

**PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND  
RETENTION OF LEARNERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALINDI  
SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree  
of Master of Education in Leadership and Administration.**

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**NAIROBI – KENYA**

**AUGUST, 2022**

## DECLARATION67

I, the Undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and the fruit of my labour. I declare that this work has not been presented to any other college or university for examination or the award of an academic degree. All the information obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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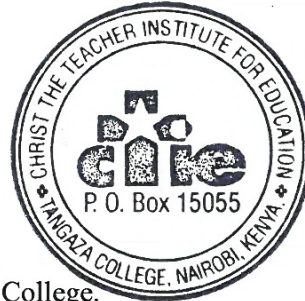
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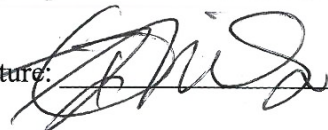
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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Michael Mwangangi Musyoki and Mrs. Rosina Muthikwa Mwangangi.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am grateful to God, for the gift of life, health and knowledge that enabled me to go through this academic initiative. I thank my parents for supporting me spiritually, physically and socially. May you be blessed for your good work. My heartfelt appreciation is extended to Sr. Jane Owuor, the Superior General of the sisters of St. Joseph, Mombasa, and her Counselors, for allowing and financially supporting me to pursue postgraduate studies. I also thank my employer, the Teacher Service Commission (TSC), through Dr. Nancy Macharia for giving time and opportunity to study.

I wish to register my appreciation to my two supervisors. Sr. Dr. Kinikonda Okemasisi my first supervisor and Dr. Tom Odhiambo who provided scholarly insights, support and guidance throughout the writing and development of this thesis to completion. Thank you, my supervisors, for your dedication, availability, commitment and words of encouragement. I also thank my colleagues for their support in the face of many challenges towards the completion of this thesis. May the Almighty God bless you all and reward you abundantly.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to find out how the transformational leadership strategies adopted by principals help in the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following research questions: How does the principal's role modeling enhance learner retention? To what extent does the provision of resources as strategy employed by principals' influence learner retention? To what extent does parental involvement as a strategy employed by the principal impact learner's retention? What is the relationship between conducive learning environment and learner retention in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County? This study adopted both the transformational leadership theory and Beatty Guenter's 1994 Theory of Students Retention. It adopted a mixed research method, specifically a convergent parallel mixed method design to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Both cross-sectional survey and the phenomenology design were used. The researcher targeted one Sub-County Director of Education, 29 principals, 453 teachers and 3760 students at public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County. The sample size was 531 participants. The probability sampling techniques used were stratified and simple random sampling to select 136 teachers and 376 students of public secondary schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the Sub-County Director of Education and 9 principals. Data was collected through questionnaire and in-depth interview guides. The instruments were subjected to both face and content validity. Cronbach Alpha determined the reliability of Quantitative data. Qualitative and quantitative data were concurrently collected and analyzed. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 24 that generated descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages that summarized data and presented. Qualitative data was organized into themes and presented using narratives and direct quotes. Ethical principles were considered in the whole research process. The findings showed that some of the transformational strategies principals employed need to be strengthened in order to influence the learners' retention. These include provision of resources such as equipped library, ensuring teachers observe time allocated in class, correcting books of the learners and parental involvement. The study recommends that the government, through its agencies such as the MOE and TSC, should provide resources such as finances meant for FSE, learning materials, and infrastructure on time to enable principals retain learners in school.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>AEE</b>	Alliance for Excellent Education
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>FDSE</b>	Free Day Secondary Education
<b>GER</b>	Gross Enrollment Rate
<b>KCSE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>KEMI</b>	Kenya Education Management Institute
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOEST</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>NARC</b>	National Rainbow Coalition
<b>NER</b>	Net Enrollment Rate
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PTA</b>	Parent-Teacher Association
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The chapter presents the background information to the study, the problem statement, the general and specific objectives, the research questions, the scope, the significance and delimitation of the study. The section also discusses theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study, and finally the operational definitions of the terms as used in the study.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Leadership is a key function of administration that helps to create better productivity in accomplishing any organizational goals (Management Study Guide, 2017). Different authors, such as Burns (1978), Bass (1985) and Leithwood (2018), among others, have advocated for transformational leadership. Transformational leadership focuses on the individual person and encourages the followers to use all their potential in bringing about success. Transformational leaders seek to change those they lead by representing sustainable and self-replicating leadership. Their leadership is likely to impact learner retention (McCarley, 2016). According to Balwant (2016), school principals' leadership refers to the way the principals plan, organize and control secondary institutions. In order to run and maintain the retention of learners in secondary schools, the principals' leadership is crucial.

Burns (1978) first used the term transformational leadership to describe a process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham (pp. 243-259)). Bass (1985) extended the work of Burns (1978) by defining four transformational leadership dimensions as idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Berkovich, 2016; McCarley et al., 2016). Leithwood's work in the (1980s) and (1990s) extended the concept to schools as he began to explore the model as the opportunity to move beyond "instructional leadership", which

was and remains the prevalent model of the time. Since transformational leadership involves change, it is very useful in schools. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2018), the concept of a leader's commitment to moral and personal values is essential in bringing about institutional change through teamwork to attain retention of learners in schools. Similarly, transformational principals are individuals who are change-oriented, inspiring, good communicators and act as role models. Likewise, they empower teachers and parents to perform better through training, developing and providing an enabling learning environment for the students (Leithwod, 2018). In addition to that, principals' transformational leadership emphasizes on the development of school visions and missions. Besides, Wiyono (2017) emphasized on improvement of motivation and empowerment of the personnel as well as optimum achievement of the schools' goals hence retention of learners. Scholars Leithwod, (2018), Duke, (2020) and Berkovich, (2016) pointed out that principals' leadership is one of the aspects that determine the students' retention and success.

Retention of students in public secondary schools has been quite a priority globally. For instance, in Canada, high school retention has been on the increase from 11% to nearly 14% between the year 2000 to 2012 (Duke, 2020). This was because the government of Canada, by empowering principals' transformational leadership, have put in place a stay in school program with broader economic and social factors that can have more important implications than policy in contributing to Canada's impressive performance on retention (conference Board of Canada, 2013). Further to that, the report from UNICEF (2017) shows that in Sub-Saharan Africa countries retention of students in secondary schools is generally low for female (21%) compared to male (28%). The school of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a transformational principal who embraces a multi-dimensional approach to leadership (Hackett & Hortman, 2018). According to Avci

(2016), school principals are the most important human resource persons that will make the school peaceful or peaceful for the success or failure of students' retention. Similarly, the transformational leadership strategies exhibited by principals working in educational institutions positively affect the learners' retention and their achievement. According to the report of UNICEF (2017), the transformational principals need to make the school environment attractive, safe and friendly for retention of students in schools. In addition, they should involve parents, provide resources and make them accountable for their students' welfare and educational achievement.

Education is key to the realization of the global sustainable development goals. Alliance for Excellent Education AEE (2017) as cited in American Psychological Association stressed that containing school dropout rates can bring several additional incomes and economic benefits including increased job earnings, tax revenues, and investment and long-term economic growth. According to the World Bank (2017) statistics, the secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) increased from 54.3 % in 2013 to 69.0 % in 2017 due to Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) programme, while the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) increased from 38.5 to 51.1 in the same period. The total number of secondary schools in Kenya increased from 8034 in 2013 to 10655 in 2017. Principally, increased enrolment coupled with the drive to ensure 100% transition of learners to secondary education has placed tension on educational infrastructure since the demand does not commensurate with its growth. As a result, some of the students drop out of school due to poor physical facilities (Education -Kenya Yearbook 2019/2020). This implies that approximately 40% of public secondary school going age learners have dropped out of school and only 60 % have been enrolled in secondary schools (Session paper no.1 of 2019).

Non-completion of secondary schooling continues to be a matter of concern for policymakers and practitioners worldwide (Gray & Hackling, 2016). Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019) points out that the quest to retain learners in schools is a global issue. In regard to Kenya, it abolished tuition fees for students attending its secondary day in its effort to retain them in schools and complete secondary schools (MoE, 2016, Session paper no.1 of 2019). Despite efforts made by the country, there is still low retention of students in public secondary schools (Abuya, 2015). Muthaka and Wangombe (2016) illustrate that increased school dropout rate is a threat to the achievement of vision 2030 of making Kenya a middle-income economy.

Low retention of students in public secondary school has been witnessed in many secondary schools in Kilifi County and Malindi Sub-County. According to session paper no.1 of 2019 of Kenya, factors such as poverty, drug and substance abuse, early marriages, population increase, and child labor have been recorded as the main causes of school dropout in secondary schools. Similarly, Kilifi County Development Profile (2019) notes that principals feel frustrated due to low remuneration, harsh working conditions, terrorist attacks, rejection from parents and delocalization which affects their families leading to absent of both teachers and principals hence low students' retention in schools. Theirworld (2019) stressed that students are motivated when transformational principal provide resources, safe and welcoming environments. Joel, Ogola and Malusu (2019) report that many secondary schools perform poorly due to poor leadership, besides inadequate funds and poor facilities.

Several studies have been conducted by different scholars on how principals' transformational leadership strategies influence the retention of learners. For example, Barrett et al., 2019; Botha 2014; Suraya and Yunus, 2012; Obama, Akinyi and Orodho, 2016). Glen (2017)



studied Australian school leaders to well understand the bigger pressures of improving student performance and retention while achieving accountability goals. The study pointed out that important professional standards are required for principals to create clear evidence-based policies within schools. Further to that by developing highly skilled and excellence teaching practices, school principals create innovations in the school environment which shape school improvement and leadership growth as the two major components of students' success and retention. Glen's study established that the process of leading a professional learning community impact positively student learning and retention in schools.

Similarly, Sagor (2016) found that schools where students reported a conducive learning environment and resource provision high rate of retention was recorded. Therefore, the problem of low retention is common especially where conducive learning environment and provision of resources is inadequate. In the same vein, Damanik (2017) observed that in order to improve learner retention, principals should prompt a safe and warm school environment.

According to a report of Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoE, 2016), principals' leadership strategies have a direct bearing on the overall effectiveness of schools because retention of both the teachers and students are under the leadership of school principals. Antoniou (2013) found that transformational leadership is at the heart of achieving educational goals of a given society such as the retention of students in secondary schools. Further Abuya (2015) adds that transformational leadership in secondary schools though present, fails to address the problem of learners' retention. The magnitude of low students' retention in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools has been witnessed despite of food programme and free tuition. This underlines the significance of this study in order to fill the missing link by investigating the

principals' transformational leadership strategies on students' retention in public secondary school, Malindi Sub-County.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Retention of learners in any school is usually linked to good leadership. Review of empirical literature indicates decreasing levels of learner retention in public secondary schools in Kilifi County. The Ministry of Education (2019) rated Kilifi as the most affected county with highest level of low student retention with Malindi Sub-County the location of this study included. The statistics have shown that those who completed form four in the year 2019 were 14,145 compared with 29,096 students enrolled in form one in the year 2015 with decline of 14,951 students (Ministry of Education, 2020).

The statistics from Ministry of Education (2021) in Malindi Sub-County have shown that those who completed form four in the year 2021 were 2747 compared with 5017 students enrolled in form one in the year 2016 with decline of 2270 students. This is a clear indication that the issue of retention of learners in schools is a major problem particularly in Malindi Sub-County. A number of studies have shown that where principals employ transformational leadership, there is high level of student retention. This study therefore investigated principals' transformational leadership strategies on whether provision of conducive environment, principals' role modelling, provision of resources and parental involvement can lead to learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub County.

## **1.3 General Objective**

To examine the influence of principals' transformational leadership strategies; role modeling, provision of resources, parental involvement and conducive learning environment and learner retention in Malindi Sub County.

### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research that addressed the effect of principals' transformational strategies and learners' retention in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County were:

- i. To assess the effectiveness of principals' role modeling strategy on learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County.
- ii. To examine whether provision of conducive learning environment can lead to learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County.
- iii. To determine whether provision of school resources by principals has influence on learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County.
- iv. To evaluate whether parental involvement as a strategy leads to learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. How does the principals' role modeling strategy enhance learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County?
- ii. To what extent does provision of resource as a strategy employed by principal's influence learner retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County?
- iii. How does the parental involvement as a strategy employed by the principal's impact learner's retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County?
- iv. What is the relationship between conducive learning environment and learner retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kilifi County?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to benefit learners, teachers, parents, the Ministry of Education, policy makers, researchers and academicians in general. The learners will benefit from this study since the study will show the effective strategies that will motivate them to remain in the schools to completion of their studies and possibly achieve their dreams and appreciate the value of education in their lives. The teachers too will benefit from the study since they will have the required resources and conducive environment for teaching. They will be able to inspire students to remain in school and help them to utilize the provided resources to achieve their educational goals.

The study will also help the parents to evaluate their parenting styles and social economic status that contribute to low retention of learner in secondary schools and be able to take measures on the way forward. The Ministry of Education (MoE) will benefit from the findings of this study by identifying several leadership strategies that may need more emphasis, and improvement that would be effective in improving the management and administration of secondary schools. The findings will help Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) acquire knowledge to provide principals with support to contribute towards learner retention.

Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) will hopefully profit since Sub-County Director of Education in Malindi, and principals will be trained on how to use strategies as managers of education, especially to create awareness to the community around the school in order to curb antisocial activities such as tourist, fishing among others which leads to school dropout. The policy makers may benefit in making decisions with respect to principal's strategies. The findings will also provide literature and firm foundation for researchers and academicians who will be interested in conducting research in leadership strategies on retention of learners. In addition, the researcher will benefit in professional life and service to vulnerable

learners. Finally, the findings of the study should solve the problem of learner retention and add knowledge on the existing literature on principal's leadership strategies geared towards learner's retention in public secondary schools.

### **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study was carried out in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub- County. There are several strategies which can be employed by the principals' transformational leadership, but this study concentrated on role modelling, provision of resources, parental involvement and conducive learning environment. The study was delimited to the Sub-County Director of education, principals, teachers and the students. The Sub-County Director of education was considered since he was able to give information concerning principals. The principals were considered since they are chief executives of the schools that they manage, and it is their transformational leadership strategies that were under investigation. The principals targeted were from public secondary schools in Malindi Sub- County. The teachers were considered since they are responsible for the performance of learners aided by learning resource and conducive learning environment.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This section focuses on two theories: Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1995) and Students Retention theory by Beatty Guenter (1994) to determine the role of school principals' leadership and student retention. The section will explore the strengths, weakness and justification of these theories.

### **1.7.1 Transformational Leadership Theory**

The transformational leadership theory postulated by Bass in 1995 asserts that the impact of a leader on his or her followers is the significant measure of the degree of a leader's transformational approach. The rationale of this assertion is the fact that transformational principals focus on working hard and taking into consideration the opinions of students (Galli, 2019). The theory emphasizes on the change for better and excellent transformation of all the aspects of the school and particularly retention of students in secondary schools (Imenda, 2014). A transformational leader as an agent of change emphasizes the ingredients of change, for example, ideas, innovation, influence and consideration for the individual in the process (Botha 2014). This may lead to principals as role models to involve parents by creating a conducive learning environment and providing resources in the schools which makes students remain in school. Bass (1995) defined four transformational leadership dimensions: idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation by stating that, transformational leaders can employ one or more of them (Balwant, 2016; McCarley et al., 2016). These four dimensions informed the objectives of this study in many aspects.

Idealized influence describes leaders that serve as role models for their teachers and students, who allow them to be identified with a shared school vision (KEMI, 2014). Besides, principals lead by example, mentoring, having high expectations, having a best practice, holding students and teachers accountable among others (Hauserman & Sheldon, 2013). Also, principals are respected, trusted and are admired who ensure that the students have resource materials needed for learning, demonstrating ethical and moral conduct. Inspirational motivation describes principals as leaders who develop a vision that not only appeals but also inspires the students. A team spirit is developed where principals, teachers, parents and subordinate staff are involved to

motivate learners so as to complete their school without dropping out. Principals clearly communicate expectation towards certain goals, offer meaning to any given task and challenge students to work hard.

In *Intellectual* stimulation, the principals promote innovation and encourage creativity in students. This motivates them to work with dedication. Transformational principals as leaders gives personal attention to each students treating them differently according to their needs and capabilities. This creates a conducive learning environment where students feel free to express themselves. Moreover, Individualized consideration defines transformational principals as leaders who attend to individual needs for achievement and growth by acting as mentors, overseeing their needs, encouraging two-way communication, listening and delegating. A transformational principal, therefore, needs to embrace each student's needs in terms of supervision in order to encourage and motivate their retention in schools.

Transformative leadership respects the laid administrative structure and encourages the students to come out with new ways of doing things. Learner retention is very vital and transformational principals will greatly enable the required reforms. Scholars have acknowledged that principal's transformational leadership is important in a dynamic environment that requires substantial change and quick response for retention of students (Galli, 2019; Busch & Fernandez, 2016; Martine & Fellenz, 2012). This fits the Kilifi County situation and in particular Malindi Sub County.

### **1.7.2 The Strength of the Transformational Leadership Theory**

Various studies that have used the transformational leadership theory have proved its success in transforming of the low performing schools to high performing hence high retention rates (Botha, 2014; Balwant, 2016; McCarley et al., 2016). Anderson and Sun (2017)

examination of articles concerning transformational leadership found that leadership behaviors of nurturing students make them feel valued and respected hence stay long to learn in school. Also, because of the respect and loyalty that they have garnered, it is easier for the school principals to get their students excited and support changes occurring in schools. The transformational leadership attempts to change the institution's values to make them standard, human, fair and just in order to have a safe and conducive learning environment. Transformational principals focus in provision of resources like human, financial and physical resources which bring change such as technology to captures the interest of learners to stay and learn in schools.

The transformational leadership theory has ethical component. When the learners are shaped morally, they feel appreciated hence remain in the school since they know what is right and wrong. The leader is sensitive to the follower's values, needs and morals. Transformative leadership theory successively addresses public sector highly needed leadership and integrative team members by establishing a role modelling for the team and nurturing acceptance of shared goals (Dong, 2017). This shows that the theory focuses on individual student contributions for the change and the development of the school. The attention of individual and student performance is the core for the learners' retention that result in school performance. Consequently, the elements of transformational leadership that comprise the theory (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) are required in an effective transformational leader who leads to retention of learners.

