

## Principals' Stress in Public Secondary Schools in Kisumu County, Kenya

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### Abstract

Stress of principals in public secondary schools has been a serious problem to parents, the government and the Ministry of Education in developed and developing countries including Kenya. The problem has generated a lot of questions and debate for an immediate action to be taken if such cases like poor results, school drop-out, frequent transfers and principals' suicide are to be avoided. Despite the fact that principals of secondary schools have been trained in leadership and management, there is no information about the reasons why principals are stressed and cannot perform their work properly. The purpose of this study was to examine the level of stress among principals, and the objective was to establish the reasons why principals are stressed in their work performance. The study adopted the Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS) developed by Levine and Ursin (1991). It was also based on a conceptual framework explaining the aspects of stress in relation to principals' work performance. Related literature for the study revealed that major sources of principals' stress were workload, lack of teaching and learning resources, uncalled for transfers, indiscipline of students, and lack of adequate finance to manage the schools. The area of study was Kisumu County. The target population was two hundred and twenty principals, two hundred and twenty deputy principals and seven Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) in the county. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools, while purposive, stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to select both principals and the deputy principals in various categories of schools. Saturated sampling technique was used to select Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Instruments for data collection included questionnaires, observation check-list schedule, document analysis and interview schedule. Questionnaire was used to gather information from both principals and deputy principals and interview schedule was used by the researcher to collect data from the Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers of the County. Document analysis was employed to gather information about the Principals' transfers, category of schools and performance of students in the national examinations from the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education department respectively. Observation check-list was used by the researcher to collect data on the availability of teaching and learning resources in schools. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean, percentages and standard deviations using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Programmed (SPSS). Qualitative data were categorized into emerging themes then reported in verbatim form. The study found out that principals were stressed because of; inadequate funds to run the schools, dealing with human resources, family issues, impromptu meetings, pressure to perform from the stakeholders, uncalled for transfers, indiscipline among the students, students drop outs, lack of enough teachers, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, work overload, absenteeism and lateness of teachers. The study recommended that more teachers should be employed in schools to relieve the principals from work overload and more funds to be allocated for schools by TSC and MoE respectively, for appropriate management of schools.

**Key words:** Stress, principals, public secondary schools, Kisumu County

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### I. Introduction and Literature Review

Globally, stress has been identified as the greatest obstacle to achieving goals in life (Wells, 2013). Stress may cause fear in an individual which may lead the capacity to derail people on their work and reduce defeat regularly (Kimani, 2015). In 2008, report from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics in USA, revealed that the increasing demand placed on principals lead to a greater stress. It was reported that 35 percent of the 415,000 education administrators in the United States worked more than 40 hours per week (United States Bureau of labor, 2008). Yambo et al. (2012) asserts that principals of public secondary schools are also stressed up to the point that some of them have committed suicide, quitted the teaching profession while others continue to be leaders of their schools but sleep on their jobs (Yambo, et al., 2012). According to Campbell et al. (2007), a team of 12 carried out a research in USA on how stress affect leadership with 230 respondents (principals),

they found out that eighty eight percent (88%) of leaders reported that too much work was a primary source of stress in their lives and that having a leadership role increases the level of stress (Campbell, et al., 2007). The team further found that more than two-thirds of surveyed leaders believed that their stress level was higher than it was five years ago (Campbell et al., 2007). This finding concurs with that of Philips, Sen and McNamee (2007) who found out that secondary school principals have a higher level of stress when working with students discipline and allocating educational resources. The causes of stress that were most reported included parents, workload, government initiatives and time frame for changes (Philips, et al., 2007).

Chan, Chen and Chong (2010) carried out a study on teachers stress' in Hong Kong and found out that inadequate informal arrangement, heavy workload, time pressure, education reforms, external school review, pursuing further education and managing students' behavior as the most frequently reported sources of stress among school leaders. Travers and Cooper (1991) carried out a study in United Kingdom and found out that those employees working in educational institutions especially the high school principals and their deputies reported higher level of stress related illnesses. In the developing countries, in Africa including Kenya, secondary school principals also demonstrate stress related issues. A study in South Africa by Schulze and Steyn (2007) indicated that educational administrators are experiencing series of stress and stressful situations. Currently, these administrators generally experience causes of stress such as non-committed parents, poor learner discipline, lack of learner motivation, learner negative attitude towards themselves, numerous changes inside and outside the school and lack of self-esteem (Schulze & Steyn, 2007).

According to Brimm (2001), stress in the modest amount can be helpful to job situation by increasing awareness and being a necessary push to accomplish a task. This kind of stress is referred to as eustress (positive stress). Conversely, distress is a negative stress experienced by an individual who fails to achieve (Brimm, 2001). A state of distress produces feelings of helplessness or desperation because too much stress can harm the body and lead to ineffective performance but a certain amount of stress is necessary for everyone (Black, 2003). Brimm (2001) states that stress can also be self-imposed, originating within the individual's unrealistic and unreasonable demands. Stress among school principals may exist from within or outside the school or personal. This study aims to find out the reasons why principals are stressed in their work. A study done by Fullan (2001) on teachers stress, noted that some of the reasons of stress among school principals were administrative work load, student discipline, lack of enough teachers, among others. However, there is no evidence that these reasons of stress are applicable to principals of public secondary schools in Kisumu County, hence the need for this study.

According to Kanyeki (2015) and Cosgrove (2000), a person who is stressed may exhibit signs such as: isolation, missing at work place, debts, abandoning the family, complaints of assaults and harassment, hence impact negatively on performance. Other effects of stress are increased heartbeat, speed breathing, or held breath, slow digestion among others (Cosgrove, 2000).

A survey report, conducted in 2016 / 2017 by Trendy Consulting International Limited, on customer and employees satisfaction, revealed that principals and teachers of secondary schools are unhappy due to lack of motivation and low pay despite putting more effort into their work (Education Staff Reporter, 2017). The report further found that teacher promotions as per the laid down policy and scheme of service is not appealing to the majority of principals since they have observed anomalies when it comes to upgrading of teachers. That is, there is unfairness, lack of transparency or lack of professionalism in the recruitment of teachers and the deployment of the principals across the counties. This kind of situation triggers stress among the school principals in the country.

Makokha (2018) noted that delay of the release of school funds has been a problem in the public secondary schools in Kenya. This had resulted into protest by the school principals because they could not pay salaries for non-teaching staffs and board of management teachers on time across the country, thus leading to principals' stress (Makokha, 2018). This sentiment was further asserted by Mumias East Sub-County heads of secondary schools association chairman, in Kakamega County that delay of funds in schools was making it difficult for the principals to manage their schools. The chairman further noted that, delay on paying Board of Management teachers demoralizes them and results into poor performance in the subjects (Makokha, 2018). One of the school principals in Mumias stated that school principals work under pressure since support from the government is limited. More so, overcrowding and congestion due to the government's 100% transition policy of the learners from primary to secondary are also seen as some of the factors that might jeopardize students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations (Makokha, 2018). Also, many schools have new principals who have been under delocalization and need time to adapt to the new stations.

