

# Principals' Human Resource Management Practices and Academic Achievement in Public Secondary Schools in Bungoma East Sub-County, Kenya

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## Abstract

## Original Research Article

The role of the school principal is to provide a school environment that promotes academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between principals' human resource management practices and academic achievement in public secondary schools. Embedded mixed method research design was adopted for the study. The target population comprised principals, deputy principals and heads of department drawn from Bungoma East Sub-County in western Kenya. In a total of 33 schools, 33 principals and 33 deputy principals were automatically included in the study while 114 heads of department were selected through random sampling as respondents for the study. Data was collected using interview schedule administered to the principals while questionnaires were administered to deputy principals and heads of department. Data on academic achievement was collected using document analysis. A pilot study was done in three schools before the main study to establish validity and reliability of the research tools. A correlation test was done between the principals' human resource management practices and academic achievement in public secondary schools. A strong positive relationship was found between the principals' human resource management practices and academic achievement in public secondary schools. It was thus concluded principals' human resource management practices affect students' academic performance. The study recommends that school principals should employ effective human resource management practices such as competitive recruitment, professional development of staff, rewarding and staff welfare programmes.

**Keywords:** Academic Achievement, Human Resource Management Practices, Principal.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human resource management practices involve a set of activities concerned with recruitment, staffing, training and retraining, promotion, motivation, transfer and discipline of staff. Therefore, human resource management is key for any success of the program in the organization. They implement the organizational programmes, meaning a proper management of HR determines staff commitment in their jobs and subsequently organizational performance. In the education sector, HR management involves maximizing performance of the staff to obtain maximum output. In public secondary schools, teachers are the key human resources since the key elements involved in maintaining and improving education

standards is happens them. As such, poor management of the teachers reduces the extent to which curriculum is delivered hence affecting academic achievement.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource management required that the managers promoted the best understanding and application of human resource practices which included recruitment, employment conditions, professional development, safety, health and wellbeing of their employees. In America, a study by Maeroff, Callan and Usdan examined leadership of students learning in Washington D.C [1]. The study reports that for there to be learning, the school principal must serve as a leader. Being a leader for the principal entails working with

teachers and strengthening their skills through capacity building, which result to improved students' academic performance.

In Nigeria, Omebe studied human resource practices in education [2]. The study found that human resource management is seen as a design of formal system in an organization that ensures effective and efficient use of human talents to accomplish organizational goals. Therefore, in the education sector, human resource management practices are concerned with recruiting, staff welfare, maintenance, training and re-training, placement, motivators, compensations, transfer and discipline of staff. Subsequently, human resource management practices determine the performance of staff in any organization. In an education system, staff should be adequately recruited, supervised and adequately rewarded. These made them committed to their work hence attaining educational goals.

### Staff Recruitment in Schools

In the education sector, understaffing is a popular cause of poor academic outcomes. According to UNESCO, the recommended teacher-pupil ratio is 40:1 [3]. In Kenya, enrolment in public schools had increased due to Free Day Secondary tuition while the number of teachers remains largely unchanged. Therefore, these big class sizes in public schools make it difficult for teachers to teach lessons effectively as compared to their colleagues in private schools.

A reviewed study by Boy investigated the relationship between free primary education and students' performance in Bungoma District [4]. The study found that over-enrolment had negatively affected performance in public secondary schools. Teachers had complained of increased pupils-teacher ratio. Boy observed that high pupils to teacher ratio were one of the main reasons for poor performance in national examinations. The challenge was seen where head teachers did not have adequate qualified teachers on staff, which negatively affected academic achievement. Therefore, Boy recommended that there was need to enhance recruitment and selection of educational institutions to support the implementation of the curriculum. In Kenya, the task of staffing of schools is performed by the Ministry of Education through the Teachers Service Commission.

Njuguna studied human resource management practices in public secondary schools in Kiambu East District [5]. The study adopted descriptive research design and obtained data from 4 sampled schools. It used stratified and simple random sampling techniques to obtain respondents for the study who included 4 principals, 6 deputy principals and 30 teachers. The study findings revealed that rigorous selection of employees ensured that the right candidates enter the organization with appropriate and necessary skills,

abilities, knowledge and experiences to fill vacant teaching posts hence promoting academic achievement in schools.