### **1.7.3 Weakness of Transformational Leadership Theory**

The critique of this theory is that, it emphasis too much on the leadership personality thus requiring the leader to be a perfect person in all areas. This makes it an exclusive since it emphasis too much on the heroic aspect of the leader. This implies that it is dependent on one



individual, the principal of the school if the principal is transferred this can make student to leave the school. It also embeds the followers' performance to leader performance. Similarly, dependence on the leader's abilities as the standard by which followers measure their own performance is misleading and has a high potential of being abused or causing leadership derailment (Daft & Marcic, 2016).

Transformational leadership can be undemocratic and discriminatory, but Bass (2012) argued that transformational leaders can be participative. Good theory includes constructs that are clearly defined (Bacharach, 2012). Bass (2012) explained that transformational leaders can employ one or more elements of transformational leadership that comprise the theory (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration). Critics suggest that the four elements cannot be substantially separated. Similarly, a clear conceptual definition and the common ground of the different transformational leadership dimensions is unclear (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013).

#### **1.7.4 Justification of Transformational Leadership Theory**

The researcher chose transformational leadership theory since it addresses comprehensively the basis of this study. Unlike other theories, transformational leadership theory focuses on both the leader and the follower. In the school set up, the followers are the staff and students among others. In public secondary schools, the principals strive to link all the variables together to achieve the institutional goals. They encourage students to work hard and organize meetings with other schools to exchange ideas. Similarly, collaboration of the students, parents, teachers and principals build leadership density in schools and provide the conditions which facilitate the development of teachers and students as leaders in the areas of curriculum, learning and teaching for the teachers as they are delegated by the principals (King, 2012).

Principals encourage the development of transformational leadership to improve physical, financial and human resources by making decisions together with teachers and parents in areas such as choosing textbooks and instructional materials; shaping the curriculum; setting standards for student behaviour; designing professional development and in-service programmes and deciding school budgets hence attending to individual needs for the achievement and retention of learners. Darling-Hammond (2018) states that principals help to develop a positive school learning environment in which students become interested in the interactions as they participate all the time at schools. This leads to success and high retention of learners in any secondary school.

Likewise, transformational leaders bring change in attitudes, skills and knowledge among teachers, parents and students in school learning environment. In literature review, the theory has been justified vital and effective during uncertain or crisis moments or when the institution is undergoing changes like dropout of learners. Transformational leadership is a conscious leadership style regardless of the situation. Transformational principals have ways to make teachers, parents and students trust their performing behaviors that contribute to retention of learners (Bass, 2003). The leader induces followers to support their vision and put aside self-interest for the sake of the institution. Transformational principals will take responsibility for helping to solve problems as they grow in the process by involving the parents to be committed in schools. Principal's energetic, enthusiastic and oral communication helps parental involvement in school to understand real life issues and be responsible in supporting retention of their learners.

Similarly, this theory is appropriate in Kenya as curriculum changes are underway. The Ministry of Education requires transformational principals and parental involvement more in schools to facilitate the implementation of these new changes especially in increasing retention of learners in school in order to be in line with 100% transition. In all the reviewed studies the researcher come across limited research that studied on principal's transformational leadership strategies on retention of learners' public secondary in Malindi Sub County.

### **1.7.5 Beatty-Guenter Theory of Student Retention**

Beatty-Guenter theory of Students Retention (1994) was based on study done in Canadian community which revealed that student's success at college is affected by problems they encounter in their lives outside of school. The theory highlights the wider support and encouragement of the students by parents who are crucial to their motivation to succeed and complete their studies. Beatty Guenter (1994) identified five broad categories of student retention namely; sorting, supporting, connecting, transforming student and transforming institution strategies integration in school and become active members.

Transformational student strategies aim at transforming a student from passive learner to an active learner, from being unmotivated to be a goal-oriented learner, from expecting failure to hoping for success; from poor study skills to learning improved skills; and academic counseling. Lastly, transforming the institution strategies target the improvement of all aspects of teaching and learning together with the working environment and parental involvement. This may need the involvement of curriculum design, research programme, policy review, staff development programme and cultural change.

Beatty's five categories of retention strategies of sorting, supporting, connecting and transforming the students are closely linked to transformational leadership strategies in undertaking in the struggle to retain students in schools. This theory is simple, precise, clear and practical for retention of learners in secondary schools which marked it most relevant to the study. It offers holistic approach to students' life, since it recognizes that students have physical, economic and social needs. The theory motivates principals to help learners feel comfortable.

In the light of principals' leadership strategies, this is likely to be a remedy for increasing retention rates of students in secondary schools, since it addresses all the needs of learners, which is the real problem of this study. It enhances collaboration and cultivates a teamwork spirit in an educational institution as it requires everyone to participate in the activities geared towards students' retention and success. The theory views students as very important in an educational institution, who need full attention according to the needs that enable them to succeed. It shows that for a learner to be comfortable in school, the personal needs must be fulfilled; some needs are physical, economic, social and security.

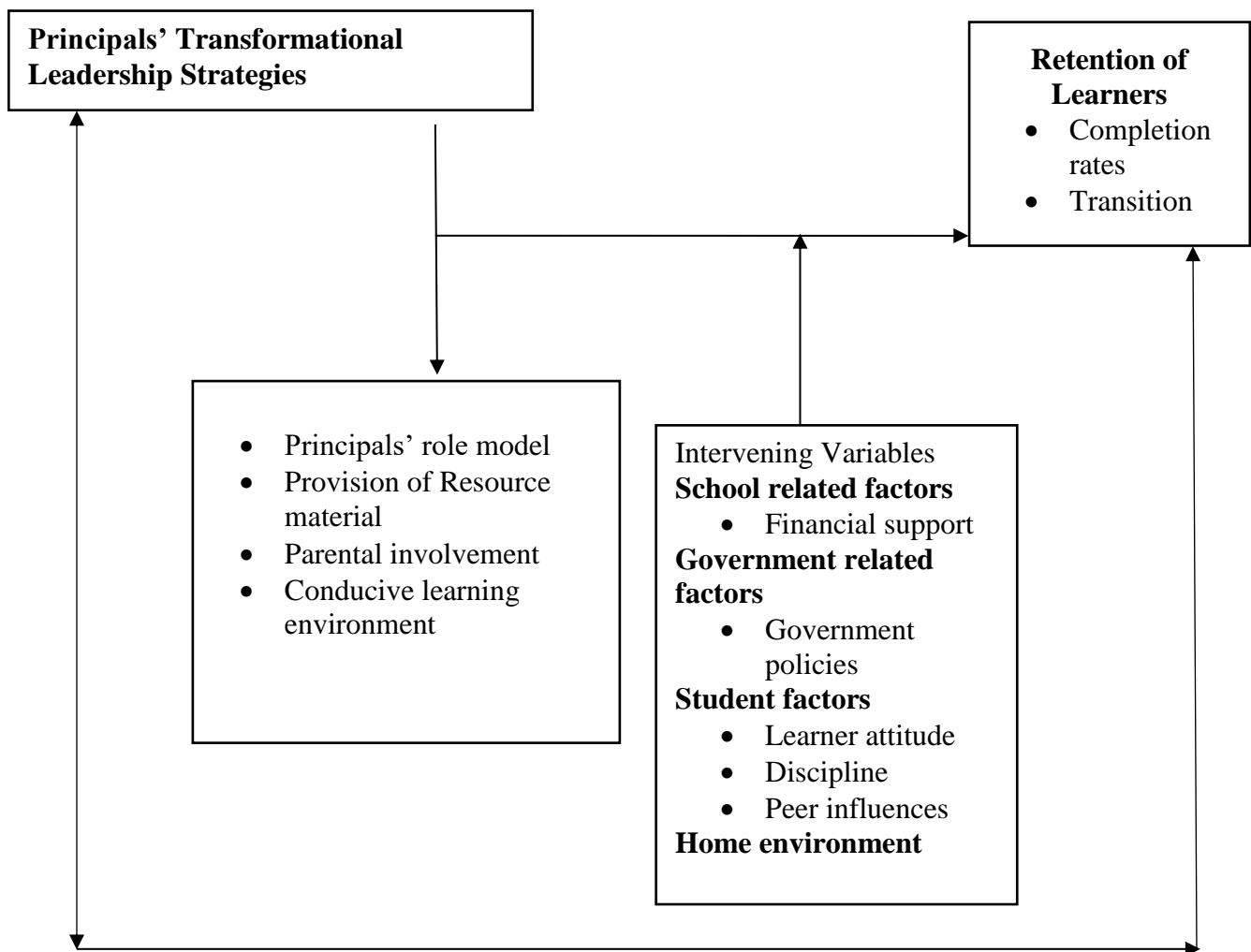
It also identifies the importance of having professionally empowered principal, who would be fully equipped and ready to guide and help learners to study in order to achieve their goals. This theory is found to possess the aspects necessary for principals, teachers, students and parents in solving the problem of retention in public secondary schools. It is used because it touches the aspect of learning environment, resource provision and security of learners. This theory is chosen to support the areas which are not tackled in transformational theory.

## 1.8 Conceptual Framework

The figure: 1 is a conceptual framework that highlights the relationship between the transformational leadership strategies adopted by principals and the retention of students in schools.

### INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

### DEPENDENT VARIABLE



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

As shown in Figure 1.1 the independent variable of the current study is the principals' transformational leadership strategies and the dependent variable is retention of learners. In this study, the researcher conceptualized that student retention is a dependent variable influenced by

independent variables, which are transformational leadership strategies undertaken by the principals. In the conceptual framework, the researcher presumes that if principals' transformational strategies especially conducive learning environment, provision of resources, principals' role model and parental involvement to learners are put in place; and if intervening variables such as school related factors, government related factors, home environment and student factors are controlled, learners can be retained in secondary school in Malindi Sub County.

Intervening variables are important unpredictable situations that if not controlled may affect the attainment of the desired results. In order to have effective principal's transformational leadership strategies on learner retention, these intervening variables must be considered. For example, sometimes the experience of a principal as transformational leader may likely lead to resistance to change. The school, student, home related factor and education policies influence the principal leadership as well as retention of learners directly since they determine how far the students can be flexible to remain in school. If these are controlled, then, retention of learners in secondary schools would be achieved.

Dependent variables indicate that there is a positive change if principals' transformational leadership strategies help learners to stay in school. It shows that there is learners' retention, completion, good performance and moral maturity. The principal's transformational leadership strategies in this study are understood as the activities undertaken by the principals to ensure that what is necessary for the persistence and permanence of students up to the end of a programme is climaxed by their secondary completion.

## **1.9 Operational Definition of Key Terms**

**Classroom learning environment** – Teaching learning materials, teacher-pupils ratio and facilities in a classroom setting.

**Dropout:** A student who abandons schooling before completion of the secondary school cycle.

**Followers** – refers to students, teachers, subordinate staff, parents and other stakeholders who work closely with principals as team in ensuring that the school is transformed.

**Instructional materials** – Teaching learning resources such as textbooks and charts that are used by teachers and students during teaching and learning of social studies.

**Leadership** – is the way the principals plan, organize and control secondary schools. either in a participatory manner or being single handled (Balwant, 2016).

**Leadership strategy** – is a plan or activities that principals practice in their school to capture learners' attention towards achieving set objectives. In this study, the objective is learner retention.

**Learner/Student** – denotes to someone who attends an educational institution for the purpose of studying in secondary school level.

**Learning environment** – talk about the diverse physical locations, contexts, and school culture in which students learn.

**Parental involvement** – is the participation of parents in the academic activities of the students in secondary schools.

**School Principal** – is the head of a secondary school in Kenya.

**Public secondary schools** – refers to secondary schools established by the government of Kenya. Such schools get financial support from the Ministry of Education (MoE).

**Retention** – is ensuring that students enrolled in secondary schools remain in school until they complete their course without dropping out.

**Strategy** – is carefully developed plan or method for achieving a goal or a skill in developing and undertaking such a plan.

**Transformational leadership** – is a leadership style that takes into consideration the concerns and input of followers. It is a model of leadership where the leaders inspire members to go beyond their task requirements.

**School environment** – is the social, physical, economic environment of the school in which the principals, teachers and parents operate in, bringing about a wholesome learning place where students' dreams and ambitions are tended, where everybody is respected and feel attached to the school.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter details with studies on principals' transformational leadership strategies and their impact on the students' retention as well as the summary of the literature.

#### **2.2 Empirical and Conceptual Review of Literature**

This section will review empirical studies done by various researchers related to this study. It will categorize in accordance with the conceptualized variables derived from the research questions which covers research done globally, from Africa and those done from Kenya.

Retention is about students remaining in one institution and completing a programme of study (Monica, 2017). Principal's transformational leadership strategies play an important role in the learner retention. Retention and completion rates are important measures of the performance of institutions and higher education systems. Learners could not secure their right to education by themselves, although in many developing countries they constitute the majority of the population (Imenda, 2014).

In Europe, some countries have retention rates as low 2.8% in Germany, Ireland 4%, Norway 8.7%, Italy 15 %, Spain 26.7%, and Portugal 37.1% (Chenge, Chenge & Maunganidze, 2017). This gives a hint on the retention problem worldwide. Montecel, Cortez and Cortez (2014) opined that some countries like Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras have retention rates as low as 40% or even below. In Africa, there is challenge of learner's retention which has been sighted to be a hindrance to principals in public secondary schools. Bush and Glover (2016) conducted a study about school leadership and management in South Africa and asserted that principals should set up interventions to reduce problems of low learner retention in their schools. The

researchers showed that principals are instructional leaders, custodians of quality and learning exercises in their particular school.

In Kenya, Atieno (2009) studied the factors influencing retention rates in public secondary schools in Nairobi Province, Kenya. The findings of the study indicated that leadership style of the principals was one of the factors that influence financially students to attend school and stay up to completion. Learners rely on the principals, teachers, and parents who can formulate means and ways to help them remain in schools. Therefore, school leaders should know which strategies they are supposed to apply in order to retain learners in public secondary schools.

### **2.2.1 Principals' Role Modeling Strategy and Retention of Learners**

Principals' role modeling conveys knowledge and skills in ways that students can understand, remember and apply (Leithwood & Sun 2017). As well, principals as role models ensure that students are following curricula, excelling academically and becoming outstanding members of society (Allen et al., 2015). Further to that, studies such as Balwant, (2016); Balyer, (2012); Northouse, (2017) have shown that principals who are role models encourage students to do better by explaining goals and planning for them clearly in order to motivate them to remain in school. A transformational principal ensures that students focus on their studies by being considerate of individuality, being charismatic in influencing them and inspiring them. Instead of using set problem-solving techniques, principals involve students and teachers to come up with solutions to problems as they arise (Northouse, 2017).

Voss, Kunter and Baumert (2017) note that principals are expected to set a role model as transformational leader in classroom coaching management. This takes place within the cultural

context of the classroom which include maximizing the amount of instructional time, handling events in the classroom, teaching at a steady pace and maintaining clear direction in lessons. It makes sense for principals to motivate and empower teachers to design lessons that take the advantage of the cultural characteristics of their classrooms, which arouses interest of students to remain in school and learn. According to Pietsch and Tulowitzki (2017) creating a common vision to implement change in a school environment is paramount. The biggest challenge for school leadership is handling different kinds of people, with various goals and interests (Leppard, 2018).

Studies done by Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro, (2015); Galli, (2019) in U.S.A argue that principals as role models are responsible for introducing useful changes aimed at improving the quality of school's instructional programs and students' retention. Besides, there is consistency and essence of school life involving social, emotional and academic experiences of student's retention. The study concluded that school leaders are responsible in giving moral support as well as the needs and facilities required for improving and maintaining learning and teaching of students in order to retain them and achieve the goals of the school institution. Thus, principals must lead by example in all consequences especially in punctuality, commitment, industrious, fairness, resourcefulness, firmness and courage. The students will emulate the example set by the principals and be able to follow what they are expected to do in school hence retaining them to study.

A study in Hong Kong by Pounder (2018) explored the concept of transformational leadership as applied in schools and found that principals who are a role models exhibit a passion for their jobs, the students and the teaching and learning process. The concept grew out of the proven success of transformational leadership style in schools and research studies in education

reporting positive correlations between subordinate learning in educational setting, students learning and performance in schools. Thus, principals as role models have a key role in the educational outcomes for students and retention in secondary schools along with supporting and developing staff, building relationships and encouraging parent engagement.

A research by Adlam (2016) stresses on school rules the learners should follow, what they should do and what they should not do while in school for learning to take place. Some of the common indiscipline cases that makes learners not to concentrate with learning hence drop out of school includes taking alcoholic drinks, escaping from school, failure to follow school rules, regulations leading to expulsion and participating in strikes. Therefore, principals must make firm decisions in regard to those who break school rules.

Nwobodo and Agusiobo (2017) are of the same view in that there is high relationship between school principals and academic adjustment which leads to retention of learners. The manner in which principals as role models employ their transformational leadership determines how the students, teachers and parents view their school and whether they feel at home and accepted. Consequently, it is this feeling that will make them own the school goals, vision, mission and therefore improve on learners' retention. Thapa (2018) stresses that effective schools have five dimensions namely; safety, relationships, instructional leadership, institutional environment and school improvement process. These aspects were confirmed by Loukas (2020) who concluded that principals' role model is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, social and academic dimensions. Further to that, school principals must ensure that all dimensions' work in harmony to enhance academic performance and retention of students. Therefore, there is need for the current study to assess principal's role model as transformational leadership on retention of learners in secondary schools.

In Kenya, a study by Kariuki (2019) sought to establish influence of the transformational leadership on the teachers' performance in public county schools in Nyandarua County. The study found that the teachers' performance was important for the improvement of school and the principals as role models play key roles in the enhancement of teachers' performance and students' retention. The study of kariuki concentrated on the teachers' performance study while the current study emphasized transformational leadership strategy and retention of learners. Another study by Ogola (2017) sought to establish the leadership styles in secondary schools in Nairobi County and how they affected performance and retention of students in schools. The study found that principals as role models were rated higher in more task-oriented than human relationship-oriented leadership behavior.