Misuse of school funds has made some school principals to be deployed as classroom teachers and also being transferred to other work stations when they do not opt for it. When the school principals pass through all this challenges they become stressed up, hence cannot perform their work effectively (Ochieng', 2018). Cases of indiscipline have been experienced by the principals in their various schools (Wanzala, 2017). The phenomenon of secondary schools being set on fire in second term has been a perennial problem (Mochema, 2018). In the last

four years, that is, from 2015 to 2018, arson attacks have hit public boarding secondary schools in Kenya, resulting into the destruction of school property worth millions of shillings that stressed most of the school principals. For instance, in the year 2016, one hundred institutions experienced arson attack (Mochema, 2018). This caused a lot of stress to the school principals.

Moreover, a research which was carried out by the national Quality Assurance and Standards Officer in the year 2017, on school unrest, found out that in the year 2016 the country witnessed inordinately high number of strikes which was 483 and the number reduced by 67 in the year 2017 (Ochieng', 2018). Also, in the year 2018 more school unrest was observed. The statistics indicate that within the first two weeks of the month of July 2018, Eastern region recorded the highest cases of strikes, at the Rift Valley region 7 cases while Nyanza and Coast region had 5 cases each (Wanzala, 2018). It was further noted that before the month of July of the year 2018, the strikes were sporadic but the frequency increased in the first two weeks of the month of July, 2018. This provided a total of 30 percent of the schools which had experienced students' unrest in the month of July. Some of the schools which had been involved in strike included Oriwo boys, Kisumu girls, St. Mary's Yala, Wang'apala, Onjiko boys, Chalbi boys among others. Frequent strikes of the students may interfere with the coverage of the syllabus, this may demoralize the teachers and principal of the school in performing their duties hence may result into poor performance of the students in the national examination and the general development of the school. Poor performance of a school may cause the school stakeholders to create a lot of pressure to the school principal, and they may demand for his/her transfer (Wanzala, 2018).

Currently, secondary school principals are being transferred to other counties within the country. The new policy provided by the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education, referred to as delocalization states that, the principals and their deputies should not work in one station for more than six and nine years respectively. The move is not supported by the teachers, principals and the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) (Ochieng', 2018). The national treasurer of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) claims that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has subjected the principals to a harsh working environment because of the one-sided decision being made in education sector (Abuga, 2018). Bett (2018) also agrees that principals who have been transferred to other counties, this change may affect the performance of the students because new principals might take time to adapt in the new areas.

Research done by Black (2003) observed that not all stress are caused by emergencies, however, the two major sources of stress for an executive or a principal are internal and external demands. This study intended to look into the principals' internal sources of stress in relation to their work performance in school leadership. The study investigated on: work over-load; lack of enough teaching and learning resources (teachers and physical facilities); uncalled for transfers of principals; lateness and absenteeism of the teachers; indiscipline among students and high rate of school drop-outs. Fleet (1988) noted that other reasons for principals' stress include starting a new job especially principals who have been appointed without proper training in leadership, trying to work hard to get promotion, working for long hours, being pressured by demanding officers, and other similar situations. Such activities induce stress among school principals. At the same time, Fleet (1988) feels that positive events can also cause stress. For instance, winning a context like when you get promotion and when you get allot of money unexpectedly. These stress aspects are further discussed.

### **Lateness and Absenteeism of Teachers from School Without Permission**

A World Bank report (2013) on education in Kenya revealed that Kenyan teachers have very little contact with their students (Mumo, 2015). The report found out that children in public primary schools in Kenya were taught for two hours and forty minutes a day in contrast to the required five hours forty minutes. Public school teachers were 50% less likely to be in class teaching. The result is that children in public schools get about 20 days less of teaching days per term than those in private schools, thus, interferes with the completion of syllabus on time. Such reports stress the principals.

According to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), most of the cases reported for disciplinary actions are either absenteeism or negligence which is highly related to the level of stress, among the teachers. The Ministry of Education observed that the cause of dismal exam results in public secondary schools is due to teachers' absenteeism (Kahiga, 2015). In a comprehensive review of the school-based learning programme in 2008 report, the TSC noted a decline in the performance of subjects taught by teachers undertaking those courses due to inadequate preparation and absenteeism among the teachers. Warmer (2014) carried out a research in Australia on reasons of stress among senior educators and school principals, found out that having tough conversation with teachers to address issues such as poor performance, not keeping up with teaching syllabus plan and poor work habit for instance, late coming or continued absenteeism. They explained conversation like these are often harsh and accusation leading to ill feelings.

### **Work Overload**

Lizotte (2013) points out that excessive workload leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure. He explains that work overload may take two forms:

(i) Qualitative work overload implies performing a job that is complicated or that is beyond the employee's capacity. (ii) Quantitative work overload is as a result of many activities performed in a prescribed time. The principal of the school may be heavily influenced by the quantitative work overload, whereby he/she has a lot of duties to be performed in a prescribed time (Cosgrove, 2000). The principal of a secondary school has a variety of duties to perform. They include being the school leader, teaching students in class, ensuring proper implementation of curriculum, chairing the staff meeting, secretary to the Board of Management (BoM), attending meetings, collecting and supervising examinations in the schools, among others (Lizotte, 2013).

A research done by Travers and Cooper (1997) found out that the workload and long working hours emerged as particular issues for English teachers as opposed to colleagues in France. When Travers and Cooper (1997) questioned British teachers across all educational sector about sources of their stress, their responses indicated high workload, poor status and poor pay emerged as three of the seven major sources of stress, the others being systematic origin. Pithers and Sodem (1998) highlighted role overload as a significant stressor in teachers, including the principals. They assessed the levels of strain, organizational roles and stress in 322 Australian Scottish vocational and FE lecturers. Strain was found to be average in both national groups, but there were high levels of stress with role over load emerging as the major cause. Role overload occurs when an employee has to cope with a number of competing roles with their job. A study by Male and May (1998) on learning support coordinators in further education colleges illustrated the importance of such factors. Thirty five coordinators were also assessed for burn out, stress and health, and the results indicated overall mixed evidence for heightened stress in this group emerged, but there was strong evidence for work overload and excessive working hours, associated with emotional exhaustion. Therefore, principals' work overload in public secondary schools in Kisumu County was assessed in the leadership of secondary schools.

### **School Drop-outs**

A new global study which was conducted in poor urban areas in Kenya and six other counties, which was documented in the journal of Adolescent Health of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of public health, found out that boys suffered more than girls from drop out. The study found out that adolescent depression and violence was closely associated with explosive to physical and emotional neglect and violence and sexual abuse at an earlier stage (Kebaso, 2019). Overall, the study found that 46 per cent of young adolescents reported experiencing violence, 38 per cent experienced physical neglect, thus drop out of school easily. The study was analyzed by 22 experts drawn from Kenya.