### Staff Maintenance

Staff maintenance is concerned with making the work environment conducive through human resource practices such as promotions, motivations, staff safety, and security and health services. For work to be performed in the school the mood and morale of the staff must be enhanced. As such, in a school environment, the head teacher the comfort and happiness of workers. Staff motivation can be achieved through such acts as prompt payment of salaries and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment. Njuguna observes that if workers are given the impression that they are not valued they become demotivated [5]. This makes them feel reluctant therefore it is the duty of the school head to provide conducive atmosphere working environment where everybody feels their contribution is valued hence this impact positively on academic achievement. This reviewed study was carried out in public secondary schools in Kiambu East District while the current study was carried out in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County.

### Staff Development

Jackson, Schuler and Werner studied human resource management in Canada's education sector and found that training and staff development practices enable teachers to develop themselves by acquiring new competences that improve content delivery hence positively impacting students' performance [6]. Similarly, Clotfelter studied how and why teacher credentials matter for student achievement in Mimeo, Duke University [7]. It was observed that effective teacher management practices, such as staff development programmes, were positively related to student performance. Further, the success of the educational organization hinged on strength and quality of staff members, which is assured through training, conference, workshop and seminars. Staff development improved teachers' effectiveness in mastering relevant content areas in subjects on which national examinations were based. Further, it helped the teacher to seek more knowledge on teaching as a profession.

Schuler examined strategic human resource management linking people with strategic business needs at Oxford University London [8]. The study found that human resource management practices and systems were linked to organizational competitiveness and increased productivity of staff which promoted positive organizational performance. The reviewed study was carried out in public secondary schools in England while the current study was carried out in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County in Kenya.

In Kenya, Gituathi investigated the human resource factors influencing pupils' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Thika West District, Kiambu County [9]. The study adopted descriptive research design and obtained data from 4 sampled schools. The researcher used stratified and simple random sampling to obtain respondents for the study who included 10 head teachers, 20 teachers and 270 students. The study findings revealed that professional development programmes gave members of staff opportunity to learn new techniques that were important in improving their instructional processes hence improved academic performance in schools. The current study adopted embedded mixed methods research design and obtained data and the respondents included 33 principals, 33 deputy principals and 101 heads of department. Further, the reviewed study was carried out in primary schools in Thika West, Kiambu County while the current study was carried out in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County.

Makuto studied the influence of head teachers' management practices on pupils' academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Teso North District [10]. He employed descriptive research design and obtained data from 21 sampled schools. Respondents for the study were 21 head teachers, 168 teachers and 294 pupils. The study found that few teachers attended staff development programmes. Therefore, it was important in this study to examine the situation of teaching staff development in Bungoma East Sub-County.

### Staff Rewards

Staff rewards entails designing and administration of recognition packages for work performed. School principals are also expected to take the issue of staff rewards seriously. Studies have shown that staff performance increases substantially when they are adequately compensated according to quality and quantity of work done. For instance, a study by Robbins in England examined the essentials of organizational behaviour [11]. The results revealed that motivation of human resources was associated with high productivity. The rewards used were either financial or non-financial and were given on basis of individual effort and performance. Non-monetary motivation included verbal praises, letters of appreciation and presentation of gifts. Further, school principals also motivated the teachers by recommending those who showed excellent performance for promotion, which boosted their morale and productivity.

In South Africa, McEwan studied the determinants of effective instructional leadership [12]. He found that good student academic achievement was registered in schools where teachers regarded the school principals as facilitators and supporters. As such, McEwan recommends that the school management should provide fringe benefits and exclusive privileges

to the teaching and non-teaching staff. Further, schools should have outreach packages for all community members. These packages include retirement, competition prizes, and certificates of recognition and awards and incentive policies. The study was carried out in South African schools while the current study was carried out in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County in Kenya.

Another study by Ndinza focused on the influence of management practices on student academic performance in public secondary schools Kitui County [13]. The study revealed that poorly remunerated staff showed signs of low motivation leading to poor academic performance in schools. This study underscored the value of staff motivation in schools. Therefore, the present study examined the situation of staff motivation by the school heads in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub County.

