motto, vision, and mission statement and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

### Relationship Between School Motto, Vision, And Mission Statement and Attainment of KCSE in Kenya.

		Attainment			Total	$\chi^2$	p-value
		Low performance	Average performance	High performance			
Vision	Disagree	11(55.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	11(55.0%)	25.000 <sup>a</sup>	0.000
	Undecided	0(0.0%)	6(30.0%)	0(0.0%)	6(30.0%)		
	Agree	0(0.0%)	2(10.0%)	1(5.0%)	3(15.0%)		
Total		11(55.0%)	8(40.0%)	1(5.0%)	20(100.0%)		

The  $H_{02}$  stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between school motto, vision, and mission statement and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. The chi square results in Table 4.23 indicated that school motto, vision and mission

statement is statistically significantly ( $X^2=93.572$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ) associated with attainment of KCSE in Kenya. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between school motto, vision, and mission statement and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. Out of the total 20 schools, majority 11(55%) of the schools had low performance for the last four years while 1(5%) had high performance. According to this study findings, the low performance was noted among those respondents 11(55%) who disagreed that school motto, vision, mission statement is followed in the schools. On the other hand, the high performance was noted among the respondents who agreed that school motto, vision, mission statement is followed in the schools in public secondary schools in Nandi central Sub County 1(5%).

$H_{03}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between school rules, regulations, policies and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

**Relationship Between School Rules, Regulations, Policies and Attainment of KCSE in Kenya**

		Low performance	Average performance	High performance	Total	$\chi^2$	p-value
Rules	Disagree	11(55.0%)	4(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	15(75.0%)	16.083 <sup>a</sup>	0.003
	Undecided	0(0.0%)	3(15.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(15.0%)		
	Agree	0(0.0%)	1(5.0%)	1(5.0%)	2(10.0%)		
Total		11(55.0%)	8(40.0%)	1(5.0%)	20(100.0%)		

The null hypothesis  $H_{03}$  stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between school rules, regulations, policies and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. However, the study findings in Table 4.24 indicated that school rules, regulations, policies are statistically significantly ( $X^2=16.083$ ,  $p=0.003<0.05$ ) associated with attainment of KCSE in Kenya. The low performance was noted among those respondents 11(55%) who disagreed that school rules, regulations, policies are adhered in the schools. On the other hand, the high performance was noted among the respondents who agreed that school rules, regulations, policies are adhered in public secondary schools in Nandi central Sub County 1(5%). This assertion was also supported by Nappi, (2014) who stated that a prime task of school leaders is to exercise instructional leadership of the kind that results in a shared vision of the direction to be pursued by the school.

$H_{04}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between regular internal assessment exams and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

**Regular Internal Assessment Exams and Attainment of KCSE in Kenya**

		Low performance	Average performance	High performance	Total	$\chi^2$	p-value
Regular2	Disagree	11(55.0%)	3(15.0%)	0(0.0%)	14(70.0%)	14.821 <sup>a</sup>	0.005
	Undecided	0(0.0%)	3(15.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(15.0%)		
	Agree	0(0.0%)	2(10.0%)	1(5.0%)	3(15.0%)		
Total		11(55.0%)	8(40.0%)	1(5.0%)	20(100.0%)		

The null hypothesis  $H_{04}$  noted that there is no statistically significant relationship between regular internal assessment exams and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. However, the study findings in Table 4.25 revealed that regular internal assessment exams are statistically significantly ( $X^2=14.821$ ,  $p=0.005<0.05$ ) associated with attainment of KCSE in Kenya. The low performance was noted among those respondents 11(55%) who disagreed doing regular internal assessment exams in the schools. On the other hand, the high performance was noted among the respondents who agreed doing regular internal assessment exams in public secondary schools in Nandi Central Sub County 1(5%). Study findings concur with Ituma (2012). Mwebaza (2010) who studied on teachers' and students' perceptions on regular internal examinations and found out that, there were many regular examinations to be used which had a positive relationship to students' attainment in the final examinations.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Forms of Culture

The first study objective was to establish form(s) of culture(s) that is/are practiced in public secondary schools in Nandi central Sub County. Descriptive statistics show that the respondents agreed with the statements that; Educational resources and learning opportunities are equitably distributed to all students, Students and staff feel emotionally and physically safe, high concern for staff/students combined with strong performance expectations from them, centered on performance with little regard for staff and students and that collegial staff relationships, important leadership decisions are made with input from staff members, students and parents. The study results also show that forms of culture practiced in schools include; equal distribution of educational resources and learning opportunities, making students and staff feel emotionally and physically safe, high concern for staff/students combined with strong performance expectations and being centered on performance with little regard for staff and students.

### Relationship between School Motto, Vision, Mission Statement and the Attainment of Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education

The second study objective was to determine the relationship between school motto, vision, mission statement and the attainment of Kenya certificate for secondary education in Kenya. Descriptive statistics show that the respondents agreed with the statements that; school motto, vision, mission statement spell out the purpose of the school, clearly describes, school motto, vision, mission statement envisioned future", school motto, vision, mission statement creates a new and deeper relationship among students and staff, school motto, vision, mission statement consists of a new-defined ideology of the school, for example fundamental values and beliefs. The study results also show that there is a positive relationship between school motto, vision, mission statement and the attainment of Kenya certificate for secondary education in Kenya. This implies that school motto, vision, mission statement should spell out the purpose of the school, clearly describe, should create a new and deeper relationship among students and staff and should consist of a new-defined ideology of the school, for example fundamental values and beliefs.

### Relationship between School Rules, Regulations and the Attainment of KCSE

The third study objective was to determine the relationship between school rules, regulations and the attainment of KCSE in public secondary schools in Kenya. behaviors.

### Relationship between Internal Assessment Exams and Attainment of KCSE

Descriptive statistics show that the respondents agreed with the statements that; teachers offer more frequent continuous assessment tests to their students, Students take seriously the assessment tests offered, teachers take seriously the continuous assessment tests offered to students and that continuous assessment test results are reflected in the students Attainment in the end term examination results. The study also showed that there is a positive relationship between regular internal assessment exams and attainment of KCSE in Kenya. This implies that for students to attain good results teachers should offer more frequent continuous assessment tests and the students should take seriously the assessment tests offered.

## Conclusions

The study concluded that forms of culture practiced in schools include; equal distribution of educational resources and learning opportunities, making students and staff feel emotionally and physically safe, high concern for staff/students combined with strong performance expectations and being centered on performance with little regard for staff and students.

The study also concluded that school motto, vision, mission statement should spell out the purpose of the school, create a new and deeper relationship among students and staff and consist of a new-defined ideology of the school, for example fundamental values and beliefs.

## Recommendations

- i. The study recommends that the schools should eliminate the forms of organizational culture that pull down the academic performance of students such as exacting culture, non-directional school motto, vision and mission, non-sound academic values, punishment rather than motivation, non-supportive teacher-student rapport and dictatorial administration
- ii. The schools should ensure that their school motto, vision, mission statement should spell out the purpose of the school and this will create a new and deeper relationship among students and staff.
- iii. The study also recommends that they should have set rules and regulations, which will direct student's social and academic discipline that translates into performance by guiding students' behaviors.

- iv. The study finally recommends that teachers should offer more frequent continuous assessment tests and the students should take seriously the assessment tests offered this will ensure attainment of good results

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