The study catalogued the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) suffered by 1284 adolescents' aged 10 to 14 "low income urban settings" around the world. It found remarkable common experiences with trauma and very similar impacts regardless of where the children lived, which included Viet-nam, China, Boliva, Egypt, India, Kenya, UK, and United States (Kebaso, 2019).

The report from the Bellagio Working Group on Gender Equity by 2030: putting adolescents at the Centre, found out that have as equal a part to play as girls in achieving the fifth of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS), which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030.

It has been observed that most students who are infected with HIV/AIDS also drop out of school, as they lack guidance and help from parents, guardians and other relatives (Wakhungu). This has been confirmed by the 2018 statistics released by the National Aids Control Council (NACC) which ranked Kakamega County at position 9 in the country, compared to the year 2012 when it was not falling among the prevalence counties such as Siaya, HomaBay, Kisumu, Migori, Busia, Nairobi, Kitui, and Kisii being among the top ten respectively (Wakhungu, 2019). Kenya has been ranked fourth country in the world which has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence. The study conducted by the National Aids Control Council (NACC) in Kenya found out that school girls are also infected with HIV/AIDS and the rate was increasing (Wakhungu, 2019). The study further revealed that girls of age 15-24 were equivalent to 40 per cent of the National Average Stigma Index with East and North East regions leading. This translates to approximately 17700 learners being infected countrywide. In the 2018 statistics, HIV infection data showed adults above 15 years had a prevalence rate of 85 per cent, commercial sex workers at 29.3 per cent, and children between 0-14 years had 15 per cent rate of infection (Wakhungu, 2019).

A report by the UNICEF (Wanzala, 2015) on the Second International Day of the Girl Child highlighted the power of innovation to get more girls in schools and improve the quality of learning for all children. The report also found that defilement of minors was becoming a big problem in Kenya. From Central Kenya to Rift Valley, there was increasing number of girls being defiled by their fathers, teachers and relatives which lead to teenage pregnancies and being traumatized, hence drop out of schools. The research also found

out that some of the raped minors were even infected with HIV/AIDS live a desperate life or die before the completion of their schooling (Murimi, 2013). This finding concurs with a report for right African Centre for Governance (2013), which found out that sexual exploitation was identified as the leading vices facing minors in low estates in Naivasha. It was also revealed that child labour was rampant in the slums with nearly 50% of the minors dropping out of schools. It was observed that quality education was deteriorating, that is, learners were losing out and this affected their lives which later became disastrous to our society, since the future of Kenya is in the hands of children (Ndege, 2015).

A report of "The Annual Learning Assessment" by Uwezo Kenya in conjunction with the Ministry of Education realized that two out of five pupils between age six and sixteen years in Narok County drop out of school to either get married or circumcised. It also revealed that absenteeism was high with more than four out of ten children missing school daily. It was further found that children aged between three to five years were still being forced by their parents to look after the livestock and thus end up skipping the pre-school education. Narok North education officer reported that the number of pupils, who dropped out of school in the district in the month of October, 2011 was 990. The number of boys who dropped out was 389 against 501 girls in ten educational zones in the district (Gicobi, 2015).

### **Principals' Transfers**

According to the Teachers Service Commission Act 2013 (RoK, 2013), it is the work of the TSC to transfer a teacher from one school to another at the right time. The principal cannot transfer him/herself from one station to the other without the TSC recommendation. A teacher is supposed to teach in a school for at least 5 years, when one can be transferred to another station (ROK, 2013). A transfer can be offered to the school principal or to a teacher before the right time occurs if at all it is requested for medical purposes and also if one of the spouses wants to join the family.

However, sometimes there are frequent uncalled for transfers of principals or teachers which interfere with the learning process in schools in the country. It involves both the individual and mass transfers of school principals. For instance, there was a transfer of more than 20 teachers in Kilifi County which paralyzed learning in most schools (Standard Team, 2011).

A report by Okewo (2015) indicated that on many occasions, principals have been blocked from their schools by the parents and students, demanding for their uncalled for transfer if the students perform poorly in KCSE and KCPE exams. At times, school principals are reshuffled by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), a case which is believed by the employer, uplift education standard in schools in Kenya. However, the school principals have been against this issue of reshuffling. They complain that it takes them a longer period to settle down in their new work stations, hence affecting their work performance in their schools (Kombe, 2017). Further, in the year 2018, many school principals were delocalized to the new working stations in other counties and this was rejected by most principals, teachers, schools' sponsors, students, Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers (KUPPET) and the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) officials since they believed that principals were being frustrated in their work (Wanzala, 2018). Some schools whose principals were delocalized in the country include; Lugulu Girls, Bunyore Girls, Ribe Boys, Makweni Boys, Waa Boys, Nyahururu Girls, Kakamega High, Kisumu Girls, Otieno Oyoo Boys among others (Wanzala, 2018).

### **Lack of Teaching and Learning Resources**

The resources which are considered here for the effective teaching and learning are the teachers, teaching /learning resources and physical facilities available in the school. Hopkins (1997), in his study on learner performance in schools explains that a teacher's role is central in students' performance and impact upon their academic performance. This finding is supported by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1995) that singled out the teacher as being the most important resource that if varied, and can influence school's academic performance positively. It has been observed that the level of education of a teacher plays a very important role in his/ her recruitment in teaching profession. A study by Allen (2005) on teacher development in the teaching profession in USA, realized that teacher preparation program needs to recruit the most promising teachers they can, and build the capacity of their recruits through solid teacher education. And also, the teachers in the class room must continue to enhance their skills and knowledge through quality professional development. The level of education of professionals affects the quality of their competence and thus, the knowledge of company 'stability to achieve success (Sveiby, 2001). This idea has also been supported in Kenya by the Teachers Service Commission chief executive officer who posited that teachers are pivotal to the right to education and there is need to supply qualified teachers and also motivate them by reducing their work. Teachers' effort and services to students for building a better society has been recognized and celebrated for by the Kenyan government (Wanzala, 2016).

In Kenya, increased access to primary and secondary schooling has placed great demand on teachers, especially since the Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 2003. Most teachers work under stress, in

overcrowded class rooms and dilapidated buildings without the necessary resources. This aspect has escaped many stakeholders and more so the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), which has been complaining for teacher quantity across the board (Naomi, 2016). The teacher as a resource, plays an important role in lesson presentation when interacting with students and materials used for instruction. The teacher must plan, prepare, teach the learner effectively, and involve the learners in the classroom activities (Odera, 2001).