### Statement of the Problem

The government of Kenya invests significant resources in the education sector. Part of these resources goes into training school principals in management courses offered by Kenya Education Management Institute as well as attend workshops to enhance their management skills. Despite these efforts, academic achievements in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County have remained poor over the last five years as indicated by the following mean scores: 2014 (4.81), 2015 (4.51), 2016 (3.38), 2017 (3.12) and 2018 (3.37). Following this trend very few students from the Sub-County have been qualifying to join universities for higher learning. In view of this state of affairs, there was need to carry out a study on possible factors contributing to this poor academic achievement in public secondary schools in the Sub-County. Moreover, related studies carried out on other factors affecting academic achievement have revealed little information regarding influence of human resource management practices on academic achievement in public secondary schools. Therefore, the study sought to establish the extent to which human resource management practices influence academic achievement in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted embedded mixed methods research design, which enabled the respondents to report on influence of principals' human resource management practices on students' academic achievement. The target population for the study was all principals, deputy principals and heads of department in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County. The sample for the study was selected through proportionate sampling to get a representation of schools from each of the three categories of schools, namely extra county, county and sub-county public

secondary schools. In each school, the principal, deputy principal and heads of department were selected as respondents. The principal and deputy principals became automatic respondents while the heads of department were selected through random sampling.

Data was collected using interview schedules for school principals, questionnaires for deputy principals and heads of department and document analysis was used to collect data on school KCSE mean scores. To ascertain validity, the questionnaires and interview schedule questions were presented to experts in the Department of Educational Planning and Management of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in western Kenya. This was done to enhance face and content validity. For reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot study of the instruments in three schools in the neighbouring Sub-County using test-retest technique at an interval of two weeks. Reliability coefficient of items in the research instruments was computed and found to be +0.7. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics

frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation. Spearman rank order was used to test the hypothesis. In the study, the principals' human resource management practices constituted the independent variable. It was measured through sub-variables such as staff recruitment, staff development, staff maintenance and staff rewards. Conversely, the dependent variable comprised schools' academic achievement, which was measured using the KCSE mean scores.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Principals' Human Resource Management Practices

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of principals' human resource management practices on academic achievement in public secondary schools. The deputy principals and heads of department were asked to score on a Likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements regarding principals' HR functions. The findings from the deputy principals were as summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table-1: Deputy Principals' Responses on Principals' Human Resource Practices Table 1**

Items	SA F %	A F %	U F %	D F %	SD F %	Mean	SD
Principal regularly invites motivational speakers to talk to students and staff	18(54.5)	7(21.2)	3(9.1)	2(6.1)	3(9.1)	4.1	1.3
Physical facilities in the school meet public works standard for safety of persons	5(15.2)	28(84.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.2	0.4
The school ensures fair and competitive recruitment of staff	5(15.2)	23(69.7)	1(3.0)	4(12.1)	0(0.0)	3.9	0.8
The principal uses collaborative approaches in addressing issues in the school	3(9.1)	22(66.7)	0(0.0)	8(24.2)	0(0.0)	3.6	1.0
Principal sponsors the staff for professional development through workshops/seminars	2(6.1)	9(27.3)	2(6.1)	16(48.5)	4(12.1)	2.7	1.2
Principal gives rewards to students, teachers and support staff for good work done	3(9.1)	30(90.9)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.1	0.3
Principal Supports staff welfare groups in the school	3(9.1)	20(60.6)	2(6.1)	8(24.2)	0(0.0)	3.5	1.0
Physical facilities in the school caters for physically challenged persons	6(18.2)	26(78.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.0)	4.1	0.7
<b>Mean</b>						<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>

*Source: Researchers (2021)*

The findings in Table 1 show deputy principals' responses on whether principals regularly invited motivational speakers to talk to students and staff or not: 18(54.5%) deputy principals strongly agreed with the statement, 7(21.2%) deputy principals agreed with the statement, 3(9.1%) deputy principal was undecided, 2(6.1%) deputy principals disagreed with the statement and 2(6.1%) deputy principals strongly agreed with the statement. The mean rating response of deputy principals on Likert scale was 4.1. This implied that most, 25(75.8%), deputy principals agreed with the statement, meaning that most principals' regularly invited motivational speakers to talk to students and staff for encouragement purpose.

On the statement that physical facilities in the school met public works standards for safety of persons, 5(15.2%) deputy principals strongly agreed and 28(84.8%) agreed with the statement. There mean

rating response on Likert scale was 4.2. This meant that 33(100.0%) of deputy principals strongly agreed with the statement; therefore, most physical facilities in schools met public works standards for safety of persons.