A report by the Ministry of Education (2015) emphasizes the need for principals to act as role model by creating clear, continuous and unambiguous communication between teachers and learners. Similarly, school leaders play a key role in ensuring the openness of their school to parents and members of the local community. Thus, an open communication between the principals and learners is important in fostering discipline and better performance hence high retention. Further to that, openness of principals to learners makes them become free to share some of the challenges that if not addressed could lead to low retention in public secondary schools. Despite of this open communication, there is still low retention of learners in public secondary schools and particularly in Malindi Sub-County. The current study quest in assessing principals' role modeling as transformational leadership strategy on retention learners in public secondary schools Malindi Sub-County, Kenya.

### **2.2.2 Provision of Resources strategy and Learners' Retention**

School resources play a key role in student retention and performance. These resources include physical, financial and human resources. Physical resources have to do with physical classrooms, staff offices, vehicles, textbooks, library and laboratory equipment which directly or indirectly contribute to the higher student's retention and achievement. Financial resources include the expenditures and school budget required in running school activities (Blankstein, Noguera, & Kelly, 2016). In addition, human resources includes teachers, support staff, students, parents, community members and other educational stakeholders (Fullan, Rincón-Gallardo and Hargreaves, 2015). According to Hauserman and Stick (2018), principals are supposed to put in place required adequate resources towards the actualization of the school goal and objectives in order to retain students in schools.

Studies such as Hauserman & Stick, (2018); Gupta, (2019); Hooper and Bernhardt, (2016) have shown that when school principals concentrate on financial resources and attention given to the overall improvement of the schools, the results show positive changes in students' performance and retention. Principals play a major role in the management of all school financial activities (Fullan, Rincón-Gallardo & Hargreaves 2015). Simkins (2018) argues the good budget can facilitate the effective planning and management of financial resource, offering the opportunity to achieve higher levels of efficiency. Oldring (2019) explains that principals engage parents and others outside the immediate school community to support the school in its endeavour to fill the achievement gap. Sahin (2016) highlights that ineffective legal and policy framework leads to lack of government support in public secondary schools in terms of inadequate teachers, funding and other financial incentives to keep the learners in school.

The reviewed literature has revealed that the principal is the chief planner of the school who has the overview of school systems, processes and resources to produce intended students' learning outcomes and retention (Blankstein, Noguera, & Kelly, 2016). Therefore, Principals should gather all possible resources from the parents and other organizations to ensure they are adequate and effectively used in order to retain learners in school. For example, it could be a requirement for principals to seek the school community's formal approval for the schools' annual budget plan and it could be mandatory for school leaders to present quarterly finance reports for discussion by their school community. This could involve the introduction of requirements for stakeholder involvement in financial oversight (Blankstein, Noguera, & Kelly, 2016). The principals provide the resources to specific groups of students such as free meals and free transportation for some of public secondary school students (Santiago, 2016). The OECD (2018) review in Uruguay adds that the use of targeted funding conveys policy objectives and responds to emerging needs in the school system.

Besides, a study done by Halverson (2018) points out that principals are expected to coordinate teaching and learning by hiring, developing, evaluating teachers, supporting struggling students, community outreach, budgets and managing infrastructure in order to enhance the retention of learners. Similarly, a study by Brandt (2017) found out that high performing schools were characterized by high expectations, frequent monitoring of students' progress, a positive learning and a goal clarity. Further to that, effective principals exert pressure on teachers and students for high academic achievement and retention. The challenge occurs in most cases where public secondary schools are cash-strapped in bringing computers and other forms of technology in the classes which needs principals' intervention hence need for the current study.

Killick (2016) notes that technology needs to come into classrooms to keep up with the learning demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century which leads to high retention of learners. Principals are responsible for introducing useful changes aimed at improving the quality of schools learning programs, though they do not have the techno-savvy to compete with other devices which are difficult to keep students' interests and attention when teaching new concepts. Cohen (2016) indicates that inadequacy of the computers and lack of interest, delete comma may lead to students dropping out of school due to failure of understanding and start other activities causing low retention of learners in public secondary school. So, there is need for principals to provide resources so as to manage their leadership, curriculum planning and progress of students in order to retain them in school.

Several studies in Africa found a strong relationship between resources provision and students' retention (Balwant 2016; Brandley & Lauren, 2014). For instance, Bayer (2016) indicates that, principals as the chief supervisors in schools are bestowed with the responsibility of ensuring learning resources are adequate and always available for use and up to date. Similarly, OECD (2019) indicates that schools that lack quality school leaders, financial, human resources, adequate infrastructure and textbooks will have more difficulties to promote quality education hence low retention of learners. Most secondary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa operate with inadequate resources due to poor funding. Schools face inadequacy of textbooks, classrooms, sanitation facilities, teachers and other teaching and learning resources.

Studies have shown that school characteristics entail features of available facilities, school size, policies of the school, value system, norms, integrity and recognition (Adejumobi & Ojikutu, 2013; Nwobodo & Agusiobo, 2017). Those factors such as; the physical building, classroom and materials are used for instruction, academic performance, feeling of safety, school



size, feeling of trust and respect for principals, teachers and students. In addition, Kothari (2016) argues that there is need for principals to distribute resources like books and equipment account for scholastic difference among public secondary schools in order to retain students. Similarly, better facilities in school and supervision of resources by principals make a difference in achievement of learners which leads to high academic success and retention.

In Kenya, Malusu (2019) reports that many secondary schools perform poorly due to poor leadership, besides inadequate funds and poor facilities. The study contended that examination results of many high-cost schools and well-established schools were always better than those of low-cost schools which mostly lack resources. Most low performing schools are poorly equipped and due to inadequate resources and facilities, such schools fail to attract students in public secondary school. Availability of adequate teaching materials often makes the teaching easy and enhances retention rate of about 80% of what is learned. It facilitates learner centered learning through discovery, innovation and creativity, motivation and encourages participation hence high retention of secondary school students. Principals' provision of resources as strategy for learners' retention has worked out in other places globally and regional. Therefore, there is need for the current study to investigate and find out whether this strategy can also apply in Malindi Sub-County public secondary schools.

### **2.2.3 Principals' Parental Involvement Strategy and Learners' Retention**

Principals' parental involvement refers to a situation where principals encourage parents to directly be involved in the education of their students. Involvement of parents in learning process helps to improve student retention and performance, reduce absenteeism and restore parents' confidence in their children's education (Kwatubana & Makhalemele, 2015). Strong collaboration of parents with school principals can lead to increased improvement in both high

students' retention and academic performance of the school. The transformational principals must encourage parents to get involved and make contribution towards helping the school achieve its missions and goals through retaining learners in public secondary school (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). Moreover, transformational principals should engage parents to follow-up with students' academic performance and retention by providing appropriate funding, supporting guidance and counseling programmes and providing an enabling environment that is conducive for learning which motivates the students to achieve full potential in the schools (Cohen, 2016).

In America, Ryan (2015) points out that academic performance and retention is positively related in having parents who enforce values at home. In addition, Ryan emphasizes on need for parents to be sensitized by principals during meetings and conferences on how to create learning environment at home for their children in order for them to have interest in learning at school. The transformational principals are encouraged to create a welcoming atmosphere to the parents and not allow them to feel intimidated (Balwant, 2016).

A study by Plowden (2017) stresses that apart from pens and books, the parents are advised by the principals to provide their children with other facilities such as tables, chairs and good lighting at night in order to create conducive home environment for learning. Plowden opines that, it is the role of principals as transformational leaders to help parents understand why it is important for them to get involved. Their involvement motivates and encourages students to study and see the value of completing their education. In addition, Plowden notes that when principals facilitate opportunities such as attending open days, academic days, prize giving days, annual meetings, fund raising days, sports day and curriculum implementation and involve parents, retention of learners is enhanced.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ((UNESCO, 2018) highlights that over the years, the issue of low retention of learners in public secondary schools has persisted in Africa. Likewise, lack of parental encouragement by school principals contributes to significant low retention. In addition, failure of parents to contribute to school activities like Board of Management and Parents-Teachers Association meetings leads to barrier on the ability of learners to continue in their schooling. According to Busch and Fernandez (2019), most parents do not understand how their involvement may have a great impact on the retention and academic well-being of their students. However, transformational principals have direct bearing on the overall effectiveness of school because parents, teachers and students perform under the leadership of school principals (UNESCO, 2018). Similarly, Damanik and Aldridge (2017) note that many parents find challenge in paying school fees for their students. Such situations affect the ability of parents to keep learners in school all the time hence low retention which needs intervention of transformational principals.

Kambandya (2016) carried out a study in Salima District in Malawi. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of administrative strategies on retention in community day secondary schools. The main purpose of the research was to establish strategies that can be employed for the retention of learners in community secondary schools. Findings of the study indicated that some of the strategies used for students' retention by the principals were school culture and motivation, but parental involvement was missing in the process. Therefore, principals suggested that schools should have more parent-teacher associations meetings to enhance parental involvement in the school activities, education and retention of their student. The challenge which makes it difficult for them to assist their students is the fact that some parents are unable to read and write, they can only communicate in their mother tongue. There is

need for school principals to involve parents in meetings of their students together with teachers in order to assist them understand their children well.

A study by Nekongo-Nielsen, Mbukua, Tjiramba and Beukes (2015) contends that there are different causes of low retention among secondary schools. Some of the common causes of school dropout among secondary students includes economic hardships, lack of parental support and early pregnancies among others. Nekongo-Nielsen et al. (2015) outlines that the lack of parental involvement, economic factors, system factors, pregnancy and cultural factors accounted for 11%, 15%, 20% and 4% of the reported number of dropout cases in 58 schools in Namibia respectively. There is need for principals to involve parents in matters concerning their children in public secondary schools in order to retain them in schools.

In Kenya, a study done by Simiyu, and Riechi (2016) notes that schools where principals prepare the right platforms for parents and teachers to support the education of learners from poor backgrounds, reduces cases of dropouts. The rationale for this is that the platforms focus on always keeping learners in school and this is possible especially, with government subsidies such as the bursaries, food programme and the community development funds. In addition, the government established the free secondary education to improve both the enrolment and retention of learners in public secondary schools. Likewise, the ascension to power by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government brought about the Constituency Bursary Fund which was aimed at ensuring that learners from poor parents remain in schools (Onuko, 2015). There is necessity for transformational principals to create awareness to parents by involving them in clear communication and decision making for their learners in order to understand what they are supposed to do to retain them in secondary schools for completion.

Studies have shown that effective principals encourage the parents to be able to see the importance of being involved in their children's learning and benefits that might result afterward (Brown, 2017; Jumba and Githinji, 2018). As well, lack of parental involvement and support of learner's education due to parental illiteracy among other reasons in the learning activities, makes it hard for parents to motivate and encourage their children to learn. Further to that, reaching families whose home language is not English by sending parent's information about their learners in their own home language disrupts their schooling.

Principals' efforts towards improving students' retention and schools' general achievement is lacking in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools due to lack of parental involvement (Kilifi County Development Profile, 2019). As a result, some parents are not seen at the school for a whole year, even to follow up on the performance of their children. Similarly, parents are occupied with other activities, negligence and too busy in their job forgetting their children. This might lead to students losing morale in education hence drop out of schools. There is need for assessment of principals' transformational leadership strategy of involving parents in handling such cases in order to retain learners in public secondary school to complete their schooling in Malindi Sub-County.

#### **2.2.4 Principals' Provision of Learning Environment strategy and Learners' Retention.**

A conducive learning environment is a safe platform where learning environment goes beyond physical well-being. It is an environment where learners feel supported, welcomed and respected. Schein (2019) claims that building a productive school learning environment is the central element in a leader's practice. Likewise, Leithwood (2018) acknowledge that there is much evidence to suggest that provision of the learning environment plays a big role in retention of students. Further to that, Leithwood (2018) stresses that principals who provide learning

environment to students in schools share norms, beliefs, values, and assumptions of the members. Besides, Peterson-Ahmad, Stepp and Somerville (2018) found that transformational leadership has been shown to significantly predict a positive school learning environment.

A study by Allen (2015) found that adoption of transformational leadership strategies creates student capability to use ideas and information, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities which encourages learners to remain in school. In addition, several studies in United States have shown that transformational leadership is positively associated with school learning environment and motivates teachers and students to do more than they are expected in terms of extra effort and productivity (Moolenaar, Daly and Sleengers, 2015). This enables successful principal to influence their students to achieve the vision and mission that has been a tradition in the school. Similarly, Sahin, Arseven and Kiliç, (2016) argue that in order to have positive learning environment, a transformational leader should respect each student and create a comfortable environment by giving encouragement and support.

McCarley, Peters and Decman (2016) note that principals' leadership is responsible for transforming school learning environment to meet the increased demands of local, state and federal stakeholders. The studies further indicated that the adoption of transformational leadership in different settings has succeeded. It centered on leaders establishing new norms, changing employee attitudes, creating a new vision of reality and making fundamental changes to the culture of the institute. A study by Day, Gu, and Sammons (2017) pointed that fostering the acceptance of school goals and collaborations promotes cooperation in school leadership. Consequently, assists them to work together towards common goals. Day et al. (2016) found that such an approach not only works in enhancing efficiency in the school but also ensured retention of learners. Similarly, Damanik and Aldridge (2017) stresses that an effective school

environment as one where a positive attitude on the part of the entire staff is exhibited through their overt behavior that creates a warm orderly learning atmosphere.

Arokiasamy (2017) explains the components of transformational leadership through dimensions such as offering support individually, being exemplary to the important values of the school, indicating high work performance, developing structures and encouraging involvement in the decision-making processes leading to building a conducive school learning environment. In addition, Busch and Fernandez (2019) assert that transformational leadership practices can create a conducive learning school environment especially in the way of thinking towards solving the problem through the challenge. A study by Uthman and Kassim (2018) in Nigeria pointed out the impact of the leadership of principals and students' retention in Kaduna state secondary school. The study was based on transformational theory and Freud's theory of environment. The findings indicated that principals' leadership styles of the sampled schools had a major influence on the school environment. Besides, it influenced the school's achievement and student retention. The study concluded that a transformational principal provides individualized support by indicating responsibilities to be done.

Sithole (2017) in South Africa on promoting a positive learning environment in a school setting investigation found that if there is a caring environment in the school set up, then it will lead to the students obtaining good, envisaged outcomes and retention. The results showed that principals help the students achieve the good results or alternatively, they could make the learners fail. The study concluded that students' success in their learning progress is determined by a positive learning and teaching environment delivered by the principals.

In Kenya, Jumba and Githinji (2018) established that the schools headed by transformational principals create a conducive learning environment. In such schools, students use the term "our

school” in reference to the school thus ensuring that there is a sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability at every stage of decision-making. They concluded that transformational principals entail: allowing the learners choose their leaders; offering them with a suggestion box; responding to their suggestions and complaints in a friendly manner. This encourages students to have interest in learning since they are free to make their own decision hence able to remain in schools to complete their education. There is need for the current study since is done in different geographical area to check whether there is conformity or contradiction. The current study assessed transformational leadership of principals as a strategy and learner retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County.

### **2.3 Summary of Literature Review and Knowledge Gap**

From the empirical literature reviewed, many scholars agree on the importance of the principals’ transformational leadership and retention of learners (Bolanle, 2013; Barret, 2014; Werang, 2016). Jumba and Githinji (2018) established that the schools headed by transformational principals create a conducive learning environment that later translates to learners’ retention. Malusu (2019) pointed that many secondary schools perform poorly due to poor leadership, besides inadequate funds and poor facilities.

Simiyu, and Riechi (2016) concluded that schools where principals prepare the right platforms for parents and teachers to support the education of learners from poor backgrounds, reduces cases of dropouts. However, literature concerning how principals’ transformational leadership strategies respond to student retention was not adequately addressed hence creating the knowledge gap that this study sought to fill.

Some of the reviewed literature used either purely qualitative nor quantitative research design, which is limited in terms of giving detailed information. Few studies also used a mixed methods design but were not clear on specific mixed methods used. The current study filled this



gap by employing a convergent mixed method research design to get better knowledge of the study. Mixed methods reside in idea that all methods have bias and weaknesses so the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data neutralizes the weaknesses of each data.

The researches collected data from different respondents who included the principals, teachers and students hence source triangulation thus enhancing the reliability of the result. The current study included the Sub County Education Officer, principals, teachers and students so that the data could be compared in drawing the conclusion.

Mwaura (2016), Kariuki (2019) Akinyi and Orodho, (2016) researched on the impact of critical roles played by principals' transformational leadership in secondary schools to ensure retention of teachers and success. Their studies were limited to retention of secondary teachers and were conducted in different counties of Kenya. The current study filled that gap by focusing on principals' transformational leadership strategies and learner retention in Malindi Sub-County public secondary school, Kilifi County in Kenya.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in this study. These comprised of research design, location of the study, target population, sample and sampling procedures, sampling frame, description of data collection instruments, validity, pilot study and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted convergent parallel mixed methods design. This is because it entails both qualitative and quantitative research designs hence perfect fit for this study (Fisher, 2017). Convergent parallel design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell, 2018). This approach was favored over others because there were some research questions which necessitated a qualitative approach while some required a quantitative method. A convergent parallel design helped the researcher to best understand or develop more complete understanding of the research problem by obtaining different but complementary data from the respondents (Creswell & Plano, 2018).

A convergent parallel design collects and analyses two independent strands of quantitative and qualitative data at the same time in a single phase (Creswell, 2018). The design prioritizes both qualitative and quantitative methods equally, keep the data analysis independent, mix the results during the overall interpretation, and try to look for convergence, divergence, contradictions, or relationships of two sources of data (Creswell & Plano, 2018). In this case, the convergent parallel design enabled the researcher to adopt a cross-sectional survey research

design for quantitative data and a phenomenological research design for qualitative data. Cross-sectional survey was chosen since it is best in finding out the prevalence of occurrence, situation, problem, attitude or issue as stated by Kumar (2014). Moreover, it was useful in describing the characteristics of a large study population, large study sample, thus making the study results significant; the design also allowed the researcher to use of questionnaire for teachers and students in data collection (Kombo and Tromp 2018).