According to Ndung'u (2015), the Kenyan government has had along legacy of an unjust and unequal system of education. That is, the national government has created a situation where by public schools are not allocated resources to develop and improve the educational environment. Public schools' infrastructures are dilapidated and are inadequate which lead to poor performance of most schools and thus, causing stress to principals. This is also in agreement with Mahugu (2015), who points out that most students are frustrated in schools as they cannot fit in the available class rooms, fields and use the available materials due to the high enrolment. The frustrated students who cannot fit in the field during the games time can easily get involved or engaged in wicked ways as a means of relieving stress. For instance, taking drugs, fighting or arson of schools.

Adequate, suitable and well maintained buildings motivate classroom teaching and learning (RoK, 2005). The buildings include classrooms, toilets, laboratories, library among others. It also involves correctly marked play grounds and suitable sufficient equipment. Ozer (2013) states that the type of quality of buildings, their presence or absence may affect learning in one way or another. It is therefore, important for the school principal to consider the requirements of the Public Health Act on standards of school buildings (Cap 242) and be sensitive to gender when planning and locating these facilities (RoK, 2005).

### **Indiscipline among Students**

In a school, it is the work of teachers to instill the knowledge, morals, attitude and wisdom in students in order to make them good performers in academics, sports, and morally stable in their lives. Therefore, the society expects students to uphold good moral standards which they have benefited from their teachers. Learners of the past would come to school already armed with basic virtues and moral principle natured at the family level. These virtues included honesty, obedience, courtesy, perseverance, patience and respect. At present, the school system has been overloaded with parenting and academic roles. Teachers are overwhelmed with duties, some of which have been neglected by the parents. Parents have failed to raise their children with the right social values that embody self-discipline. It is apparent that indiscipline in schools is largely due to this parental crisis (Kuria, 2015). Of late, the country has witnessed a wave of indiscipline cases in schools. Close to 100 Secondary schools were closed due students' unrest (Akong'o, 2016). There has been an upsurge of cases of arson, homosexuality, bullying, drug and substances abuse and general truancy in our schools at alarming rate. The frequent strike of students may have enhanced stress to the principals (Kuria, 2015).

A study of 1000 student teachers (Morton, et al., 1997), revealed that classroom management was their second greatest source of anxiety, the greatest being evaluation apprehension. Of all the causes of stress reported, classroom management anxiety was the only one that did not decline following teaching practice.

A report on Presidential Committee on students unrest and discipline in Kenyan secondary schools (2001), observed that disturbance in schools occurred partly because of lack of dialogue between students and administrators, poor management skills by the administrators and poor parenting while other researchers argue that the causes of indiscipline in schools are political interference, tribalism, religious politics, poor relationship between students and teachers. The other argument by other stakeholders is that, indiscipline is caused by the ban of punishment, inclusion of students on the BoM committee, the restriction on suspension and expulsion of indiscipline students (Kuria, 2015).

Indiscipline in schools has been counterproductive in the educational achievement of secondary schools. Cosgrove (2000) argues that the rural secondary schools have been plagued by direct poverty, immoralities, drugs, alcoholics and local illicit brews have become safe havens for such frustrations. This argument is quite befitting in day schools. This finding concurs with that of National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) as cited in Kibet (2014), shows that 56.3% of the respondents (students) abused prescription of drugs while 50.3% smoke bhang, drug such as cigarettes, alcohol, miraa, inhalant and kuber. There were also evidence of low consumption of cocaine and heroin. Among the students randomly selected from seventeen regions, it was identified that alcohol was the most commonly abused drug in secondary schools as 74.4% often take drugs without the knowledge of the teachers.

In the year 2018, a number of public secondary schools in Kenya were closed down in the month of July, before the official time due to the students' unrest (Standard Reporter, 2018).

### **Competency of the Principal**

A report by Ogambo (2005) indicated that quite a number of teachers have been given the headship without any formal preparation for it. This leads to lack of commitment and the position is used as a license to be absent from duty anytime they choose. Unprepared principals may suffer from the problem of role ambiguity.

Role ambiguity occurs when the person does not know what he or she is supposed to do in the job. This may cause stress to the principal (Black, 2003). Principals' knowledge, skills, strategies, actions, beliefs and perceptions have been found to be the principal's powerful tools for bringing improvement in school management (Shore, 1995). If he/she lacks these concepts, this will cause undue pressure, thus leading to stress. The quality of leadership in a school affects to a large extent the success or the failure of that school. The function of the school leadership as an element of the school environment is to influence the group towards achievement of group goals (Shore, 1995). A study done by UNESCO (2005), found out that the level of education greatly influenced school principal's ability to offer management in school in Australia. In Malaysia, a research by Fergusson and Ladd, (1996) as cited in Ahmed (2006), noted that those teachers' qualifications, that is, knowledge and education, account for a large share of the variance in student's achievement than any other single factor.

However, Miller and Chait (2008) quickly dismiss this claim by stating that a state issued license to teach, commonly called a certificate, is particularly weak indicator of teacher quality. Level of education of professionals may also affect the quality of their competence and thus the knowledge company ability to achieve future success (Sveiby, 2001). This claim is supported by Edcan (2008) who noted that participation in continuing education among nurses proved to be the most clinical wider accepted method of measuring clinical competence.

The competence of the principal can also be evident through teamwork and cooperation. The principal should cooperate with others to accomplish common goals; work with the employees within and across the principal department to achieve shared goals; treat others with dignity and respect and maintain a friendly demeanor; values the contributions of others (SPA, 2008). In this case, a leader develops and sustains a sense of common purpose, and mutual support and responsibility. The principal should also demonstrate generic competence, which refers to other general skills, such as teamwork skills and communication skills. Learning this skill is often integrated in the instructional design, like working in teams to solve related problems and giving presentation.

### **Statement of the problem**

Principals in public secondary schools face a lot of challenges in the leadership of their schools that sometimes put a lot of demand on their work and sometimes make one to be stressed up ( Koome, 2007). For instance, there has been frequent students' unrests in most public secondary schools in the county, that has resulted into the destruction of the school property worth millions of shillings due to indiscipline among the students. Cosgroove (2000) noted that most principals have resigned from leadership post while some of them have quitted teaching profession. However, the government of Kenya has been increasing teachers' salary and provide workshops for the principals regularly for effective school management, but principals are still stressed in their work place, hence there was need to establish the reasons for principals' stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya.

### **Purpose and Objective of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine stress on principals' work performance in Kisumu County. The objective was to establish the reasons for principals' stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County.

## **II. Methodology**

The study was carried out using descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design depicts the state of affairs as it exists (Kothari, 2004). Orodho (2009) also noted that descriptive survey allows the researcher to collect information, summarize, interpret and present for the purpose of clarification by interview or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals. This research design was also suitable for the study because the researcher was not able to have control over the variables and only reported what had happened in the field. Consequently, research design was chosen for the study due to the fact that it was appropriate for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents. The research design was employed in the study because it enabled the researcher to describe reasons for principals' stress in public secondary schools in Kisumu County.