The statement that the school ensured fair and competitive recruitment of staff had 5(15.2%) deputy principals who strongly agreed, 23(69.7%) who agreed with the statement, 1(3.0%) who was undecided and 4(12.1%) who disagreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 3.9, which meant that 28(84.4%) deputy principals agreed with the statement. Therefore, most schools ensured fair and competitive recruitment of staff giving people equal chances of recruitment. This finding agreed with that of Njuguna that in 80% of schools there was openness in the recruitment process [5].

Further, the item that the principal used collaborative approaches in addressing issues in the school had the following responses: 3(9.1%) deputy principals strongly agreed with the statement, 22(66.7%) agreed and 8(24.2%) disagreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 3.6, suggesting that 25(75.8%) deputy principals agreed with the statement. This implied that most principals used collaborative approaches in addressing issues in the school involving human resource.

The statement that the principals sponsored the staff for professional development through workshops/seminars had 2(6.1%) deputy principal strongly agreeing, 9(27.3%) agreeing with the statement, 2(6.1%) being undecided, 16(48.5%) disagreeing and 4(12.1%) deputy principals strongly disagreeing with the statement. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 2.7, meaning 20 (60.6%) deputy principals disagreed with the statement. As such, it was deduced that school principals did not sponsor the staff for professional development through workshops/seminars to keep abreast with the current trends in education. This finding disagreed with the view by Gituathi that professional development gives members of staff opportunity to learn new techniques that were important for improving performance in schools [9].

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether or not the principal gave rewards to students, teachers and support staff for good work done. To this statement, 3(9.1%) deputy principals strongly agreed and 30(90.9%) deputy principals agreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 4.1, implying that 33(100.0%) deputy principals agreed with the statement. Therefore, it was interpreted that school principals gave rewards to students, teachers and support staff for good work done to motivate them. This finding reiterated that of Ndinza who found out in her study that giving rewards motivates the staff leading to

improved performance in public secondary schools [13].

The statement that the principals supported staff welfare groups in the school had 3(9.1%) deputy principals who strongly agreed, 20(57.9%) who agreed, 2(6.1%) who were undecided and 8(24.2%) who disagreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 3.5, which meant that 23(69.9%) deputy principals agreed with the statement. As such, most principals in the study area supported staff welfare groups in the school during times of need. This finding agreed with Njuguna who found that 80% of principals supported the welfare of school staff [5].

The item which stated that school physical facilities in the school catered for physically challenged persons attracted the following feedback: 6(18.2%) deputy principals strongly agreed with the statement, 26(78.8%) agreed and 1(3.0%) strongly disagreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 4.1, suggesting that 32(96.7%) deputies agreed with the statement. Therefore, it was deduced that most schools had physical facilities that catered for physically challenged persons making schools all inclusive.

The overall mean rating response by deputy principals on principals' human resource practices was 3.8, which was above average on Likert scale. This meant that most items were rated high with regard to principals' human resource practices. Therefore, most school principals used the critical human resource management practices. The standard deviation of 0.8 implied that deputy principals tended to concur in most of the principals human resource management practices during their rating. This finding agreed with that of Ndinza who, in a study, found that human resource management practices determine performance of staff in any organization [13].

Table 2 shows how heads of department rated their principals on a five-point Likert scale regarding their human resource management practices.

**Table-2: Responses of HODs on Principals' Human Resource Practices**

Items	SA F %	A F %	U F %	D F %	SD F %	Mean	SD
Principal regularly invites motivational speakers to talk to students and staff	48(47.5)	40(39.6)	5(5.0)	7(6.9)	1(1.0)	4.3	0.9
Physical facilities in the school meet public works standard for safety of persons	33(32.7)	58(57.4)	5(5.0)	2(2.0)	3(3.0)	4.1	0.8
The school ensures fair and competitive recruitment of staff	17(16.8)	64(63.4)	2(2.0)	15(14.9)	3(3.0)	3.8	1.0
The principal uses collaborative approaches in addressing issues in the school	24(23.8)	58(57.4)	12(11.9)	6(5.9)	1(1.0)	4.0	0.8
Principal sponsors the staff for professional development through workshops/seminars	27(26.7)	45(44.6)	21(20.8)	6(5.9)	2(2.0)	3.9	0.9
Principal gives rewards to students, teachers and support staff for good work done	29(28.7)	59(58.4)	8(7.9)	3(3.0)	2(2.0)	4.1	0.8
Principal Supports staff welfare groups in the school	19(18.8)	57(56.4)	4(4.0)	18(17.8)	3(3.0)	3.7	1.1
Physical facilities in the school caters for physically challenged persons	23(22.8)	62(61.4)	1(1.0)	9(8.9)	6(5.9)	3.9	1.1
<b>Mean</b>						<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Source: Researchers (2021)