In cross-sectional surveys, data was collected at one point in time. The design made use of standardized questions where reliability of the items was determined and the findings of the study were generalized (Creswell, 2018). Plano and Ivankova (2016) notes that, phenomenological approach enables an in-depth study of the relevant variables in order to describe the existing situation by the use of interview guide.

### **3.3 Location of the Study**

The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. Malindi Sub-County is one of the seven Sub-Counties among Kilifi North, Kilifi South, Ganze, Magarini, Rabai and Kaloleni that make up the County of Kilifi. The Sub County is situated in the south eastern part of Kenya along Mombasa-Lamu road. The Sub-County is unique in that, it has rural, urban and semi-urban or semi-rural 29 public secondary schools and occupies an area of approximately 627.20 square kilometers. The urban public secondary schools are characterized by high enrolment rate and low retention while the rural schools have both low enrolment and low completion rate since they lack most of the infrastructural development. Similarly, it has negative effects as students from poor background drop out of school to go and work in those attraction sites in search for school fees. Retention of learners has been very low in this location making it relevant for the current study.

### **3.4 Target Population**

Target population refers to a large group from which the sample is taken (Kombo and Tromp 2018). In this study, target population included 29 public secondary schools, Sub-County Director of education, principals, teachers and students.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

A sample size is a piece of the populace chosen to represent the population as a whole. A sample size should not be less than 30% of the total population (Hewson, Vogel and Laurent, 2016). The 30% sample size was considered fit for the study because of constraints in terms of resources, time and the overall target population being used which was less than 10,000 (Mugenda, 2013).

Statistics from Malindi Sub-County Education Office Report (2020) showed that the Sub-County has 4273 target population which includes 29 public secondary schools, one Sub-County Director of Education, 29 principals, 453 teachers and 3760 students. In this study, the sample size comprised of 531. That sample was 30% of the 29 public schools involving 9 public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County; one (1) Sub-County Director of Education, 30% of the 29 principals involved 9 principals, 30% of the 453 teachers involved 136 teachers and 10% of the 3760 students involved 376 students. Accordingly, a sample size of 10% - 20% is sufficient for a study depending on the nature of the population under scrutiny (Mugenda, 2013).

The students were sampled using 10% as backed by Gay (2017) since the students' population of 3760 was slightly higher. The ultimate sample size may be considerable less than the nominated sample size if there is widespread lack of response, ineligibility, or both (Lavrakas, 2016). Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. Probability sampling technique enabled the researcher to select a representative sample and make

generalizations since it normally gives equal chances of participation to each member of the population (Quinlan, 2019).

According to Best and Kahn (2018) purposive sampling helps the researcher to build a sample that is satisfactorily to their specific needs. Purposive sampling was used to select Sub-County Director of Education because of supervisory role in the county and ensures that competent leaders manage the schools under his or her jurisdiction.

**Table 1.1: Sampling Matrix**

Category	Target population	Sample Size	Proportions	Percentage (%)
Schools	29	9	0.3	1.7
Teachers	453	136	0.3	25.6
Students	3760	376	0.1	70.8
Principals	29	9	0.3	1.7
Sub-county Director	1	1	-	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4272</b>	<b>531</b>		<b>100</b>

### 3.5.1 Sampling of Secondary Schools

Schools were stratified into girls and boys then simple random sampling was used to get schools from each stratum. According to Leary (2017) each of the stratum was more identical with the populace, more exact approximation was formed from each group hence there was a wholesome representation.

### **3.5.2 Sampling School Principals**

Nine (9) principals of the selected schools were automatically included in the study. This is because they were in a good position to give in-depth data concerning strategies they use to retain learners in schools.

### **3.5.3 Sampling of Teachers**

Simple random sampling was used to get the required number of teachers to participate in the study. The total sample of 136 teachers were distributed proportionally according to the size of the population in schools. The teachers were sampled because they knew the enrolment as per class and attendance registers which made them know their students who were in or out of school. In addition, they normally work with the principals hence were able to tell what strategies the principals employ to retain students in schools. A scorecard with the words “Yes” and “No” was used to do simple random sampling. The papers were placed in a box for teachers to choose from at random. Those who chose “Yes” on the pieces of paper were chosen to take part in the study.

### **3.5.4 Sampling of Students**

The students in the schools were stratified according to the classes and gender. To calculate the sample size of students, the formula of Yamane (1967) who stated that sample size could be computed using the formula:  $n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$  was applied. Thus the sample size for students was 376. These were distributed proportionally among nine schools that participated in the study. Systematic sampling was used to select students in each school. To achieve this, the class register was used to get the names of students in each class. After this, every fifth student on the list was picked systematically and the process continued until the required sample was reached.

Students were included in the study because they were the main focus of the study in regard to retention. They are the ones who either complete or drop from the schools. Their views on the strategies used by principals to motivate them to remain in schools were crucial for schools and policy formation.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

This study employed qualitative and quantitative instruments. The researcher used these two types of instruments for reasons of triangulation and converging of qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaire instruments were used for the purpose of primary quantitative data while interview guide for qualitative data. Questionnaires were designed to obtain information from the teachers and students. On the other hand, interview guide was designed to obtain information from principals and Sub-County Director Education.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaires for Students**

The questionnaires consisted of five sections. Section A comprised of demographic information which included age, type of school, the class and gender. Section B; based on research objectives enquired information about principals' role modeling as a strategy and learner retention. Section three provided information on the principals' provision of conducive learning environment as a strategy and learner retention. Section four included information about principals' resource provision as a strategy and learner retention. The fifth section provided information about the principals' parental involvement as a strategy and retention of learners.

#### **3.6.2 Questionnaire for Teachers**

The questionnaire consisted of five Sections: Section A focused on the demographic information of the teachers which included their age, Gender, years and educational qualification. Section B; based on research objectives enquired information about principals' role modeling as a strategy and learner retention. Section three provided information on the

principals' provision of conducive learning environment as a strategy and learner retention.

Section four included information about principals' resource provision as a strategy and learner retention. The fifth section provided information about the principals' parental involvement as a strategy and retention of learners.

### **3.6.3 Interview Guide for principals and Sub-County Director of Education**

In-Depth interview guide is a very useful qualitative instrument, which elicits a vivid picture of the participants' perspectives of a given phenomenon, and it gives a human face to a social problem (Greenfield 2016). The interview guides contained items that sought demographic information about the respondents as well as the study objectives.

They sought to find out how role modeling, resource provision, conducive learning environment and parental involvement led to learner retention in Malindi Sub-County. Each of the categories had a different tool. The interview guide for Sub-County Director of Education focused on how they motivate the principals in their work and the policies that they have to ensured retention.

## **3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables of the study (Bajpai, 2018). Reliability measured consistency, precision, repeatability, and trustworthiness of a research.

### **3.7.1 Validity of the Quantitative Instruments**

Content and face validity were employed to ensure that the instrument were valid. Content validity is based on the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific intended domain of content while Face validity is the degree to which the sample of the test items represents the content that the test is designed to measure (Nachimias & Nachimias 2016). Face



validity focused on the sentence construction and the layout while content validity dealt with the representative of the items or variables under study.

### **3.7.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments**

Pilot studies helped the researcher to identify questions that could not make sense to respondents and other problems with the questionnaire that could lead to biased study results. The researcher picked randomly two (2) public secondary schools, six teachers (three from each school) and two principals in Malindi Sub-County to take part in the pilot study. The pilot study schools were excluded from the sample. This helped the researcher to identify any omissions which could have occurred during the construction of the instruments. It also enables the researcher to establish how the instruments would perform in the actual study. Therefore, the researcher was able to detect any typographical errors, ambiguous items, layout and format of the items as well as the appropriateness and levels of the language used in the tools. This enabled the researcher to refine the instruments appropriately.

### **3.7.3 Reliability of the Quantitative Instruments**

This study applied Cronbach Coefficient Alpha to determine internal reliability of the items in the likert scale and split-half reliability to test reliability of multiple choice questions (Cooper & Schindeler, 2014). A Cronbach's Coefficient of 0.7 and above was considered reliable for further analysis. This method was appropriate owing to the fact that it required only one administration (Kothari, 2014). In the study, a combined average Cronbach's Coefficient of 0.85 was achieved thus considered good for this study.

### **3.7.4 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Instruments**

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research, the study employed multiple strategies to make the research credible. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of the research can be transferred to other context or settings (Selvam, 2017). This was done by collecting comprehensive notes.

Dependability is concerned with whether one could get the same results if repeated. This will be established through the audit trail and peer examination (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2012). Conformability refers to the degree to which the results could confirm or corroborate by others. Dependability is rationale for selecting the participants from which the research was conducted and consistency of the data collected. Moreover, using multiple sources of data collection helped boost the study reliability.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

In the gathering of information, the researcher obtained all the essential documents to facilitate the process of data collection. The researcher got a clearance from Tangaza University College Research Ethics Committee (TUCREC) before proceeding to the field for research. The letter was used to acquire research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). The official letter and permit were presented by the researcher to the Sub-County Director of Education in Malindi to be allowed to access the schools for data collection. Each selected school for data collection was visited by the researcher and permission was attained from the principal of the relevant school. On the agreed dates, the researcher and the trained research assistant on ethical issues visited each school to administer the research instruments. This was done to guarantee clarity. The researcher then personally administered the interviews either by use of telephone or personally keeping the Covid 19 protocols. The researcher

explained the intention of the interview on the agreed appointed day and conducted in 20 to 30 minutes for each informant.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Procedures**

After collecting data, all the complete questionnaires and interview guides were thoroughly checked by the researcher and organized for processing.

#### **3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis Procedures**

Quantitative data was analyzed by use of inferential statistics (correlations) and descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics measures relationships among different variables in the data (Beins, 2019). To assess principals' transformational leadership strategies and learner retention variables, correlations coefficient was applied. Kombo & Tromp (2018) defines Correlation coefficients as indicators of the strength of the relationship between two different variables.

Data collected using questionnaire was coded and entered into IBM SPSS version 24 spreadsheet. Return rate of the questionnaire was computed and after this, the researcher analyzed demographic information. Each research question was analyzed in three steps: first, the researcher employed descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), followed by an appropriate inferential statistic (correlations). The output was presented in tables and inferences made to interpret the findings. Each finding was linked to similar literature in chapter two and implication of the finding captured.

#### **3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures**

Qualitative data from interview guide was manually categorized into themes and sub-themes. Next, the researcher grouped themes into meaningful sub-themes. The sub-themes were then coded and analysed into categories. Creswell (2017) observed that coherence in writing is very important and it means that the ideas tie together and logically flow from one sentence to

another. This helps the research to flow from one paragraph to another, which is likely to give precise results. Finally, the researcher converged the themes, presented the quotes and interpreted results from the two sources of data. The researcher also tried to look for convergence, divergence, contradictions and relationships of two sources of data. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing information from questionnaires and interviews to determine the principals' transformational leadership on retention of learners in secondary schools and conclusions were drawn then recommendations.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

This study involved ethical principles which were considered in the whole research process. Kombo and Tromp (2016) argue that the researcher must obtain informed consent, from any subject used in the study and ensure all subject participate voluntarily. Before the collection of data, the researcher presented the duly signed proposal to Tangaza University College Research Ethics Committee (TUCREC) got a clearance that was attached to the proposal which was submitted to NACOSTI to get research a permit before proceeding to the field data collection. The researcher also sought permission from other relevant authorities such as the Sub County Director of Education and from the principals of sampled schools.

During data collection, the researcher introduced herself and then explained the purpose of the study to the participants to enable them to have adequate information regarding the research. Comprehension of the information gave the respondent the power of free choice thus enabling them to consent or decline participation in the research. The researcher made it very clear to the participants that they were free to participate or withdraw without any penalty whatsoever. The participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

The research was careful not to cause any harm to the participants by using friendly language that is non-threatening. The researcher treated the respondent with dignity and courtesy

protecting every person's rights. A consent form was provided for them to sign after providing the required information. After meeting the ethical protocols, the researcher proceeded with data collection and analysis. Participants were assured that after collecting the data, their responses could be used solely for academic purpose. Qualitative data was collected from the Sub-County Director of Education and principals while Quantitative data was from teachers and students through questionnaires. An explanation of what was expected of them was guided and taken through the interview. The researcher sought permission to use a tape recorder so as to refer in case of missing out some information. The researcher shared the findings with participants and was able to read back to them to ensure conformability and trustworthiness. After data collection the researcher acknowledged all the sources used in the study. This was necessary for the academic honesty.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, presentation, and discussion of the study findings. The discussions were analyzed within the framework of the research objectives and questions. Specifically, the chapter provides both visual and tabular presentations of participants' demographics and the objective-based results. First, respondents' demographic information is summarized followed by the tabular presentation of the main results of the main objectives, which are triangulated with textual excerpts from the qualitative data transcripts. To support the analysis results, the study provides a comprehensive discussion of the findings backed by the conclusions from the previous studies' literature and synthesis. The objective-based analysis and discussion presented in this chapter are critical and informative to the pertinent factors relative to the principals' transformational leadership strategies for retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya.

#### 4.2 The Response Rate of the participants

Table 4.2 gives the summary of the response rate of the participants included in the sample. The questionnaires were distributed to the students and teachers while interview guides were conducted with the principals and Sub-County Director of Education.

**Table 4.1 Response Rate**

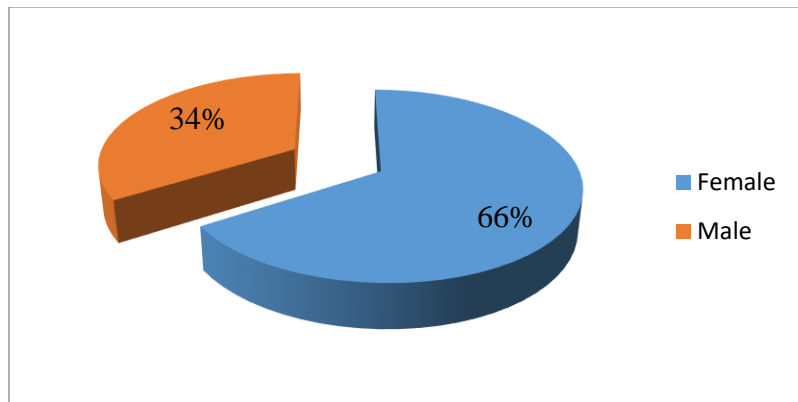
Category	Target participants	Response rate	Percentage (%)
Students	376	350	93.1
Teachers	136	130	95.6
Principals	9	9	100
Sub County Director	1	1	100
Total	522	490	93.9

The study targeted a total of 522 respondents from 9 public secondary schools. Questionnaires were administered to 376 students. Out of these questionnaires, those successfully collected were from 350 representing 93.1%. A total of 136 questionnaires were administered to teachers, out of these questionnaires, 130 were returned representing 95.6% indicating an overall success of 93.8%. All the nine principals targeted were available for interviews. The Sub-County Director of Education was also available for the interview making the response rate 100%. However, as shown in Table 4.2, there were gaps in the response rate because some questionnaires were returned unfilled, and some were lost making the response rate of teachers less by 2.4% and students by 6.9 %. The other percentage of teachers (2.0%) were in isolation because they were suffering from Covid-19. Bryman (2016) and Williman (2016) suggest that a response rate of 85% and above is excellent, 70%-85% is very good, 60%-69% is acceptable, 50%-59% barely acceptable, while below 50% is not acceptable. The response rate of 93.9% in this study was therefore excellent.

#### **4.3 Demographic Information of the Participant**

The researcher inquired from the students, teachers and principals for the demographic information. The researcher presented the information in terms of gender, age and class for the students. For the teachers, principals and Sub-County director, the demographic information included: gender, age, professional qualification and teaching experience.

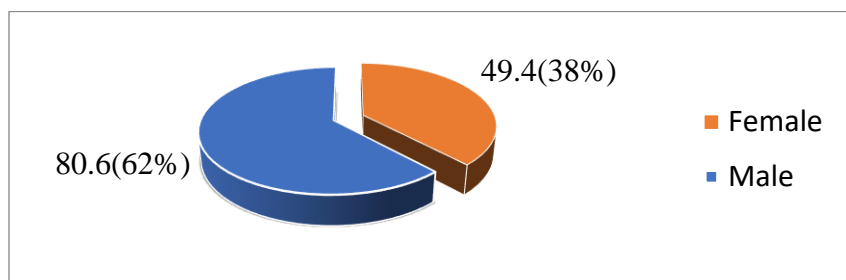
**Figure 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Students Respondents by gender**



As shown in Fig 4.1, 232 (66.3%) were female and 118 (33.7%) male students. Female participants were almost twice the number of male participants in terms of gender. This suggested that although both genders were represented in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools, the number of girls outweighed the number of boys. This contradicts the findings of a study done by the Ministry of Education (2019) which indicated that there were more boys than girls due to the high dropout of girls from public secondary schools.

**Figure 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Teachers Respondents by Gender**

Figure 4.4 shows the findings on the gender of the teachers.



As displayed in figure 4.4 above, the analysis indicates that male teachers who participated in the study constituted a higher percentage 80.6(62 %) than the female teachers 49.4(38%). This means there is a gender disparity between male and female teachers. This is



contrary to female students who are more than male students. The analysis indicates that there is a gap in female students who are more compared to female teachers and few male students compared to male teachers in Malindi Sub County public secondary school. This probably might be due to female students not completing their school course making retention of females to be low. According to Kenyan Gender Policy (2018), the human rights-based approach is geared towards ensuring equal rights to education for boys and girls, men and women.

The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2018) affirms its commitment and determination to address legal and policy concerns to reduce gender parity gaps in the education of girls and women, boys and men to increase the retention of learners in schools. This section gave insight to the researcher, that few females have attained bachelor's degrees probably in this Sub County and may share their success and challenges which could probably help the researcher to address the problem of learner retention. Tumusiime (2013) discovered that the high cost of education and poverty in homes has affected mostly student's retention in schools.