### **Location of the Study and Population**

The study was conducted in Kisumu County which comprised of 7 sub-counties namely; Nyakach, Muhoroni, Nyando, Kisumu East, Kisumu Central, Kisumu West and Seme. Kisumu County is situated within nyanza region, Kenya. The study was carried out in Kisumu County because it is an area in which some principals have quitted principal ship due to stress (Wanzala, 2015). Population of the study comprised of 220 principals, 220 deputy principals and 7 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SQASOs) in

Kisumu County. The population provided sample size of the respondents who participated in the study. These participants were selected for the study because they have reliable information about principals' stress in public schools in the region. Population of the study is displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Study Population**

Population	Number
Principals	220
Deputy Principals	220
SCQASOs	7
Total	447

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

Kumar (2011) states that a sample is a sub-set of a population for the study. The sample size for the principals and the deputy principals was calculated proportionately using 30% of each category of the respondents, as agreed by Mugenda and Mugenda (2009). Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to sample 66 principals and 66 deputy principals of public secondary schools. Saturated sampling method was also employed to sample 7 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SQASOs) for the study because their number was small and could be well managed in the study (Cozby, 2001). Therefore, the total number of all sampled participants in the study was 139. The sampled participants in the study is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Population Sample**

Participants	Total Population	No. Selected	Percentage
Principals	220	66	30
Deputy principals	220	66	30
SQASOs	7	7	100
Total	447	139	

### Instruments for Data Collection

The research instruments which were employed for data collection included interview schedule, observation check-list schedule, questionnaire and document analysis.

### Questionnaire

Open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect information from the principals' and deputy principals' opinions and attitudes. Cozby (2001) states that the use of questionnaire guarantees confidentiality and can be administered to a large number of respondents. In addition, Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) state that questionnaire is economical to use in terms of time and money.

### Principals' Questionnaire

The principals' questionnaires consisted of two sections which were A and B sections. Section A provided demographical information of the principals such as gender, age, academic qualifications, professional qualifications, experience in the teaching professions and job groups. Section B covered the areas related to the research objective, reasons for principals' stress in schools. It consists of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to be answered.

### Interview Schedule

In order to gather in-depth information from the Sub – County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, an interview schedule was used. The interview schedule was not divided into sections. It consists of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questions covered the areas related to the research objectives. The in-depth interview was selected because interview questions involved face to face interactions which helped in obtaining data required to meet specific objectives of the study. It was also flexible and in-depth information could be realized during the interview session due to the established rapport between the interviewer and interviewees (Cresswell, 2013).

### Document Analysis

Cresswell (2013) describes document analysis as the critical examination of public or private recorded information related to the issue under investigation. The instrument was selected for use by the researcher because it could help to obtain un-obstructive information at the pleasure of the researcher without interrupting the researched. The method was also useful to access data at their convenient time and allowed the researcher to obtain data that were thoughtful in that the informants had given attention to compiling them (Cresswell, 2013). Therefore, in order to get more information about the school principals in Kisumu County, the researcher visited



the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) offices at the county level and requested for the legal documents about the school principals and secondary schools within the county respectively. At the Teachers Service Commission office, the researcher got legal information about the transfer, death, early retirement and deployment of principals. The Ministry of Education provided the researcher with the policy guideline documents about the schools activities and performance of the candidates in KCSE exams from 2011 to 2017 in Kisumu County. During the examination period, the researcher identified the total number of all schools, their names, the type and the category of secondary schools in each sub-county in the region. Also, the number of students (males and females) who sat for KCSE exams and their performance mean grade were produced for the analysis.

### **Observation Check-list Schedule**

Orodho (2008) states that observation method implies the collection of information by way of investigator's own observation, which could be recorded without interviewing the respondents. This method of data collection assisted the researcher to see what people actually do rather than what they say they do. In this study, observation check-list was employed due to the following reasons; it allowed the researcher to gain first-hand experience without informants, information about the items in schools could be recorded as they occurred, by use of physical observation and taking photos of some items in the environment. Through observation, the researcher was able to explore other things that could be uncomfortable to informants and also enabled the researcher to identify unusual aspects within the school environment.

Observation check-list was prepared by the researcher and it consisted of various aspects to be assessed. The main aspects which were involved in the observation check-list included school compound, institutional administrative block, classrooms, library facilities, equipment and materials for the outdoor activities. Each aspect consisted of other items which were to be assessed by the researcher. The learning resources were assessed in accordance to their availability and conditions for teaching and learning of the students. Each item was assessed employing Likert scale rated from 1-5. The indicators which were employed in the rating scale included: 5 – More than enough; 4- Enough ; 3- Few; 2 – Very few; 1 – Meant T/L resources were not there.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Marzano (2012), data analysis is the process of systematically editing, coding and arranging research data in a way that it can be understood by the researcher and be presented to others what has been discovered. Gray (2009) points out that data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making. In this study, descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data quantitatively. Descriptive statistics was selected due to the fact that it could enable the researcher to identify and quantify the relationships between variables and also examined the qualities of a single set of data. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed as follows:

#### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

Gray (2009) states that quantitative data analysis involves the use of numbers and what they stand for as the materials for the analysis. Therefore, quantitative data obtained from the closed -ended questions of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as the calculation of mean, percentages and standard deviation. To get the information from the school principals and the deputies, a five – point Likert - scale was employed. The scale was numbered as: 5 – Strongly Agree; 4 – Agree; 3 – Undecided; 2- Disagree; and 1 – Strongly Disagree. Likert - scale was selected because it was more reliable since respondents were able to answer each statement included in the instrument and it further provided more information than other scales such as Thurston – type scale (Kothari, 2004). The information collected through Likert – Scale was edited, coded, classified and then analyzed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22) at the set value of 0.05 level of significance (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) and the findings were presented in Tables and bar graphs.

#### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that qualitative data analysis involves ways of discerning, examining, comparing and contrasting, and interpreting meaningful patterns or themes. That is, it deals in words and is guided by fewer universal rules and standardized procedures than statistical analysis. Data which were collected from the interview schedule and the open – ended questions of the questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively. The data obtained from the interview were written down by the researcher and were organized into themes and sub-themes in accordance with the research objectives after which the conclusions were made by the use of coefficient correlation analysis and reported in the verbatim form. The findings of the research was presented in

accordance to the research objective. That is, reasons for principals' stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County.

### III. Results and Discussion

#### Reasons for Principals' Stress in their work Performance in Public Secondary Schools

According to Oxford Dictionary (2010) stress is described as pressure or worry caused by the problems in somebody's life. At the same time, Kyriacou (2001) describes stress as negative emotion such as anger, anxiety, frustration, or depression resulting from some negative aspects of one's work as an employee. Brimm (2001) also describes stress as any action or situation that places physical or psychological demands on an individual. Principals were therefore asked to state the reasons why they are stressed in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County. In order to establish the reasons, the study adopted the use of eight itemized-Likert scaled questionnaire that was administered to the principals. The stress aspects that were examined included; Lack of managerial skills, uncalled for transfer, indiscipline among students, students drop out, lack of enough teachers, inadequate learning facilities, work overload, lateness and absenteeism of teachers. Using the responses; Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) or Strongly Disagree (1), the principals ticked on the most appropriate response based on their own assessment of personal experiences at their work places.