Table 2 shows heads of departments' responses to the statement that principals regularly invited motivational speakers to talk to students and staff. In their responses, 48(47.5%) heads of department strongly agreed with the statement, 40(39.6%) agreed, 5(5.0%) were undecided, 7(6.9%) disagreed and 1(1.0%) strongly disagreed. Their mean rating response on Likert scale was 4.7, implying that 88(87.1%) heads of department agreed with the statement that most principals' regularly invited motivational speakers to encourage students and staff on academic matters.

Further, the HODs were asked to indicate their views on the statement that facilities in the school met public works standards for safety of persons. Of the HODs, 33(32.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, 58(57.4%) agreed, 5(5.0%) were undecided, 2(2.0%) disagreed with the statement and 3(3.0%) strongly disagreed. Their mean rating response on Likert scale was 4.1, meaning that 91(90.1%) heads of department agreed with the statement that physical facilities in their respective schools met public works standards for safety of persons.

The statement that the school ensured fair and competitive recruitment of staff had 17(16.8%) heads of department strongly agreeing, 64(63.4%) agreeing, 2(2.0%) being undecided, 15(14.9%) disagreeing and 3(3.0%) strongly disagreeing with the statement. Their mean rating response on Likert scale was 3.8, suggesting that 81(80.2%) heads of department agreed with the statement. Therefore, most principals ensured fair and competitive recruitment of staff which gave people equal chances of recruitment. This finding concurred with Njuguna's that 80% of schools practice openness in the recruitment process in Kiambu East District [5].

The study further sought HODs' views concerning the item that the principal used collaborative approaches in addressing issues in the school. In their response, 24(23.8%) heads of department strongly agreed with the statement, 58(57.4%) agreed, 12(11.9%) were undecided, 6(5.9%) disagreed and 2(2.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The mean rating response on Likert scale for this item was 4.0, implying that meant 82(81.2%) heads of department agreed with the statement. Consequently, most principals in the study area used collaborative approaches in addressing issues in the school involving human resource management.

Table 2 also shows HODs' response to the item that the principals sponsored the staff for professional development through workshops/seminars. As indicated, 27(26.7%) heads of department strongly agreed with the statement, 45(44.6%) agreed with it, 21(20.8%) were undecided, 6(5.9%) disagreed and 2(2.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Their mean rating response on Likert scale was 3.9, meaning

that 72(71.2%) heads of department agreed with the statement. This implied that most principals sponsored the staff for professional development through workshops/seminars to keep them updated with the current trends in education. This finding agreed with Njuguna who found that the organizations put into place training programs of its employees to enhance their knowledge and skills to be more productive in Kiambu East District [5].

The findings on whether or not the principals gave rewards to students, teachers and support staff for good work done show that 29(28.7%) heads of department strongly agreed with the statement, 59(58.4%) agreed, 8(7.9%) were undecided, 3(3.0%) disagreed and 2(2.0%) strongly disagreed. Their mean rating response on Likert scale was 4.1, indicating that 88(87.1%) heads of department agreed with the statement. As such, most principals in the study area gave rewards to students, teachers and support staff for good work done to motivate them.

The HODs were also asked to state whether or not the principals supported staff welfare groups in the school. In their response, 19(18.8%) heads of department strongly agreed with the statement, 57(56.4%) agreed with it, 4(4.0%) were undecided, 18(17.3%) disagreed and 3(3.0%) strongly disagreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 3.7. This implied 76(75.2%) heads of department agreed with the statement. Therefore, most principals supported staff welfare groups in the school during times of calamities. This finding agreed with that of Njuguna who, in a study in Kiambu East District, found out that 80% of principals supported the welfare of its staff [5].

The statement that school physical facilities in the school catered for physically challenged persons had 23(22.8%) heads of department who strongly agreed, 62(61.4%) who agreed, 1(1.0%) who was undecided, 9(8.9%) who disagreed and 1(1.0%) who strongly agreed. The mean rating response on Likert scale was 4.0, meaning that 85(84.2%) heads of department agreed with the statement. As such, most schools in the Sub-County had physical facilities that catered for physically challenged persons making schools to be all inclusive.