**Figure 4.3: Demographic Characteristics of Students by age**

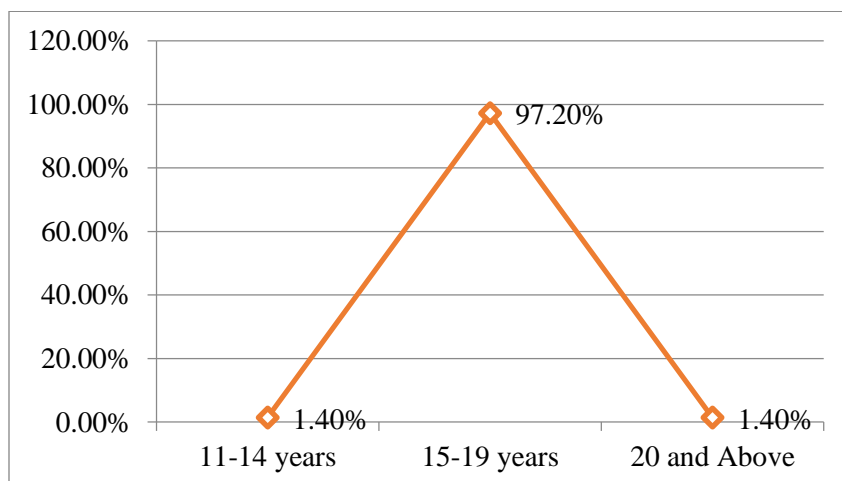


Figure 4.2 results show that a majority of the respondents were in the age brackets of 15-19 years who formed 340 (97.2%) and very few in the age brackets of 11-14 years consisting of 5(1.4%) and above 20 years 5(1.4%) respectively. This tells us that the majority of students 340 (97.2%) in the age bracket (15-19) years which is a normal age bracket for students to be in secondary schools in Kenya.

**Figure 4.4: Demographic Characteristics of Teachers by age**

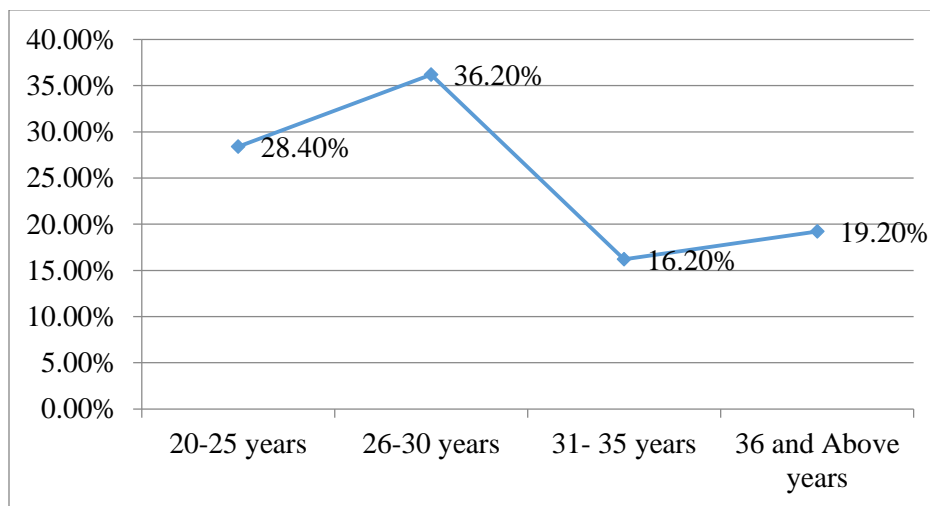
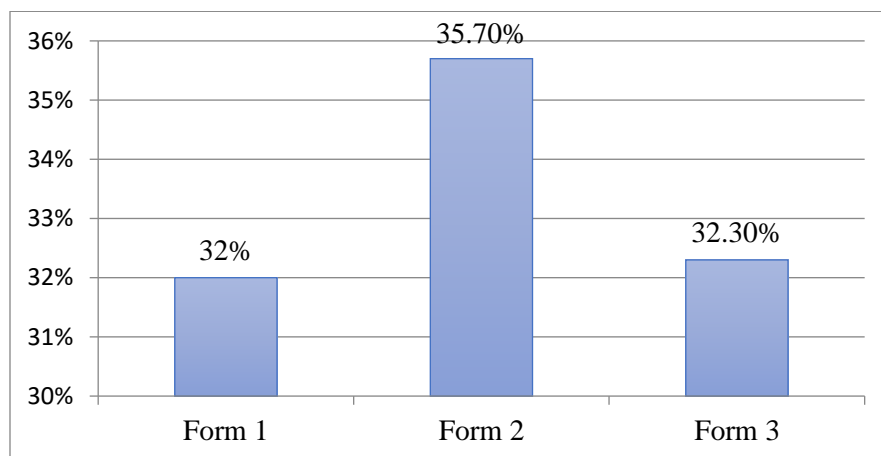


Figure 4.5 demonstrates that 47(36.2%) of the teachers were aged between 20-25 years, followed by those above 36 years of age 25(19.2%), and the least were between the age of 31 and 35 years 21(16.2%). This exhibits that many teachers who were involved in the study were experienced with principals' transformational leadership and those who were young were able to learn from the experienced teachers. Therefore, all the teachers in Malindi Sub-County Secondary schools are still at the recommendable age of teaching. The only implication is the generation gap that with the vibrant and adolescent age of the students, the teachers the age of 36 years and above may not know how to handle some of these students. As a result, students might feel unsupported and hence drop out of school.

#### 4.3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Students by Classes (Form)

The students were asked to indicate their classes as shown in Figure 4. 3. The researcher sought this information to find out the enrolment per class (form) and linked it to the dropout of learners in Malindi Sub County public secondary school.

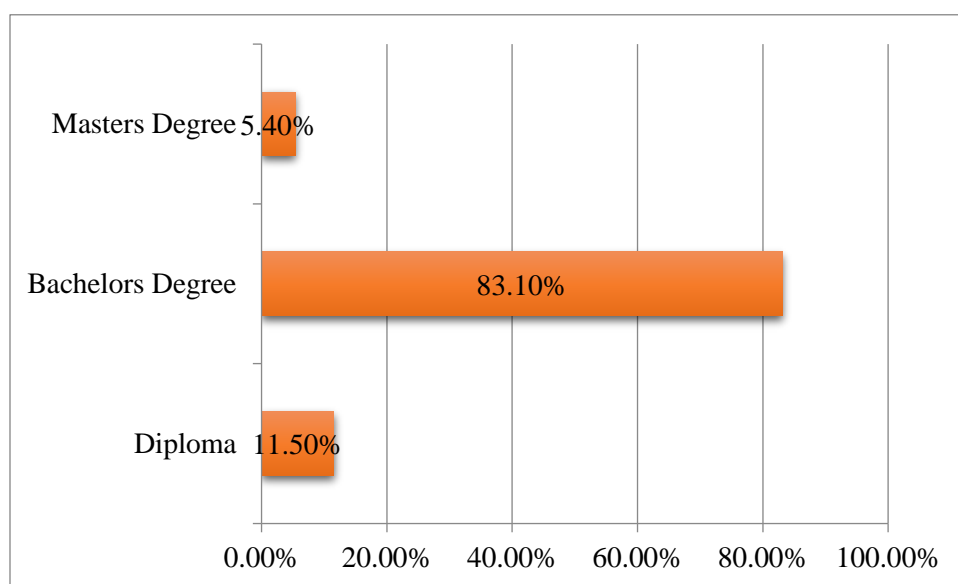
**Figure 4.5: Demographic Characteristics of Students by Classes (Form)**



The study findings show that 113(32.3%) of the participants were from form three while 125 (35.7%) form two, and 112(32%) were from form one students. This shows that students from different classes participated in the study though the majority of the respondents were from form two. This probably could be because some of the students drop out due to the influence of tourism. In addition, transferring as they transit to form three since the students in form two are more than in form three. According to Kilifi County Development Profile (2019), there is a high dropout of students from school due to the influence of tourism where students drop out to become beach boys and engage in drug and substance use, others get married early. This could be assumed to be the one causing low retention of learners, particularly in Malindi Sub County secondary schools.

**Figure 4.6: Demographic Characteristics for Teachers by the level of education**

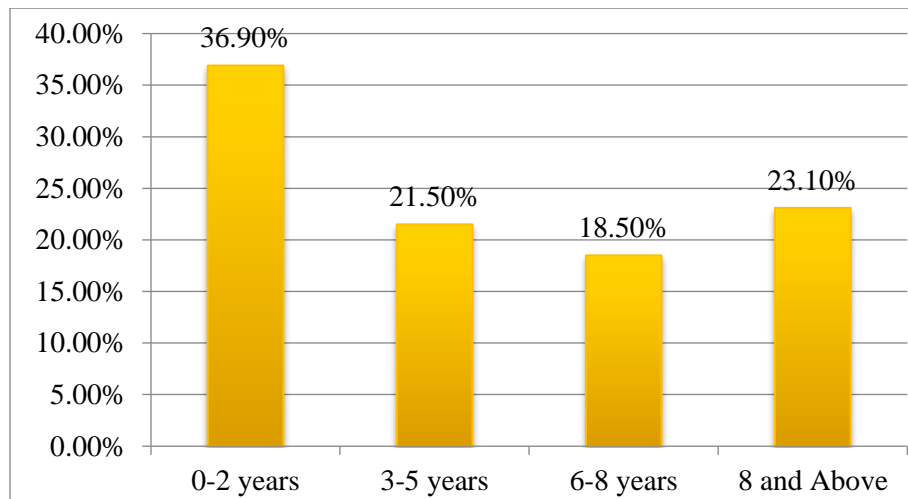
Teachers were asked to indicate their professional qualifications and the results are indicated in Figure 4.6.



The researcher analyzed the academic qualification of teachers in Malindi Sub-County public secondary schools. This was to find out if teachers have the required qualification to teach in the secondary schools and check if it contributes to the retention of students in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools. As shown in Figure 4.7, most of the teachers in the sample had a bachelor's degree 108(83.1%) level of education, followed by those with a college diploma of 15(11.5%) and very few had a master's degree of 7(5.4%). The teachers with a diploma were employed before the policy from the ministry of education changed to employ teachers with a Bachelor of Education. The few teachers with master's degrees show that the program might be expensive thus making them not further their education. The increase in percentages of bachelor's degree holder implied that secondary school has qualified teachers who could be offering better education and minimize dropout cases in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools.

**Figure 4.7: Demographic Characteristics for Teachers according to the duration of service**

Teachers were asked to indicate years according to the duration of service and the results are shown in Figure 4.7.



The research results in figure 4.7 indicated that the majority of the teachers had teaching experience of 48(36.9%) in their schools for 0-2 years, followed by 30(23.1%) those with more than eight years of teaching experience. About 28(21.5%) of the teachers in the sample had teaching experience of 3-5years and 24(18.5%) had taught for 6-8 years. The researcher assumed that the teachers had enough experience in teaching. Those teachers with two years of experience acquired knowledge of student retention from those who have taught for more than 8 years in school. Besides, the newly employed teachers from university colleges had experience with lecturers who taught them through the course of transformational leadership and retention of students in school. This suggests that most of the participants selected in the sample had enough knowledge and understanding of the impact and strategies of transformational leadership on learner retention in Malindi Sub County. UNESCO (2018) confirmed that teaching experience is

a valuable asset in schools because it assists the teachers to be stable. Moreover, efficient and maintains a better relationship in helping students, not to drop out of school.

#### **4.3.2 Demographic Information of the Principals**

The researcher observed the gender of the principals and interviewed them about their academic qualifications and teaching experience. The researcher interviewed the nine principals in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools. The percentage of male principals was 88.89% while the female was (11.11%). This shows that most of the sampled schools had male principals. Also, as indicated, it may seem that women are still underrepresented in leadership positions. Therefore, there is a need to address the gender gap in school leadership as one way of motivating and retaining learners in schools (Education Sector plan 2020-2030).

On academic qualifications, 53.3% had degrees while 7(46.7%) had a master's degree. Some of the principals attended course related to management or leadership of the school and some had no idea. The results indicate that the principals are well qualified to head secondary schools. This postulated that the sample consisted of principals with the right information to address the research questions more effectively. The finding concurs with the *Management Study Guide* (2017) which mentioned that Leadership is a key function of administration that helps to make better productivity in accomplishing any organizational goals. Although principals qualify to teach in secondary schools, the majority have no quality school leadership and management skills due to lack of training.

The study results also revealed that 90% of the principals had taught for 1-20 years while 10% had over 21 years in their current position of work. This is an indication that they had enough experience in their transformational leadership for learner retention. No principal had teaching experience of less than 10 years. Avci (2016) commented that qualifications and

experiences contribute to the success of an organization. Therefore, all principals interviewed could develop administrative strategies for learner retention in retention to their long experience in teaching.

#### 4.4 Principals' Role Modelling as a strategy and Retention of Learners

The first research objective sought to investigate principals' role modeling as a strategy for the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. Students were given six statements and were requested to choose the response that best represented their feelings, on a Likert five-point scale. The scale of rating was ranging from: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D) 3= undecided (UD), 4= Agree (A) and 5= Strongly Agree (SA). The findings were as indicated in Table 4:1.

**Table 4.2: Students' response to Principals' Role Modelling strategy and Retention of Learners (n=350)**

STATEMENT	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Our principal as role model promotes school motto and vision	49	14	44	12.6	55	15.7	100	28.6	102	29.1
Our principal tours the school to know what is happening.	40	11.4	55	15.7	44	12.6	99	28.3	112	32
Our principal spends valuable time with us discussing progress and challenges	98	28	67	19.1	56	16	65	18.6	64	18.3
Our principal leads us by teaching and mentoring	66	18.8	58	16.6	58	16.6	93	26.6	75	21.4
Our principal as a role model attends to our needs	68	19.4	51	14.6	54	15.4	70	20	107	30.6

As shown in Table 4.2, the results revealed that 49(14%) students strongly disagreed, 44(12.6%) disagreed, 100(29.1%) agreed, 102(29.1%) strongly agreed, and 55(15.7%) were

undecided. According to the results, most of the students strongly agreed that principals as role models promote the school motto and vision. The findings mean that principals as role models support the school motto and vision as a strategy for influencing students to complete their school in Malindi Sub County public secondary school. This conforms to the study of Pietsch and Tulowitzki (2017) who noted that creating a common vision to implement change in a school environment records high retention of students.

Similarly, the students were asked whether the principal role model tours the school to know what is happening. The results showed that 211(57.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 93(26.7%) strongly disagreed and 44(12.6%) were undecided. The results portrayed that many of the students strongly agreed that the principal tours the school to know what is happening. This means that supervision by walking around the school is a good strategy for learner retention. This agrees with Adlam (2016) who stressed on the principal being key in observing what is happening in school especially adherent to school rules that prescribe what learners ought to do and not to do for learning to take place.

Further, the researcher also investigated if the principals as the role model attend to the needs of the students as a strategy to retain them in school. The finding from students revealed that 177(50.6%) strongly agreed, 54 (5.4%) were undecided and 119(34%) strongly disagreed. In an open question when students were asked to respond “ways that your principal serves as a role model in their school” one student said that their principal is a God-fearing man. Based on the results, a majority of the students strongly agreed that principals as the role model attend to their needs as a strategy of retaining them in the school. The results were in-line with Galli (2019) who established that school principals as role models are responsible for giving moral support as well as the needs and facilities required for improving and maintaining the learning and teaching



of students to retain them and achieve the goals of the school. Also, Northouse (2017) indicated that principals who are role models encourage students to do better by explaining goals and planning for them clearly to motivate them to remain in school. This calls upon all the public schools in Malindi Sub County to adopt these strategies to ensure high retention.

Moreover, when the students were asked to respond whether the principal as a role model leads in mentoring and teaching to improve their retention in schools, 124(35.4%) strongly disagreed, 54(16.6 %) were undecided and 168(48%) strongly agreed. The results showed that the principals as a role model to some extent leads to mentoring and teaching as a strategy for retaining students in school. This means that they are not strong mentors since 35.4% strongly disagreed and 16.6 % were undecided. So, the principals should enhance their commitment to mentoring to help the learners who have challenges that could be a cause of low retention. A study in Hong Kong by Pounder (2018) explored the concept of transformational leadership as applied in schools and found that principals who are role models exhibit a passion for their jobs, for the learning process and the teaching of the students.

Further, when students were asked to respond on whether the principals as role models spend valuable time with them discussing progress and challenges in their studies to be retained in school, 165(47.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, undecided 56(16%) and 129(36.9%) agreed. Based on the results, the majority of the students strongly disagreed that the principal as a role model spends valuable time with them. This exposed that principals do not spend valuable time with students discussing progress and challenges in their studies to influence learner retention.

This might have bad consequences on their academic performance hence dropping out of school resulting in low retention. This is a call for the principals as role models to address the

problem of not spending valuable time with students to discuss progress and challenges in their studies in Malindi Sub County public secondary school. According to the report by the Ministry of Education (2021), there is a need for transformational principals to create time, clear communication and openness to learners by being role models to make them free to share some of the challenges that if not addressed could lead to low retention in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools.

**Table 4.3 Teachers' Response to Principals' Role Modelling strategy (n=130)**

STATEMENT	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
The principal promotes the school motto and vision	4	3.1	8	6.2	4	3.1	76	58.6	38	29
The principal goes around the school to know what is happening	10.5	8.1	2	1.5	10.5	8.1	65	50	38	29.2
The principal spends valuable time with both students and teachers	1	0.8	2	1.5	25	19.2	59	45.4	43	33.1
The principal presides over major school assembly.	4.5	3.45	2.25	1.73	2.25	1.73	45	34	76	58.6
The principal encourages teachers to promote the school vision	2	1.5	7	5.4	20	15.4	51	39.2	50	38.5

Table 4.3 shows that 76(58.6%) of the teachers are in agreement that the principal as the role model promotes the school motto as a strong strategy for retention, followed by 38(29 %) who strongly agreed, undecided were 8(3.12%) then 8(6.2%) disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. It means that this is a strong strategy and calls upon all the principals in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools to promote the school motto to ensure a high number of retentions. This is in agreement with the study of Pietsch and Tulowitzki (2017) that principals

who create a common vision to implement change in a school environment record a high retention rate.

Besides, 103(79.2%) of the respondents agreed that the principal as a role model is concerned with what is happening within the school, undecided was 21(16.2%) and 2(1.5%) disagreed. This means that a high percentage of teacher responses agreed unanimous that the principals are concerned with the learner which is very encouraging. This is a strong strategy that should be applied in schools to have a high retention of the learners. Nwobodo and Agusiobo (2017) noted that the way principals as role models employ their transformational leadership determines how the students, teachers and parents view their school and whether they feel at home and accepted.