The responses of the principals were analyzed in form of descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation, and the results presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Reasons for Principals' Stress**

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
Lack of managerial skills (incompetence) gives me stress.	17(27.4%)	22(35.5%)	2(3.2%)	13(21.0%)	8(12.9%)	2.56	1.421
Uncalled for transfer as the school principal gives me stress.	4(6.5%)	14(22.6%)	4(6.5%)	22(35.5%)	18(29.0%)	3.58	1.300
Indiscipline among Students gives me stress.	2(3.2%)	6(9.7%)	4(6.5%)	31(50.0%)	19(30.6%)	3.95	1.031
Students drop out gives me stress.	6(9.7%)	12(19.4%)	11(17.7%)	29(46.8%)	4(6.5%)	3.21	1.133
Lack of enough teachers gives me stress.	0(0.0%)	2(3.2%)	1(1.6%)	19(30.6%)	40(64.5%)	4.56	.692
Inadequate learning facilities give me stress.	0(0.0%)	3(4.8%)	2(3.2%)	19(30.6%)	38(61.3%)	4.48	.784
Work overload gives me stress.	0(0.0%)	4(6.5%)	1(1.6%)	15(24.2%)	42(67.7%)	4.53	.824
Lateness and absenteeism of teachers gives me stress.	4(6.5%)	16(25.8%)	3(4.8%)	29(46.8%)	10(16.1%)	3.40	1.221

Source: Survey data (2019)

### **Response of the Participants on Competence of the Principals and the Stress**

The analysis of the competence of the principals in the management of their schools in relation to stress was done and the result indicated in Table 3 shows that 17 (27.4%) principals strongly disagreed and 22(35.5%) disagreed with the construct that lack of managerial skills is a reason why principals are stressed in work performance while 2(3.2%) principals were undecided, 13(21.0%) agreed and 8(12.9%) strongly agreed that lack of managerial skills was a reason why principals were stressed, at a mean of 2.56. Therefore, suggesting that lack of managerial skills was not a reason why the principals were stressed in their work performance due to the low mean. This finding indicates that the majority of secondary school principals in Kisumu County have undergone appropriate training on school management, thus resulting into good leadership. Good leadership enhances managerial effectiveness that encompasses the extent to which the administrator is capable of harmonizing materials and human resources available to them to achieve the goals of the school system (Bjiogn, 2002). Bighouse (1994) studies the processes that encourage effective school management on secondary schools in Cambridge with about 300 principals, found out that successful leadership, decision making, supervision, organization, and creating the enabling environment were some of the major activities that enhances school management. Many principals in the region might have employed all these requirements in order to become competent enough in carrying out their daily administrative activities in schools. This concurs with the finding of this study that principals in this region are moderately stressed as the mean of the level of stress was found to be (3.20).

### **Responses of the Participants on Principals' Transfers and Stress**

The principals were further asked about their transfer in relation to stress, and the findings were as follows; 18(29.1%) principals disagreed, 4(6.5%) undecided and 40(64.5%) agreed that uncalled for transfer was a reason for stress in their work performance which provided a mean of 3.58. This is indicating that the principals viewed uncalled for transfer as a reason why they were stressed in their work performance. This finding concurs with what had been observed by the Standard Team (2011) that mass and individual transfers of teachers and principals had been taking place in the County. When this takes place, learning process is being interfered with as principals take some period of time to settle in their new work places, thus leads to stressful situation. This finding is further in agreement with Wanzala's observation (2018) on the change in policy of principals' transfer from one county to another county, a process known as delocalization that has been employed currently, a situation which is not supported by the principals themselves, students, school sponsors, Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education (KUPPET) as this gives them stress.

### **Responses of Principals on Indiscipline of Students and Stress.**

The respondents were asked about students' indiscipline in relation to their stress and the result is shown in Table 3 which revealed that 2(3.2%) principals strongly disagreed, 6(9.7%) disagreed, 4(6.5%) undecided, 31(50.0%) agreed and 19(30.6%) strongly agreed that indiscipline among students was a reason why principals were stressed in their work performance, that was equivalent to a mean of 3.95. This implied that the principals were stressed in the work performance as a result of students' indiscipline.

The research finding is in agreement with that of National Authority for Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) as cited in Kibet (2014) which revealed that 56.3% of the students abused prescription of drugs while 50.3% smoke bhang, drugs such as cigarettes, alcohol, Miraa, inhalant, and Kuber and, alcohol was the most commonly abused drug in secondary schools as 74.4% often took drugs without the knowledge of the teachers, thus resulting into principals' stress. The same issue was also observed by Wanzala (2018) when in the year 2018; quite a number of public secondary schools in Kenya were closed down in the month of July before the official scheduled time due to students' unrest. During this period, schools' property worth millions of shillings were destroyed and burned that deteriorated the learning process and the syllabus coverage was poor. Principal's role in regard to students' management relate to the admission policies, boarding services, social services, food, health, guidance and counseling among others. Therefore, the principal must realize that he/she will be held responsible for any wrong doings in the school. Likewise, he/she will be credited for the good performance and moderate performance. So, it is up to the principal to ensure that the relationship between him and his students remains cordial (Black, 2003). When there is no appropriate cordial relationship between the two, this may lead to chaotic situation thus leading to stress.

This finding also concurs with that of Njeri (2017) who observed that in the recent years, there has been a disturbing high death rate among school students due to indiscipline cases as follows:

- In 1991, some 19 school girls were killed by their male school mates at St. Kizito Mixed secondary school in Meru County.
- In 1989, 4 prefects died in a dormitory fire after being attacked by their fellow students.
- In 2001, 68 students died in a dormitory fire at Kyanguli secondary school in Machakos County.

- In 2015, 11 schools were torched in Bungoma County whereas over 100 schools had been affected by arson since the beginning of 2016.
- Suicide increased mostly when students failed to perform well in the national examination (Njeri, 2015).

As all these incidents took place in the Kenyan schools, who is to be blamed? The study found out that it is the Ministry of Education (MoE) to be blamed.

### **Responses of the Participants on Students' Drop-Out in Relation to their Work Performance**

The respondents were requested to give information about the school dropouts in relation to their work performance as indicated in Table 3. It was that 9(9.7%) principals strongly disagreed, 12(19.4%) disagreed, 11(17.7%) undecided, 29(46.8%) agreed and 4(6.5%) strongly agreed that students drop out was a reason why principals were stressed in the work performance, at a mean of 3.21. This implied that the principals were stressed in their work performance as a result of students' drop out.

