

## ABSTRACT

Head-teachers use different staff management strategies to coordinate day to day running of schools and to develop an environment that helps motivate pupils. These management strategies may be responsible for the disparity in school performance. Studies on head teachers' staff management strategies have concentrated on public schools, leaving out private schools. This study aims to examine the influence of head-teachers' staff management strategies on pupils' academic performance in private primary schools in Nyeri and Murang'a Counties in Kenya. The study was guided by Bertalanffy and Weihrich's Systems theory which claims that an organized enterprise does not exist in isolation but depends on the environment in which it's established. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The target population for the study is 2,630 head teachers and teachers from 259 private primary schools in the Murang'a and the Nyeri Counties. The schools considered had done KCPE for at least five years before the study period. The study employed Slovin's formula to determine the number of head teachers and teachers where 58 head-teachers and 342 teachers were estimated to be representative samples for respective groups. The research also selected 15 SCQASOs using purposive sampling, while simple random sampling was adopted to select 158 schools from the two Counties. At the school level, the researcher recruited a head-teacher using a purposive approach and two or three teachers using simple random sampling. A questionnaire was adopted to collect data from head-teachers and teachers and interview schedules from SCQASOs. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to compute the reliability of the study tools and determined at 0.7; all variables had an alpha coefficient above 0.7, which implies an internal consistency. The researcher also tested the content and the construct validity of the questionnaire by submitting the questionnaire. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using charts and tables. Qualitative data were analysed using Atlas.ti, coded while quantitative data were analyzed in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistics. The researcher used descriptive methods such as frequency distribution and correlation coefficient. The study found head

teachers' staff management strategies accounted for 83.9% of variations in private schools' performance in Nyeri and Murang'a Counties. The study also found staff management had statistical significance influence on the performance of private primary schools in Nyeri and Murang'a Counties at  $\alpha=0.05$ .