Moreover, 76(58.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the principal as a role model presides over major school assembly, followed by those who agreed 45(34%) and 9(6.9%) were undecided. When principals preside over major school assemblies, they will be able to notice the students who are not in school and plan for follow-up. Also, 100(77.7%) of the respondents agreed principals motivate teachers by encouraging them to promote the school vision, undecided were 20(15.4%) and very few disagreed 8(6.9%). The results showed that principals motivate teachers by encouraging them to promote the school vision which leads to high retention of the learners. This means that 77.7% of the respondents are in agreement that this strategy is being applied across all the public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County which is very inspiring. Nwobodo and Agusiobo (2017) established that there is a high relationship between school principals, academic improvement and school vision which leads to the retention of learners.

When the teacher participants were requested to commend whether the principals spend valuable time with both students and teachers, 102(78.5%) agreed, undecided were 25 (19.2%) and 3(1.8%) disagreed. This showed that a majority of the respondents were in agreement that principals spend valuable time with both students and teacher's contrary to student's respondent where 98(28%) strongly disagreed. This show that there is a disparity between teachers and students on how the principals avail themselves in the school that participated in the study. This calls for all secondary public schools in the Sub County to address the problem of the principal's availability for learners. Availability and commitment of the school principals are key responsibilities in any school. This is in conformity with the studies done by Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2015); Galli (2019) who concluded that school leaders are responsible for giving moral support as well as the needs and valuable time required for improving and maintaining learning and teaching of students to retain them to achieve the goals their school.

To confirm whether the principals had related responses to teachers and students, the researcher assessed similar sentiments via interview guide questions. The majority of principals 8 out of 9 translating to 88.9% were for the idea that they have been performing various roles which position them as role models, in turn, retaining learners in schools. For example, in relation to the first question on role modeling whether the Teacher Service Commission (T.S.C) expects principals in terms of absenteeism, vision and mission to enhance learner retention.

Some responses to what principals said are quoted as follows:

One principal argued that:

*As a TSC agent, I have been strictly following the TSC mission and vision of ensuring that learners are retained at school by involving both parents and teachers* (principal 1, Interview, on July 14, 2021).

Another principal stated that:

*Being in school allows me to monitor daily activities besides the provision of effective management that ensures learners are kept in school* (principal 2, Interview, on July 14, 2021).

Additionally, another principal narrated:

*Learner retention demands that as principals we conduct various activities as guided by the vision and mission outlined by TSC. This helps to retain learners in schools* (Interview with principal 3 conducted on July 14, 2021).

Another principal argued *that*:

*Honesty, hard work, punctuality, discipline and stakeholders' involvement have been part of the areas pointed out as core influences of learners' retention in my schools* (Interview with principal 4 conducted on July 14, 2021).

The findings presented by the principals show that the principals' role modeling as a strategy for the retention of learners. The researcher again interviewed the Sub-County Director on how the principals deal with issues in terms of absenteeism, vision and mission as the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) expects from any school.

The Sub-County Director said,

*The principals are busy, but they should have the absent students and find out the reasons for absenteeism and try to help them* (Interview with SCDE conducted on July 16, 2021).

These findings revealed that the principals' role modeling as a strategy for ensuring learners' retention must ensure students attend the school daily and those absent find the reasons

for absenteeism in order help them. In addition, the principals motivate students and teachers by encouraging them to promote the school vision which leads to high retention of the learners. According to the students, principals do not have adequate time with students in discussing progress and challenges in their studies. The results also revealed availability and commitment of the school principals are key responsibilities in any school. This is in agreement with a study done by Kariuki (2019) who sought to establish the influence of transformational leadership on the teachers' performance in public county schools in Nyandarua County and found that the teachers' performance was important for the improvement of the school. Similarly, the principals as role models play key roles in the enhancement of teachers' performance and student retention.

#### **4.5 Principals' provision of a conducive learning environment as a strategy and learners' retention.**

The second research objective sought to examine whether the provision of a conducive learning environment can lead to learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. Students were given six statements and were requested to choose the response that best represented their feelings on the Likert-rated scale. The scale of rating was ranging from: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D) 3= undecided (UD), 4= Agree (A) and 5= Strongly Agree (SA). The findings were as indicated in table 4.6.

**Table 4.4 Principals' Provision of Learning Environment and Retention of Learners  
(n=350)**

Statement	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Our principal provides an environment free for open ideas and beliefs	49	14	42	12	55	15.7	100	28.6	104	29.7
Our principal assists students who appear to be neglected	35	10	5	1.4	74	21.1	88	25.1	73	20.9
Our principal makes us cooperative with one another on learning	42	12	73	20.9	74	21.1	88	25.1	73	20.9
Our principal provides an enabling environment to participate in symposiums	92	26.3	60	17.1	60	17.1	69	19.7	69	19.7
Our principal inspires commitment in the school	17	4.9	24	6.9	50	14.3	122	34.9	137	39.1
Our principal encourages students to support each other in their studies	24	6.8	53	15.1	59	16.9	101	28.9	113	32.3

Table 4.4 shows that a majority of the student participants 204(58.3%) strongly agreed that their principals provide an environment that is free for open ideas and beliefs while 91(26%) disagreed and 55(15.7%) were undecided. This means that principals' provision of a favorable environment, which is free for open ideas as a strategy, makes learners remain in school and learn. However, not all students agreed with that statement. Since 91(26%) of the students disagreed and 55(15.7%) were undecided. Leithwood (2018) acknowledged that there is much evidence to suggest that provision of the learning environment plays a big role in the retention of students. Besides, the study sought to find out from students if the principals assist the learners who appear to be neglected. The results showed that 161 (46%) of the respondents strongly

agreed, 40(11.4%) disagreed and 74(21 %) were undecided. This portrays that majority of students are in agreement that the principals assist students who appear to be neglected.

However, some students were not sure, and few did not agree which means not all the principals in Malindi Sub County secondary schools apply this strategy to retain the learners. Jumba and Githinji (2018) established that the schools headed by transformational principals create a conducive learning environment which later on translates to learners' retention.

Also, the study sought to find out from students if the principals make them cooperative with one another on learning to influence the retention of students in schools. The results displayed that 161 (46%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 115(22.9%) disagreed and 74(21 %) were undecided. Moreover, when student participants were asked to respond whether the principals inspire commitment in the school and encourage them to support each other in their studies, 250(71.4%) strongly agreed, 41(11.7%) disagreed and 59 (16.9%) were undecided. This suggested that the strategy of principals in making learners cooperative with one another on learning, inspires commitment and encourages them to support each other in their studies has an impact on the retention of students in Malindi Sub County secondary schools. This concurred with a study done by Balwant (2016), who concluded that transformational principals entail responding to learners' suggestions and complaints in a friendly manner, and this encourages students to have an interest in learning since they are free to make their own decision hence able to remain in schools to complete their education.

In addition, the study sought to find out from students if the principals provide an enabling environment to participate in symposiums so as to improve the retention of learners. The results showed that 152(43.4%) students disagreed, 138(39.4%) agreed, and 60(17.1%) were undecided that principals provide an enabling environment to participate in symposiums so as to



improve the retention of learners. The finding shows that enabling principals need to provide an environment to participate in symposiums as a strategy so as to improve the retention of learners in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools. Sithole (2017) noted that transformational principal provides an enabling environment to participate in symposiums and individualized support by indicating responsibilities to be done.

**Table 4.5 Teachers' Response to Principals' Provision of Learning Environment and Learner Retention (n=130)**

STATEMENT	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
The principal provides environment open for ideas and beliefs	2	1.5	3	2.3	6	4	69	3.1	49	37.7
The principal assists teachers who appear to be neglected	1	8	2	1.5	37	28.5	43	33.1	46	35.4
The principal motivates teachers to perform well.	6	4.6	7	5.4	30	23.1	40	30.8	45	34.6
The principal inspires learners by maintaining manageable students.	6	4.6	16	12.3	33	25.1	48	36.9	27	20.3
The principal provides a good environment for interacting.	10	7.7	9	6.9	26	20	42	32.3	40	30.8
The principal assures things to be good when we face challenges.	13	2.3	9	6.9	20	15.4	66	50.8	32	24.6
The principal ensures the school environment is good for teaching.	8	6.1	1	0.8	9	6.9	63	50	47	36.2

The first question was to find out from the teachers whether principals provide an environment that is free for open ideas and beliefs for students to complete school. The responses

from the teachers revealed that 5(3.8%) disagreed, 118(90.8%) strongly agreed and 6(4.6%) were undecided. The findings reveal that majority of the teachers were for the principals to provide an environment that is free for open ideas and beliefs as a strategy for retention of students to complete school. As shown in the results, very few teachers disagreed and were undecided. This calls for all the principals in Malindi Sub-County secondary schools to apply this strategy in their schools for the retention of learners. Sithole (2017) found that, if there is a caring environment in the school set up, where students can be open and discuss their ideas, then it will lead to the students obtaining good, envisaged outcomes and retention.

When the teacher participants were asked to respond whether the principals assist perceived neglected teachers to cope with their problems in order to retain learners in school, 89(68.5%) agreed, 3(9.5%) disagreed and 37(28.5%) were undecided. This means that principals assist perceived neglected teachers to cope with their problems as a strategy for learner retention. However, some teachers were undecided about whether principals assisted perceived neglected teachers to cope with their problems or not and very few disagreed. This showed still there is a gap that needs to be addressed in those schools which do not apply this strategy. Busch and Fernandez (2019) assert that transformational leadership practices create a conducive learning school environment, especially in the way of thinking towards solving the problem through the challenge. Furthermore, the findings from the teachers on whether principals motivate teachers to leave out to perform well to maintain learners in school for learning showed that 13(10 %) strongly disagreed, 30(23.1%) undecided and 85(65.4%) agreed. The results revealed that the majority of teachers were for principals who motivate teachers in order to perform well to maintain learners in school. The researcher assumed that if all the principals can apply the

strategy of motivating the teachers in order to perform well in all schools in Malindi Sub-County then there could be high student retention.

Concerning whether principals highly inspire learners by maintaining a manageable number of students per class so as to retain them, 75(57.2%) of the respondents agreed, 33(25.1%) were undecided and 22(16.9%) strongly disagreed. The findings showed that the majority agreed however some strongly disagreed and were undecided. This could mean that some schools in Malindi Sub-County have bigger enrolment since the principals in public secondary do not limit learners during admission making it difficult for teachers to maintain a manageable number of students per class so as to retain them. Sithole (2017) stressed that students' success in their learning progress is determined by a positive learning and teaching environment.

The researcher also wanted to find out from the teachers whether the principals provide an enabling environment to interact with teachers from other schools to exchange ideas to retain students in school, 82(63.1%) of the respondents agreed, 26(20%) were undecided and 19(14.6%) disagreed. The data showed that 63.1% of the respondents agreed the principals provide an enabling environment to interact with teachers from other schools to exchange ideas on how to retain students in school. This is very encouraging. Moreover, when the teachers were asked to respond if principals motivate teachers based on their performance, 98(75.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 20(15.4%) were undecided and 22(9.2%) disagreed. Besides, the researcher also investigated whether the principals ensure that the school environment is good for teaching for the students to complete their schools.

The findings from the teachers revealed that 111(86.2%) strongly agreed, 9(6.9%) disagreed and 9(6.9%) were undecided. The results revealed that most of the teachers were for

the strategies of principals' providing an enabling environment to interact with teachers from other schools, motivation to teachers based on their performance and school environment being good for teaching for students to complete their schools. Some teachers did not have the idea, but the researcher assumed the principals should apply these strategies to address the low retention in that in Malindi Sub-County secondary schools. The findings are in line with Damanik and Aldridge (2017) noted that, an effective school environment as one where a positive attitude on the part of the entire staff is exhibited through their overt behavior that creates a warm orderly learning atmosphere.

In triangulating the quantitative findings from the principals, qualitative interviews were conducted among the principals. Regarding principals' views about the learning environment and students' retention in schools.

One principal stated:

*The school environment is conducive, and this has led to an increase in the number of admissions and reduced cases of absenteeism.* (Principal 1, personal communication, July 15, 2021).

Another principal said:

*A conducive environment in a school is crucial for the retention of students. Learners find it enjoyable to be in a good environment which attracts them to always be in school* (Principal 2, personal communication, July 15, 2021).

Another principal said:

*When the learning environment is safe, quiet and conducive to the learning processes students get happy and enjoy the school* (Principal 3, personal communication, July 15, 2021)

Another principal said:

*The environment gives the learners the motivation to be in school and attend lectures in school* (Principal 4, personal communication, July 15, 2021).

Another principal said:

*The environment is conducive as it is fenced and students are always in school as it is not easy for them to sneak out* (Principal 5, personal communication, July 15, 2021)

The finding showed a positive attitude meaning that the principals were seen as having a strategy of provision of a favorable environment in Malindi Sub County public secondary schools.

Besides, this shows the readiness of the principals to provide a conducive environment as a strategy for learner retention. This is in line with Sahin, Arseven, and Kiliç, (2016) who argued that to have a positive learning environment, a transformational leader should respect each student and create a comfortable environment by giving encouragement and support.

#### **4.6 Principals' Resources Provision and Learners' Retention**

The researcher further sought to examine whether the provision of school resources by principals has an influence on learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County. Students and teachers were given four statements separately and were requested to choose the response that best represented their feelings, on a scale of a five-point Likert Scale. The scale of rating was ranging from: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D) 3= undecided (UD), 4= Agree (A) and 5= Strongly Agree (SA). The findings were as indicated in table 4.8:

**Table 4.6 Principals' Resources Provision and Learners' Retention (n=350)**

STATE	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)
Our principal provides always enough textbooks	27	(7.7)	10	(2.9)	22	(6.3)	101	(28.9)	190	(54.3)
Our principal provides equipped library	128	(36.6)	57	(16.3)	22	(6.3)	62	(17.7)	78	(23.3)
Our principal provides a well-equipped computer laboratory	86	(24.6)	60	(17.1)	28	(8)	83	(23.7)	91	(26)
Our principal ensures that students leaders are involved in making decisions	48	(13.7)	35	(10)	60	(17.1)	96	(27.4)	111	(31.7)
Our principal ensures teachers observe the time allocated to be in class.	174	(49.8)	45	(12.9)	25	(7.1)	59	(16.9)	47	(13.4)
The principal regularly checks the exercise books	324	(92.6)	15	(4.3)	4	(1.1)	2	(0.6)	5	(1.4)

The study also asked if the principal has ensured there is the provision of enough textbooks and whether student leaders are involved in the decision-making process concerning students' needs in order to influence them from dropping out of school. The responses from the students showed that 291(83.1%) of students' participants strongly agreed on the provision of enough textbooks, 37(10.6%) disagreed, and 22(6.3%) were undecided. Also, 207(57%) student participants agreed, 83(23.7%) disagreed and 60(17.1%) were undecided. This means that majority agreed that principals in Malindi Sub-County secondary schools have ensured there is the provision of enough textbooks and involve student leaders in the decision-making process concerning students' needs as a strategy to influence learners from dropping out of school.

According to OECD (2019), schools that lack quality school leaders, adequate infrastructure, and textbooks will have more difficulties promoting quality education hence low retention of learners. The researcher also wanted to know from students if principals provide a well-equipped computer laboratory, 140(41.7%) student participants strongly disagreed, 28(8%) were undecided and 178(50.9%) agreed. The finding revealed that some schools in Malindi Sub-County were well-equipped with computer laboratories which enabled learners to remain in school and learn while other schools lacked computer laboratories which resulted in low retention of learners. According to Cohen (2016), the inadequacy of computers and lack of interest may lead to students dropping out of school.

When students were asked if principals strictly ensure the school has a well-equipped library book, 185 (52.9%) student participants strongly disagreed, 140(40%) agreed and 22(6.3%) were undecided. The results showed that principals do not strictly ensure the school has a well-equipped library book which is the main requirement in any school. Some few schools had a well-equipped library but seems to be a problem which if not addressed the retention of learners might be low. Kilic (2016) noted that technology needs to come into classrooms to keep up with the learning demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which leads to high retention of learners

When students were asked to respond if the principal checks the exercise books regularly, 339(92.6%) strongly disagreed, 4(1.1%) were undecided and 7(10%) agreed. The study revealed that most of the participants strongly disagreed that the principal checks the exercise books regularly. The results showed that the principals do not create time to attend to learners. Thus, the retention of learners is influenced by the principal's time availability despite of their busy schedule in administration in Malindi Sub County secondary schools. If the books of learners are not checked, they might decide to drop out of school. According to Hauserman and Stick (2018) to retain students in

schools, principals are supposed to put in place required adequate resources towards the actualization of the school goal and objectives.

**Table 4.7 Teachers' Response to Principals' Resources Provision and Retention of Learners (n=130)**

STATEMENT	SD	D	UD	A	SA
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
The principal budgets on the financial resources needed	0	1(0.8)	16(12.3)	71(56.9)	39(30)
The principal consults teachers about the textbooks needed to maintain learners in school.	3(2.3)	8(6.2)	22(16.9)	63(48.5)	34(26.2)
The principal involves teachers in making decisions to improve student retention	8(6.9)	3(2.3)	13(10)	63(48.5)	43(33.1)
The principal provides IT resources for teaching	4(3.1)	5(3.8)	21(16.2)	57(43.8)	43(33.1)
The principal regularly checks and the classroom record of work	14(10.8)	5(3.8)	9(6.9)	52(40)	50(35.5)

The researcher sought from the teachers if the principal ensures that there are clear budgets on the required financial resources, 110(31.4%) agreed, 16(12.3%) were undecided and 1(0.8%) disagreed. The research results indicated that the majority of teacher participants were for the principal to ensure that there are clear budgets on the required financial resources for retention of learners in Malindi Sub County. When teachers were asked to respond on whether principals seek clarification about textbooks required from teachers to maintain smooth learning, 97(27.7%) of teacher participants agreed, 11(3.1%) disagreed and 22(6.3%) were undecided. This showed that principals should seek clarification about textbooks required from teachers to



maintain smooth learning as a strategy to retain the learners in Malindi Sub-County public secondary schools.