This finding concurs with the report by the UNICEF (Wanzala, 2015) on the Second International Day of the Girl Child which indicated that, from Central Kenya to Rift Valley there was increasing number of girls being defiled by their teachers and relatives which led to teenage pregnancies and trauma, hence drop out of schools. The Paradise Valley Unified School District of Phoenix, Arizona, defines sexual harassment as including, but not limited to suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations; derogatory comments, slurs, jokes and epithets; assaults; blocking movements; leering gestures; and displays of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons where such conduct may create a hostile environment of the employee or learners Bohlander and Snell (2017).

It was also in agreement with the report by the Uwezo Kenya in conjunction with the Ministry of Education on their Annual Learning Assessment which found out that two out of five pupils/students between age six and sixteen years in Narok County, dropped out of school to either get married or circumcised. Apart from these causes of students drop-out, there could be also other causes such as HIV/AIDS scourge which left many children orphans. Some of these children normally work in the plantations of sugar, tea, coffee and fishing especially in areas which are situated near the lakes and the seas, working at the quarry and mine sites. Market and urban places could also do away with some of these children. Therefore, principals whose schools might have fallen among the above stated conditions automatically would have stress as they are being pressurized by the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission that the attendance of the students must remain intact. This is being assessed through monthly returns. In recent surveys, it was also observed that more boys drop-out of school than girls, thus there was need for research on this (Ochieng', 2015).

### **Responses of the Participants on Lack of Enough Teachers and Principals' Stress**

The principals who were involved in the study were asked about lack of enough teachers in their schools in relation to their work performance and stress as displayed in Table 4. The result indicated that 2(3.2%) principals disagreed, 1(1.6%) undecided, 19(30.6%) agreed and 40(64.5%) strongly agreed that lack of enough teachers was a reason why principals were stressed in their work performance, at a mean of 4.56. This implied that the principals were highly stressed in their work performance as a result of lack of enough teachers.

The findings concur with the observation of Wanaina (2015) in his research, on teachers' and principals' effective roles in schools, in Kenya that teacher-student ratio is disproportionately pathetic as current teacher-student ratio is 1:70 instead of 1:35 which is against the admission policy guideline. When the number of students out-numbers that of the teachers in relation to the ratio required, effective learning and teaching process would not be realized due to work overload. Work overload and excessive working hours are associated with emotional exhaustion which may lead to ineffective performance of the teachers. When the teachers cannot deliver their services promptly, this may result into principal's stress since the head of the school has a responsibility of appropriate curriculum implementation (Mahugu, 2015).

### **Responses of the Participants on Inadequate Teaching and Learning Facilities and Principals' Work Performance**

The Table 3 displays the participants' response on lack of teaching and learning facilities in relation to their work performance and stress. The result shows that 3(4.8%) principals disagreed, 2(3.2%) undecided, 19(30.6%) agreed and 38(61.3%) strongly agreed that inadequate learning facilities was a reason why principals were stressed in the work performance, at a mean of 4.48. This implied that the principals were highly stressed in their work performance as a result of inadequate learning facilities. The researcher further used another tool (observation check-list) to assess the availability of teaching and learning resources in schools. The result is displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4. Analysis of Teaching and Learning Resources in Public Schools**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
<b>i. Classrooms</b>		
• Whiteboards	15	24
• Desks	27	44
<b>ii. Laboratories</b>		
• Chemistry lab	13	21
• Biology lab	25	40
• Physics lab	20	32
• H/Science room	15	24
<b>iii. Libraries</b>	30	48
<b>v. ICT Equipment</b>		
• Computers	14	23
• Internet connectivity	10	16
• E-books	5	8
• Radios	20	32
• Television	12	19
<b>v. Agricultural equipment</b>	22	35

(Principals, n=62)

The data in Table 4 indicate that teaching and learning resources in the classrooms like whiteboards and students' desks were not enough in most schools because the number of schools that had these items was below average. That is, whiteboards 15(24%) and desks 27(44%) schools. This finding is in agreement with the report by the Ministry of Education (MoE) Kenya, which conducted a research on the teaching and learning facilities in both public primary and secondary schools in the country (Oduor, 2017).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) found out that many schools in the country were inadequately resourced, lacking teachers and learning materials and minimum facilities for students to learn. The Ministry of Education further found out that due to lack of teaching/learning materials in schools, this has caused many students to drop out of school as early as grade six (Oduor, 2017).

This finding agrees with that of Naomi (2016) and Mahugu (2015) who noted that teachers work under stress, in overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated buildings. The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) also noted that performance in KCSE has been on a downward trend due to lack of enough resources. For instance, in the year 2008, only 24 percent of the candidates obtained mean grade of C+ and above, compared to 30 per cent and 26 per cent scored on the previous years 2001 and 2006 respectively. Reddy and Anuradha (2013) also assert that school physical environment such as dilapidated teachers' houses, crowded classrooms, inadequate and informal furniture arrangement are key stressors to the school principals. Similarly, Johannsen (2011) carried out a study in USA and noted that physical environmental factors contribute to stress among teachers and identified that students' sitting preferential, poor classroom lighting, ventilation, noise level in the school from learning equipment are some of the physical environmental factors influencing stress among teachers in elementary learning institutions.

Laboratories of science subjects were analyzed and the result revealed that most schools did not have enough laboratories for science subjects. This is because only 13(21%) schools had enough Chemistry laboratories, 25(40%) schools had Biology laboratories, 20(32%) schools had enough Physics laboratories and 15(24%) schools had Home Science rooms available for the students' practical work. The findings also indicated that almost half of the schools had enough libraries in their schools to motivate the learners in their study because 30(48%) schools had enough libraries. This finding concurs with that of Owino et al. (2014), who carried out a study on the relationship between availability of teaching /learning resources and performance in KCSE Biology in selected secondary schools in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County, who found out that the overall mean response for availability of teaching and learning resources was 2.659, indicating that teaching and learning resources were less adequate.

The finding revealed also that teaching and learning resources such as Chemicals, charts, apparatus, models, local specimens, laboratories and classrooms were less adequate, and led to poor performance in KCSE Biology in Nyakach Sub-County. Yadar (2007) opined that teaching and learning materials such as text books, classrooms, teaching aids (pieces of chalk, board, ruler, protractor), writing materials and laboratories contribute to the academic performance of the learners.

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) items were analysed and the findings indicated that most schools lack ICT equipment because they were only available in few schools. This means that schools with enough computers were 14(23%), internet connectivity 10(16%), E-books 5(8%), Radios 20(32%) and Television 12(19%). This finding concurs with that of the Seasonal Paper No. 1 (2005) which noted that most sub-county schools lack the necessary infrastructure such as service laboratories and many public secondary schools cannot access ICT due to lack of computers, limited rural electrification, high cost of ICT equipment,

and inadequate infrastructure. It was further observed that many schools with computers are not connected to the internet and several schools do not have enough ICT text books (Seasonal Paper No.1 2005).