The overall mean on principals' human resource management practices was 3.97, which was above average on Likert scale. This meant that most items were rated high by heads of department with regard to principals' human resource management practices. The standard deviation of 0.9 implied that heads of department tended to concur on most of the principals' human resource management practices during their rating. Therefore, most school principals practiced most of these human resource management practices.

### Findings from Interview with Principals

The principals were asked to indicate how they motivated their staff. Of the school heads, 25(75.8%) said they motivated teachers by sponsoring them for staff development programmes. This was in agreement with Mutinda's finding that 67.5% of teachers had attended in-service training where they gained knowledge and skills that led to improved student academic performance [14]. Staff development programmes improve skills and competence of teachers through capacity building training. Such development is done through in-service training, conferences, workshops and seminars. The success of an educational organization depends on the quality of its staff members. In Kenya, education is examination-oriented, meaning teachers perceive staff development programmes as instrumental in enhancing their effectiveness in instructional duties. Clotfelter, in a study, found that effective teacher management practices do improve teachers' knowledge and competencies [7]. In another study, Makuto also found that 75 percent of teachers had attended staff development programmes, which had impacted positively on pupils' performance [10].

Further, 28(84.4%) of principals said they used rewards to motivate staff. Rewards and incentives

increase teachers' commitment thereby improving their productivity. Therefore, it is important that management takes issue of reward systems seriously. This is in line with what Omebe found in her study that staff performance increased substantially if they were compensated adequately [2]. Further, 15(45.4%) principals said they used letters of appreciation whenever teachers posted good results in their respective subjects. Teachers who received such letters showed a marked increase in their morale and hence their productivity.

All the 33(100%) principals agreed that motivation increased teachers' commitment towards their duties thereby increasing instructional outcomes. This positively contributed towards academic achievement.

### Influence of Principals' Human Resource Practices on School Mean Academic Achievement

The study sought to find out the influence of principals' human resource practices on academic achievement in public secondary schools. In order to explain the influence of human resource practices on academic achievement, School KCSE means were compared with mean of human resource practices as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table-3: Influence of Principals' HR Practices on Schools' Academic Achievement**

KCSE Mean range	Grade	No. of Schools	Human Resource Practices Mean
2.5-3.4	D	4	2.77
3.5-4.4	D+	10	3.86
4.5-5.4	C-	14	4.19
5.5-6.4	C	3	4.21
6.5-7.4	C+	2	4.63
		<b>33</b>	<b>3.93</b>

*Source: Researchers (2021)*

The findings in Table 3 show that schools that recorded low KCSE means had also recorded low means of principals' human resource management practices. On the other hand, schools that recorded high KCSE means had also recorded high means of principals' human resource practices. Therefore, it was evident that principals' human resource management practices influenced schools academic achievement. The current research findings agreed with those of Gituathi who observes that Kenya's education system is examination-oriented; therefore, teachers perceive human resource development programmes as instrumental in enhancing their instructional effectiveness [9].

To further test the relationship between principals' human resource practices and schools' academic achievements, the researchers proposed and tested the following null hypothesis: there is no statistical significant relationship between principal's human resource management practices and academic achievement in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County. In order to test whether the differences were significant between human resource practices and schools' academic achievement, the null hypothesis was tested. The findings were as illustrated in Table 4.

**Table-4: Hypothesis Test Results**

Variable	Academic achievement (Mean KCSE)
Human resource management practices	Rho = 0.533 P=0.001

*Source: Researchers (2021)*

Spearman correlation coefficient indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between principals' human resource management practices and academic achievement, as indicated by KCSE mean scores ( $Rho=0.533$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that principals' human resource management practices significantly influence academic achievement in public secondary schools in Bungoma East Sub-County. This finding agreed with the view by Ndinza who, in his study in public secondary schools in Kitui County, found that human resource management practices significantly influenced academic achievement of students in national examinations [13].

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concludes that principals' human resource management practices affect students' academic performance. Therefore, school principals who employ effective human resource management practices engender good academic performance in their schools. Human resource management practices that motivate the school staff to work also promote academic performance of the learners. Based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that school principals should employ effective human resource management practices such as competitive recruitment, professional development of staff, rewarding and staff welfare programmes. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should also put in place mechanisms to promote teachers, especially those who perform well in their areas of service. Job group promotions should be hastened to avoid stagnation of teachers in some job groups.

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