Further, teacher participants were asked to respond if principals as human resource involve teachers in making decisions, regularly checks teachers' schemes of work per class attendant and ensures there are sufficient teaching IT resources to improve student retention, 106(81.5%) agreed they are involved in making decisions, 11(3.1%) disagreed and 13(3.7%) were undecided. On regularly checking teachers' schemes of work per class attendant, 102(78.5%) strongly agreed, 19(5.4%) disagreed and 9(6.9%) were undecided. Also, 100(76.9%) agreed that principals ensure there are sufficient teaching IT resources, 9(6.9%) disagreed and 21(16.2%) were undecided. The results showed that teachers embraced principals as human resource involves teachers in making decisions, regularly checks teachers' schemes of work per class attendant and ensures there are sufficient teaching IT resources as strategies to improve student retention in Malindi Sub-County public secondary schools. Kothari (2016) argued that better facilities in school and supervision of resources by principals make a difference in the achievement of learners which leads to high academic success and retention.

In an open-ended question analysis, the majority of the students 320(91.3%) mentioned lunch meals provided by the principal, revision materials, trips, and bursary as part of what the principals have been doing to help them be in school while few respondents seemed to find very little sense in the principal's intervention. The finding also indicated that the majority of the teachers 117(89.9%) said that the school principals have tried their best in ensuring that teaching and learning materials have been provided. Also, learning has been boosted by having appreciated remedial teachings that motivate both the learners and teachers making absenteeism rates go down.

Based on the interview conducted among the principals, one of the interviewed principals confirmed the responses provided by teachers and students by saying:

*They have several resources that help in ensuring that learners are retained in schools. For example, they have tuition block, administration block, hosting sizes playing fields, laboratories (computer and science labs) and kitchens them* (Interview with principal 1 conducted on July 14, 2021).

Another principal said:

*He had fewer classes and laboratories besides having a mini kitchen. All the principals said that they were sourcing for funds or mobilizing financial resources besides the government allocation to increase the infrastructural facilities like the classes to have the ever-increasing number of learners stay in school them* (Interview with principal 2 conducted on July 14, 2021).

The Sub-County Director argued that:

*Guidance and counseling families, lunch programs and using well-wishers have been part of the resources point score strengthened on. Further, the Sub-County Director said that the principals have been using donors in getting enabling resources* (Interview with SCDE conducted on July 16, 2021).

This concurred with Blankstein, Noguera and Kelly (2016) who noted that principals should gather all possible resources from the parents and other organizations to ensure they are adequate and effectively used to retain learners in school.

As indicated in table 4.7, some of the teachers 64(48.5%) agreed to the idea that principals have been providing enabling resources which have led to improved learners' retention in the schools. Some of the teachers 63(48.5%) strongly agreed that the principals as

human resources involve teachers in making decisions on how to improve performance and student retention.

In an interview, Principal 1 stated:

*In my school, we have water tanks that provide enough water for daily use. We also have enough classrooms, toilets for both students and teachers, and enough stationary.* (Principal 1, Interview, on July 14, 2021).

When the Sub County Director was asked to respond to the question regarding the availability of resources, the response was that: *resources in schools are adequate for example we make sure schools have a lunch program, guidance and counseling and classes* (Interview with SCDE conducted on July 16, 2021).

Malusu (2019) reported that many secondary schools perform poorly due to poor leadership, besides inadequate funds and lack of resources. Also, Simkins (2018) argued that a good budget can facilitate the effective planning and management of financial resources, offering the opportunity to achieve higher levels of efficiency.

#### **4.7 Principals' Parental Involvement and Learner Retention**

The fourth objective sought to determine how principals' parental involvement influences the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. Students and teachers were given choices and were requested to choose the response that best represented their feelings on a five-point scale. The scale of rating was 1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= undecided (UD) 4= Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA). The findings were as presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 Principals' Parental Involvement and Learner Retention (n=350)**

STATEMENT	SD	D	UD	A	SA
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Our school principal encourages our parents to pay school fees	23(6)	5(1.4)	18(5.1)	92(26.3)	212(60.6)
Our principal involves parents to encourage students in school activities	30(8.6)	23(6.6)	36(10.3)	116(33.1)	145(41.4)
Our principal involves parents to support students' discipline.	26(7.5)	19(5.4)	38(10.9)	101(28.9)	166(47.3)
Our principal involves parents to support field trips outside the school.	101(28.7)	54(15.4%)	56(16)	73(20.9)	66(18.9)
Our principal involves parents in support for students' educational needs.	46(13.2)	24(6.9)	54(15.4%)	15(32.9)	111(31.7)
Our principal involves parents to notify the school student's absenteeism.	43(12.3)	57(16.1)	50(14.3)	111 (31.7)	89(25.4)
Our principal engages parents in a feeding program to retain students.	92(26.3)	40(11.4)	52(14.9)	77(22)	89(25.4)

Based on the results in table 4.8, the majority of the students' participants 304(86.9%) strongly agreed, 28(8%) disagreed and 18(5.1%) were undecided that the principals encourage parents to pay school fees and participate in decision making. This showed that the involvement of parents in paying fees for students in schools as encouraged by the principals has an impact on learner retention in Malindi Sub County. When the respondents were asked to answer whether the principals involve parents to encourage students to participate in school activities, 145(41.4%) strongly agreed, 116 (33.1%) agreed, 36(10.3%) undecided, 23(6.6%) disagreed and 30(8.6%) strongly disagreed. Moreover, whether principals involve parents in financial support of the students 115 (32.9%) of the participants agreed. This means that the fact that principals involve parents to encourage students in participating in school activities is a strategy that needs to be applied to all schools in Malindi Sub County.

The researcher also sought from the student if principals involve parents in giving discipline to the students and request parents to encourage their children to stay and participate in

school activities, where 166(47.3%) of respondents strongly agreed. Besides, if the principals request the parents to update the school in case the children refuse to report to school for no reason 111 (31.7%) of the respondents agreed. The findings showed that principals' strategy of involving parents to retain learners in school is important in Malindi Sub County public secondary school. Kwatubana and Makhalemele (2015) noted that the involvement of parents in the learning process helps to improve student retention and performance, reduce absenteeism and restore parents' confidence in their children's education.

Nevertheless, when students were asked to respond if the principal involves parental financial support for school field trips, 101(28.7%) of the student respondent disagreed strongly. Likewise, whether the principals engage parents in feeding programs to encourage student retention, 92(26.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 40(11.4%) disagreed, 77(22%) agreed, 89(25.4) strongly agreed and 52(14.9%) undecided. The results portrayed that, principals do not engage parents in feeding programs and financial support for school field trips to encourage student retention. UNESCO (2018) highlighted that lack of parental encouragement by school principals contributes to significantly low retention.

**Table 4.9 Teachers' Perception of Principals' Parental Involvement and Learner Retention (n=130).**

Item for Teachers	SD	D	UD	A	SA
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
The principal involves the parents to be supportive in the feeding program	8(6.2)	(0.8)	19(14.6)	66(50.8)	36(27.7)
The principal involves the parents in encouraging students in school activities	1(0.8)	2(1.5)	22(16.9)	62(47.7)	43(33.1)
The principal involves the parents in support of the student's discipline.	3(2.3)	3(2.3)	12(9.3)	57(43.8)	55(42.3)
The principal involves the parents to come to school when they are required.	2(1.5)	3(2.3)	12(9.3)	62(47.7)	51(39.2)
The principal involves the parents to support field trips outside the school.	7(5.3)	4(3.1)	43(33.1)	48(36.9)	28(21.5)
The principal involves the parents to meet the student's educational needs like financial support.	2(1.5)	2(1.5)	6(4.6)	72(55.4)	48(36.9)
The principal involves the parents to notify the school in case of absenteeism of their students.	2(1.5)	3(2.3)	17(13.1)	57(43.8)	51(39.2)

Table 4.9 shows that 66(50.8%) of the teachers' participants agreed that the principal involves the parents be supportive in the feeding program. This is contrary to what students responded as the majority disagreed. The study also found that 62(47.7%) of the participants agreed that the principal involves parents in encouraging students to always remain in school and participate in school activities. The results showed that there is a gap between what learners and teachers observe. UNESCO (2018) found that the failure of parents to contribute to school activities like Board of Management and Parents-Teachers Association meetings leads to a barrier to the ability of learners to continue in their schooling. Also, 57(43.8%) of the respondents agreed that the principals involve the parents in support of students' discipline. Further, 72(50.8%) of the

respondents agreed that the principals involve parents in feeding support and encourage dropouts to go back to school. Also, 65 (50%) of the respondents agreed that the principals ask parents to be available whenever they are needed in school. Besides, 57(43.8%) of the respondents agreed that the principals involve the parents to notify the school in case of absenteeism of their students and 48(36.9%) agreed in contributing and supporting school field trips.

Moreover, analysis established that all the learners seemed to agree that the parents are crucial figures when it comes to career and subject choices which later on influence their future and stay in school. Further, 212(60.6%) learners said that their parents have been paying money for them to attend extra classes, provide uniforms and attend meetings aimed at motivating them. The majority of the students and teachers 72(55.4%) agreed that the extent to which principals' parental involvement is strengthened determines the extent to which learners are retained in schools.

Information from interviews regarding parental involvement and retention of learners revealed that for some of the principals a higher number of parents turn up during special meetings such as academic clinics, general meetings, and parent day are associated with learners' retention. One principal stated:

*Some parents claim to live in other towns making it hard for them to keep attending the meeting and others are not easily available as they stay far and can't afford the transport*  
(Principal 5, personal communication, July 16, 2021).

Other principals argued about the challenges faced:

*.. some parents come from far places making the time of meetings to be started late and end early claiming that they are busy while others have poor communication with the management*  
(Principal 3, personal communication, July 16, 2021).

The Sub-County Director said:

*The principals have been using class registers and mobile communication to ensure that parents know the attendance of their children in school* (The Sub-County Director, Interview, on July 14, 2021).

The Sub-County Director also added that:

*Principals have been using sensitization conducted during the PTA meetings, class clinics, and regular communication with the parents to ensure that the parents are kept posted on the school affairs and school attendance of their children.* (The Sub-County Director, Interview, on July 16, 2021).

In summary, the findings from the students, teachers, principals and Sub County Director of Education officer showed that principals are not fully using the following strategies: provision of resources such as an equipped library, ensuring teachers observe time allocated in class, books of the learners not checked and parental involvement to impact the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County. Besides, lack of principals' transformational leadership strategies such as resources in school, parents' engagement and a conducive environment contributes to low retention of learners. A study by Allen (2015) found that the adoption of transformational leadership strategies creates student capability to use ideas and information, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities which encourages learners to remain in school. Therefore, there is a need to improve these strategies to retain learners in Malindi Sub-County public secondary schools.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the findings and the conclusion of the research study. Finally, it presents the recommendation based on the findings of the study and suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

The study focused on the principals' transformational leadership strategies for the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi sub-county, Kenya. From the background, the study revealed that the principals have an impact on what is happening in schools thus improving the retention of learners. Specifically, the study concentrated on Role Modelling, Provision of Learning Environment, Resources Provision and Parental Involvement as strategies employed by the principals to retain learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County.

##### **The finding of the study**

The first objective sought to investigate principals' role modeling as a strategy for the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. The study established that principals spend quality time with both the students and the teachers to ensure that they get to grasp all the events in the schools. The finding from the study showed that principals identify themselves with the learners and teachers which in turn is associated with learners' retention in the schools.

The second research objective sought to examine whether the provision of a conducive learning environment can lead to learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. The study revealed that a conducive environment for students and teachers helps

in the retention of learners. Further, some principals were found not committed to the provision of resources needed in schools for the retention of learners. For instance, some principals have unequipped libraries in their schools according to students, other principals do not ensure observation of time allocated for the teachers in class. Besides, the books of the learners are not checked which leads to low retention.

The other objective sought to determine how principals' parental involvement influences the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya. The study found out that parental involvement in all activities of the school is important in the retention of learners. Most of the students and teachers agreed that parental involvement determines learners' retention in schools. All the learners agreed that the parents are crucial figures when it comes to career and subject choices which later influence their future and stay in school. Some students said that their parents have been paying money for them to attend extra classes, provide uniforms and attend meetings aimed at motivating them. Other students responded that principals do not involve the parents in supporting field trips outside the school which led to low retention in school.

In the interviews conducted among the principals, the findings of the study revealed that few parents turn up for meetings in schools, although follow-ups are made for parents who do not turn up for meetings. The Sub-County Directors of Education argued that the principals have been using class registers and mobile communication to ensure that parents know the attendance of their children in schools. The Sub-County Director of Education also added that the principals have been using sensitization conducted during the PTA meetings, class clinics, and regular communication with the parents to ensure that the parents are kept posted on the school affairs and school attendance of their children.

The researcher further sought to examine whether the provision of school resources by principals has an influence on learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County. From the findings it is clear that the principals are not fully using the following strategies: provision of resources such as an equipped library, ensuring teachers observe time allocated in class, books of the learners not checked and parental involvement to impact the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County. Therefore, there is a need to improve these strategies to retain learners in Malindi Sub-County schools.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the principals' transformational leadership on learner retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, the literature reviewed, and the observations made in the field made the following conclusions:

In terms of the principals' role modeling strategy on learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, the study concluded that the extent to which principals become role models in their schools influences the retention and general performance of learners. The principals have been promoting the school motto, vision and mission besides the laid down objectives which in turn has led to increased learners' attendance and retention in school. The principals also spend quality time with both the students and the teachers aimed at ensuring that they get to grasp all the happenings in the schools to identify themselves with the learners and teachers which in turn is associated with learners' retention in the schools.

On the provision of school resources by principals has an influence on learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, the study concluded that some principals have been providing various resources that are associated with learners' retention in schools. In addition, principals have been providing infrastructural facilities like tuition blocks, administration blocks, hosting sizes playing fields, laboratories (computer and science labs) and

the kitchens to retain learners in schools. The data showed that some of the principals have been very active in ensuring that the textbooks provided by the MOE are delivered to their schools in time and reach the learners. Though some schools had an unequipped library which led to low retention of learners. The study concluded that principals of low retention of learners should make sure the library is fully equipped for high learner retention. Further, principals have been consulting the teachers on the priority areas to pump resources besides budgeting for the financial resources needed which has been associated with increased learners' retention which in turn has shown transformational leadership.

To examine whether the provision of a conducive learning environment can lead to learners' retention in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, the study concluded that the transformational principals have been performing their roles by ensuring that the school environment is conducive for learners and teachers to thrive in. This has been achieved through ensuring that there is the free and open expression of ideas, encouraging teamwork and cooperation, inspiring teachers and learners to participate in various forums aimed at giving them an opportunity to learn from others, and ensuring that they are inspired to be loyal and committed to their works.

Finally, in relation to parental involvement, the study concluded that some principals have been involving the parents in key decision-making in their schools which has led to learners' retention. For example, all the lunch programs, decisions on which facilities and school development areas to be given priority and the general welfare areas of the learners. This has been done through parents' meetings, academic clinics, open forums, PTA meetings, and AGMs.

The data showed that parents were not mainly involved in feeding programs and paying for trips outside the school which led to low retention of learners. Further, in case of incidences

such as handling serious indiscipline incidences, the parents were called to participate. On the issues of school fee payment and motivating the learners, parents were involved effectively.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions the study makes the following recommendations:

- I. Based on the theoretical framework, transformational theory and learner retention theory used in this study was relevant and supported the study, however, the study recommends another theory like system theory which will address the school administrators (principals) in identifying the required administrative strategies for achieving their objectives; school stability which will assist to retain students in schools.
- II. For the policy makers, the study recommends that: the government through its agencies such as the MOE and TSC provide resources on time like finances meant for FSE, learning materials, and infrastructure among others. In addition, the principals to ensure that the learners who absent themselves from school are easily identified by various bodies like the local admiration and be forced to get back to school with their challenges being addressed using all the available best mechanisms.
- III. The government also through various legislation should make it compulsory for the school principals to involve parents in all the forums which are meant to discuss learners' welfare and school development.
- IV. The study included the principals, the teachers, the school board and the various stakeholders, the study recommended that the implementers should ensure that they provide a conducive environment that is secure and favorable for both learning and teaching.

- V. The principals should come up with strategies that give the various stakeholders like teachers, parents and students equal chances of participation in a free, open and fair manner in various decisions meant to increase the students' attendance and retention in schools.
- VI. The principals, the school board and even teachers should source for extra resources like development funds, books and uniforms from various stakeholders and well-wishers to help the school grow and support the needy students for them to be in school.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies**

Based on the findings, the researcher provided the following suggestions for further studies:

- I. A similar study can be carried out in other Sub-County, Counties, or the Country in general. This is based on the fact that education is a basic need and for it to be successful, strategies have to be adopted to minimize absenteeism and dropout rates.
- II. The study focused on four areas of principals' transformational leadership strategies including resource providence, role modeling, parental environment and providence of a conducive environment. This means that there are other strategies like guidance and counseling, management of discipline and pedagogy variables adding up to strategies that need to be examined.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

Dear respondent,

I am a student currently pursuing a master's degree in education at Tangaza University College. I would like to collect data on the strategies adopted by principals' transformational leadership and learner retention in public secondary school, Malindi Sub County, Kilifi County. You have been selected to participate in this study by providing the information required as honestly as possible. Your generous contributions will be highly appreciated. Be assured of confidentiality and that the information will be used for the intended purpose.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

---

Sr. Caroline M. Mwangangi

## APPENDIX II: CONSENT FORM FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

### Introduction

You are invited to participate in the academic research study carried out by Sr. Caroline M. Mwangangi from Tangaza University College under Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi-Kenya. The purpose of the study is to **assess principals; transformational leadership strategies for the retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya**. You have been selected to participate in this study because you are a key stakeholder of school management in Malindi Sub-County.

1. You understand that your participation is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. You can withdraw at any time.
3. Confidentiality of your data will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.
4. The only people who will have access to your information are members of the research team.
5. No information about you or provided by you during the research will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except: if necessary, to protect your rights or welfare, or if required by law.

### Statement of consent

I have read the above information or had the above information read to me. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research.

Signature or thumbprint of participant: .....

Date: .....

Name of the person obtaining the consent: .....

Signature of person obtaining the consent.....