A report from the department of education also revealed that, there has been continuing theft of school resources such as computers and text books. It was realized that between 2015 and 2012, more secondary schools were raided by thieves who stole equipment (Gikandi, 2015). For instance, the great attack in raiding institutions to steal computers was in Gitwuni secondary school which took place in September 2015.

The findings on the agricultural equipment showed that most schools did not have enough agricultural equipment to be used in the school farms by the students. This was clearly indicated by only 22(35%) schools which had enough farm tools for appropriate teaching and learning of the students. The study also found out that the few agricultural equipment that were available in some schools were being shared by the students when they do practical work causing delay in the completion of the syllabus. Therefore, in a nutshell, the findings indicated that most schools in Kisumu County lack enough teaching and learning resources, that might have interfered with the teaching and learning process, thus resulting into poor performance in the national examination (KCSE).

This finding is in agreement with that report made by the UNESCO (2008) that teaching and learning resources are not enough in schools for the teachers to implement curriculum amicably (UNESCO, 2008). This kind of situation leads to ineffective teaching and resulting into poor performance of the students in the national examinations. That is, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) which of course gives stress to the school principals. The school principal should endeavor provide the necessary plants and facilities that will promote quality education in his school. At the same time, he/she should protect, maintain or replace the obsolete facilities. Since school buildings, equipment and supplies are costly, it is therefore important for them to be adequately maintained and cared for. It has also been noted that when employees work in unpleasant conditions, this creates physiological and Psychological imbalance in human, thereby causing stress (Cole & Kelly, 2004).

#### **Responses of the Participants on Work load**

Principals of the schools were further asked about their work load in relation to their stress as shown in Table 3 and the researcher found out that 4(6.5%) principals disagreed, 1(1.6%) undecided, 15(24.2%) agreed and 42(67.7%) strongly agreed that work overload was a reason why principals were stressed in the work performance, at a mean of 4.53. This implied that the principals were highly stressed in their work performance as a result of work overload.

This finding concurs with that of Juma et al. (2016) who carried out a study on factors influencing stress among public secondary school female principals in Rachuonyo North sub-county in Homa Bay county, found out that work load was one of the reasons why principals were stressed as its mean was computed at (3.54), which was considered as one of the factors which highly influenced stress among the principals (Juma et al., 2016). The finding was also in agreement with that of Fullan (2001) who carried out a study on factors causing stress to school principals revealed that excessive workload leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure, likewise work under load in which too little work or very easy work is expected on the part of the employee. That is, doing less work/job would lead to monotony and boredom which can lead to stress. Work overload can be reduced through delegation of duties by the school principal to other staff personnel and developing positive attitude towards self and others (Fullan, 2001).

#### **Responses of Participants on Lateness and Absenteeism of Teachers**

Finally, the principals were requested to provide information about lateness and absenteeism of the teachers in relation to their work performance. The result indicated in Table 3 showed that 4(6.5%) principals strongly disagreed, 16(25.8%) disagreed, 3(4.8%) undecided, 29(46.8%) agreed and 10(16.1%) strongly agreed that lateness and absenteeism of teachers was a reason why principals were stressed in their work performance, at a mean of 3.40. This implied that the principals were stressed in their work performance as a result of lateness and absenteeism of teachers.

The finding concurs with that of (Warmer, 2014) who carried out a study in Australia on reasons of stress among senior educators and school principals, found out that there was tough conversation with teachers when addressing issues such as poor performance, not keeping up with syllabus coverage and poor work habit for instance, late coming or continued absenteeism. They explained that such conversation were often harsh and caused accusation leading to ill feelings (Warmer, 2014). The finding is further supported by the report made by the Teachers Service Commission on a comprehensive review of the school based learning programme in 2008 which found out that there was a decline in the performance of subjects taught by teachers undertaking those courses due to inadequate preparation and absenteeism among the teachers.

It is important for a group in an organization to create cohesiveness in order to realize quality work. When there is no unity among group members, whereby there is mistrust, frequent quarrels, lateness and

absenteeism of some employees, this may lead to the stress of the principals and other employees, who are adhered to the organization rules, hence resulting into low quality work performance ( Koome, 2007). Therefore, to avoid lateness and absenteeism of teachers in a school, the principal must be a role model by coming to school early, leaving late and coming to school regularly which is in line with the national policy guidelines.

Similarly, the deputy principals in their response to the question whether leadership is stressful or not, agreed that leadership is stressful and identified the following stressors in school leadership; management of students' indiscipline, management of teachers and support staff professional misconduct, clerical duties on teacher performance appraisal, curriculum implementation and supervision, stakeholders' expectations, and management of parents' issues. Equally, on the question of the reasons why school principals are stressed, the deputy principals commonly agreed on; poor performance of students in examination, inadequate financial resources, pressure on physical facilities due to high enrolment as a result of free secondary education policy, students indiscipline and unrest, challenges of managing the human resources, uncooperative staff, high stakeholder expectations, uncooperative parents on school fee payment, delays in government capitation, fear of not meeting set targets, challenges in supervision of curriculum implementation, and teachers' professional misconduct as the causes of stress to the school principals.

On the other hand, the 7(100%) SCQASOs indicated in the interview schedule verbatim response that:

Understaffing, fee payment challenges Workload Pressure, stakeholders' high expectations for good performance, Challenges in implementation of administrative policies, students' Unrests, Teachers' professional misconduct and administrative duties on documentation were the causes of stress to the principal

Furthermore, another SCQASO of Muhoroni Sub-County highlighted the major stressors to Principals in school administration as workload pressure, students' unrests, understaffing, and financial constraints. Similarly, SCQASO of Kisumu East stated that:

In this region, majority of the school principals have identified stressors such as frequent sub-county meetings, uncooperative parents, more paper work (appraisal issue), and understaffing. Currently, the government of Kenya, through the Teachers Service Commission, has a plan to employ more teachers on a yearly basis to help overcome some of these problems

This sentiment is in agreement with that of Fullan (2001) who noted that, some of the major sources of stress among school principals include work overload, dealing with human resource, uncooperative community members and understaffing.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The study examined the reasons why principals are stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County. The study was significant due to the fact that there has been frequent quitting principalship post and leaving teaching profession by school principals in the county, yet the government of Kenya plays a very important role in uplifting the welfare of the teachers and providing quality education in schools. The role that the government play for effective teaching and administration include: upgrading teachers regularly, increasing teachers' salary, provision of workshops for effective school management and provision of teaching and learning resources in schools. The study finding indicated that principals in public secondary schools were stressed in their work performance because of uncalled for transfers, inadequate teaching and learning resources, indiscipline among students, students drop out, lack of enough teachers, work overload, lateness and absenteeism of teachers but were not stressed due to lack of managerial skills.

The study recommended that the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should provide motivational activities that support principals in their work place.

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