Date: .....

### APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

#### Instructions

Kindly place a tick (✓) in the bracket in front of the appropriate responses and where explanation is needed use the space provided. Answer all questions.

#### SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. Indicate your gender (i) Male ( ) (ii) Female ( )
3. Indicate type of your school.....Mixed school ( ) Boy school ( ) Girl school ( )  
Any other please indicate-----
4. What form are you in? Form 1 ( ) Form 2 ( ) Form 3 ( )

#### SECTION B: Principal's Role Modelling

Kindly rate your principal on how he/she performs the following activities by ticking in the appropriate spaces. **Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (UD) 4= Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

2. Indicate your age bracket (i) 9 -10 years ( ) (ii) 11-14 years ( ) (iii) 15- 18 years ( )

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	UD	A	SA
i	Our principal as role model promotes school motto					
ii	Our principal as a role model tours the school to know what is happening.					
iii	Our principal as role model spends valuable time with us discussing progress and challenges in our studies					
iv	Our principal as role model is admired, trusted and encourages us to promote school values					
v	Our principal as role model clearly understands the vision of the school					
vi	Our principal as role model leads us by example, mentoring and participates in the teaching us					
vii	Our principal as role model attends to our needs					

viii. Briefly state some other ways that your principal serves as a role model in your school.....

.....  
.....

**SECTION C: Principals' provision of learning environment on learner's retention**

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with respect to principals' transformational leadership promotion of learning environment on learner's retention.

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
i	Our principal provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas and beliefs					
ii	Our principal assists students who appear to be neglected to cope with their problems.					
iii	Our principal makes us cooperative rather than compete with one another on learning					
iv	Our principal provides an enabling environment to participate in symposiums and interact with students from other schools					
v	Our principal inspires loyalty and commitment in the school					
vi	Our principal encourages students to support each other in studies					

vii. Briefly explain other ways used by your principal to create a friendly learning environment in your school

.....  
 .....

**SECTION D: Principals' transformational leadership strategies in provision of resources**

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with respect to the following learning resources in your school. Please tick (✓) your answer in the appropriate box. **Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (UD) 4=Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

	<b>Item</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
i	Our principal provides always enough textbooks					
ii	Our principal provides equipped library					
iii	Our principal provides well equipped computer laboratory					
iv	Our principal ensures that students' leaders are involved in making decisions					
v	Our principal ensures teachers' observe time allocated to be in class.					
vi	Principal regularly checks the exercise books					

viii. State any other resources provided by your principal which makes you have interest in learning.....

.....  
 .....

**SECTION E: Principal's parental involvement on learner retention.**

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with respect to the principals' transformational leadership in parental involvement on learners' retention. Please tick (✓) your answer in the appropriate box. **Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (UD) 4=Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	UD	A	SA
i	Our school principal encourages our parents to pay our fees and participate in decision making					
ii	Our principal involves parents to encourage students to stay in school and participate in school activities					
iii	Our principal involve parents to support student's discipline and come to school when required					
iv	Our principal involve parents to contribute and support field trips outside the school.					
v	Our principal involve parents to provide financial support to meet the students' educational needs					
vi	Our principal involve parents to notify the school in case of absenteeism of their students.					
vii	Our principal engages parents in feeding program which encourages retention of student					

viii. Other ways that parents are involved in the school.....  
.....

**Thank you for your patience and cooperation**

## APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

### Instructions

Kindly answer the questions as honestly as you can by ticking (✓) in the brackets or by giving information where appropriate.

### SECTION A: Demographics information

1. Kindly indicate your Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age: 20-25 years ( ) 26-30 years ( ) 31-35 years ( ) 36 and above ( )
3. Highest educational qualification. Diploma ( ) Bachelor's degree ( ) Master degree ( )  
PhD ( )
4. Kindly indicate how long you have been in the teaching profession 0-2 ( ) 2-5 ( ) 5-8 ( )  
Above 8 years ( )

### SECTION B: Principal's Role Modeling

Kindly rate your principal on how he/she performs the following activities by ticking in the appropriate spaces. **1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (AV) 4= Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	UD	A	SA
i	The principal as role model promotes the school motto					
ii	The principal as role model goes around the school to know what is happening					
iii	The principal as role model spends valuable time with the both students and teachers					
iv	The principal as role model presides over major school assembly.					
v	The principal as role model encourages teachers to promote the school vision					
vi	I feel challenged by the performance of the principal as role model					
vii	I feel highly encouraged by the actions of the principal as role model					

viii. Briefly state some other ways that your principal serves as a role model in your school.....  
.....

**SECTION C: Principals’ transformational leadership strategies in providing learning environment on learners’ retention.**

The following statement shows the different ways that principals as transformational leaders perform their duties. Show your views on whether the principal performs these duties by ticking the (✓) the appropriate box. The scale is arranged in ascending order in terms of scores, with **1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. 1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (UD) 4= Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	UD	A	SA
i	The principal provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas and beliefs					
ii	The principal assists teachers who appear to be neglected to cope with their problems					
iii	The principal motivates teachers leave out in order to perform well.					
iv	The principal highly inspires learners by maintaining manageable number of students per class.					
v	The principal provides an enabling environment to participate in symposiums and interact with teachers from other schools					
vi	The principal always gives me assurance that things will be good when we face challenges.					
vii	The principal ensures that the school environment is good for teaching.					

viii. Briefly explain other ways used by your principal to create a friendly learning environment in your school.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION D: Principals’ strategy of resource provision**

Please tick (✓) your answer in the appropriate box using the following **5-** point scale, such that the scale is in ascending order in terms of score, 5 being the highest score.

**1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (UD) 4= Agree (A)**

**5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	UD	A	SA
i	The principal budgets on the financial resources needed.					
ii	The principal consults teachers about the textbooks needed for to maintain learners in school.					
iii	The principal as human resource involves teachers in making decisions on how to improve performance and student retention					
iv	The principal provides IT resources for teaching					
v	The principal regularly checks and the classroom record of work					

vi. State any other resources provided by your principal which makes you have interest in learning.....

#### **SECTION E: Principals' parental involvement on learner retention.**

Please tick (✓) your answer in the appropriate box using the following **5-** point scale, such that the scale is in ascending order in terms of score, 5 being the highest score. **1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Undecided (UD) 4= Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	UD	A	SA
i	The principal involves the parents to be supportive in feeding and encouraging dropouts to return to school					
ii	The principal involves the parents in encouraging students to stay in school and participating in school activities					
iii	The principal involves the parents in support of student's discipline.					
iv	The principal involves the parents to come to school when they are required					
v	The principal involves the parents to contribute and support field trips outside the school					
vi	The principal involves the parents to meet the educational needs of their students by providing textbooks, uniforms and other financial support					
vii	The principal involves the parents to notify the school in case of absenteeism of their students.					

viii. State other ways that parents are involved in the school.....

**Thank you for your patience and cooperation**



## **APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PRINCIPALS**

### **SECTION A: Personal Information (Demographics)**

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age bracket: 26-30 years ( ) 31-35 ( ) 36-40 years ( ) 40 years and over ( )
3. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
4. Kindly state how long you have been in a principal..... year(s)

### **SECTION B: Principals' role modeling**

5. How does your Teacher Service Commission (TSC) expects from you in terms of absenteeism, vision and mission as role model to enhance learner retention .....
6. As a role model, where do you think your role modeling have influenced retention of learners? .....

### **SECTION C: Principals' provision of learning environment on learner's retention**

7. What is your views about the learning environment in your school?
8. How does it enhance students' retention?

### **SECTION D: Principals' transformational leadership strategies in providing of resources**

9. What are some of the resources do you have in your school?
10. What are some of the plans have you put in place to increase the resources in your school and how has that led to students' retention.
11. What are some of strategies do you use in equipping the library, providing food in Compound and is it well kept in your school that influences retention of students in your school?

### **SECTION E: Principals' parental involvement on learner retention**

12. How do you involve the parents in school activities and how do that help in retention of learners? Do they are cooperative? Do they turn-up in large numbers? Or they do not come at all; very few come
13. What are some of the challenges do you get while contacting the parents?
14. What is your role in helping parents to get involved in their students studies to see the value of completing their education.....

**Thank you for your response**

**APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SUB COUNTY DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATION**

**SECTION A: Demographic Information**

1. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Professional qualification \_\_\_\_\_
4. Years of experience in this job \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you worked in this Sub-County? \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B: Principals' role modeling**

6. How do the principals deal with issues in regard to role modeling as Teacher Service Commission (TSC) expects from any school principal in terms of vision and mission, absenteeism .....

**SECTION C: Principals' provision of learning environment on learner's retention**

8. What are some of policies the principals have established in schools that promotes retention of students and good relationship of principals, teachers and students.....

**SECTION D: Principals' strategies in provision of resources**


9. What are some of the resources available in schools the principals provide that influences retention of students .....
10. What do principals do in terms of providing the needed resources.....  
.....

**SECTION E: Principals' parental involvement on learner retention**

11. What has the principals done to encourage parents to directly be involved in the education of their student in order to complete their education.....
13. What actions are taken by the principals to encourage parental involvement in terms of creating learning home environment, time of events and working?

**Thank you for your response.**

## APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM TUC

 **TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES  
E-mail: [dir.pgsr@tangaza.ac.ke](mailto:dir.pgsr@tangaza.ac.ke) Website: [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)

OUR Ref: DPGSR/ER/07/2021 Date: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Caroline Mueni Mwangangi  
Christ the Teacher Institute for Education  
School of Education  
Tangaza University College

Dear Caroline,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORISATION FOR CAROLINE M. MWANGANGI, REG. NO. CMLA1801**


Reference is made to your letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 requesting for ethical clearance of your research proposal to carry out a study on "*Principals' transformational leadership strategies for retention of learners in public secondary schools in Malindi Sub-County, Kenya*".

I am pleased to inform you that, your research proposal has been reviewed and found to conform to ethics in research. You are advised to submit your proposal to the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for the research permit and further guidance before commencing the data collection exercise for your study. You are also advised to adhere to the code of ethics of protection of human subjects during the entire process of your study.

This approval is valid for one year from **1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**.

Please, ensure that after the data analysis and final write up, you submit a soft copy of the thesis to the Director of Post-Graduate Studies - Tangaza University College for records purposes.

Yours sincerely,


  
**DANIEL M. KITONGA (Ph.D.)**  
*Director, Post-Graduate Studies*  
Tangaza University College

CC: Sr. Dr. Kinikonda Okemasisi - Programme Leader, M.Ed (CTIE).

P.O. Box 15055 - 00509 Langata, Nairobi Kenya  
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Email: [inquiries@tangaza.ac.ke](mailto:inquiries@tangaza.ac.ke)  
Website: [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)

## APPENDIX VIII: RECOMMENDATION LETTER FROM TUC



**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES**  
E-mail: [dir.pgsr@tangaza.ac.ke](mailto:dir.pgsr@tangaza.ac.ke) Website: [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)

**OUR Ref:** DPGS/ER/07/2021**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021

To The Commission Secretary,  
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
P.O. Box 30623,  
Nairobi – Kenya.

Dear Sir/Madam,


**Re: Recommendation for Research Permit for Caroline Mueni Mwangangi**

This is to confirm that the person named in this letter is a student at Tangaza University College (TUC). She is registered at the Christ the Teacher Institute for Education (Reg. No CMLA1801) and she is pursuing a M. Ed. in Educational Leadership and Administration.

Caroline has met all our provisional academic requirements leading to data collection. However, she cannot proceed to the field before getting a Research Permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Kindly assist her to process the permit for the same purpose.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation

Yours sincerely,








**Daniel M. Kitonga (Ph.D.)**  
*Director, Post-Graduate Studies*

**CC:**  
Sr. Dr. Kinikonda Okemasisi – Programme Leader, M.Ed. (CTIE)

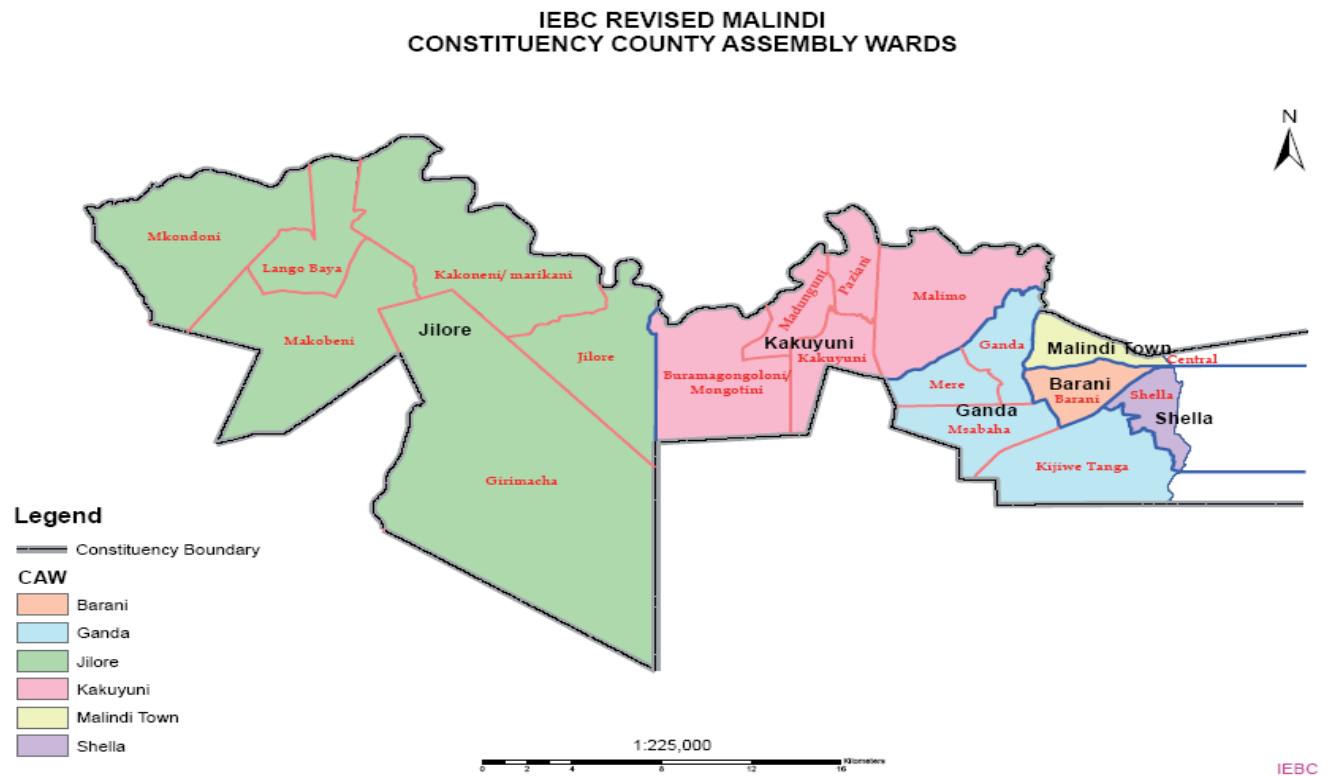
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Email: [inquiries@tangaza.ac.ke](mailto:inquiries@tangaza.ac.ke)  
Website: [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)

## APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LICENSE

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p><b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b></p>
<p>RefNo: <b>298644</b></p>	<p>Date of Issue: <b>12/July/2021</b></p>
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<p><b>This is to Certify that Sr. CAROLINE MUENI MWANGANGI of Tangaza University College, has been licensed to conduct research in Kilifi on the topic: PRINCIPALS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR RETENTION OF LEARNERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALINDI SUBCOUNTY KENYA for the period ending : 12/July/2022.</b></p>	
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## APPENDIX X: MAP OF THE STUDY AREA



Source: [www.mapsofworld.com](http://www.mapsofworld.com) retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022



## APPENDIX XI: PLAGIARISM REPORT

8/30/22, 1:40 PM

Turnitin

**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,**  
Catholic University of Eastern Africa,  
Chief Librarian  
P. O. Box 15055,  
00509 - Nairobi.

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[Izhak Berkovich, "School leaders and transformational leadership theory: time to part ways?", Journal of Educational Administration, 2016](#)

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CHAPTER ONE 1.0 Introduction The chapter presents the background information to the study, the problem statement, the general and specific objectives, the research questions, the scope, the significance and delimitation of the study. The section also discusses theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study, and finally the operational definitions of the terms as used in the study. 1.1 Background to the Study Leadership is a key function of administration that helps to create better productivity in accomplishing any organizational goals (Management Study Guide, 2017). Different authors, such as Burns (1978), Bass (1985) and Leithwood (2018), among others, have advocated for transformational leadership. Transformational leadership focuses on the individual person and encourages the followers to use all their potential in bringing about success. Transformational leaders seek to change those they lead by representing sustainable and self-replicating leadership. Their leadership is likely to impact learner retention (McCarley, 2016). According to Balwant (2016), school principals' leadership refers to the way the principals plan, organize and control secondary institutions. In order to run and maintain the retention of learners in secondary schools, the principals' leadership is crucial. Burns (1978) first used the term transformational leadership to describe a process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" Palgrave Macmillan, Cham (pp. 243-259). Bass (1985) extended the work of Burns (1978) by defining four transformational leadership dimensions as idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Berkovich, 2016; McCarley et al., 2016). Leithwood's work in the (1980s) and (1990s) extended the concept to schools as he began to explore the model as the opportunity to move beyond "instructional leadership", which was and remains the prevalent model of the time. Since transformational leadership involves change, it is very useful in schools. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2018), the concept of a leader's commitment to moral and personal values is essential in bringing about institutional change through teamwork to attain retention of learners in schools. Similarly, transformational principals are individuals who are change- oriented, inspiring, good communicators and act as role models. Likewise, they empower teachers and parents to perform better through training, developing and providing an enabling learning environment for the students (Leithwood, 2018). In addition to that, principals' transformational leadership emphasizes on the development of school visions and missions. Besides, Wiyono (2017) emphasized on improvement of motivation and empowerment of the personnel as well as optimum achievement of the schools' goals hence retention of learners. Scholars Leithwood, (2018), Duke, (2020) and Berkovich, (2016) pointed out that principals' leadership is one of the aspects that determine the students' retention and success. Retention of students in public secondary schools has been quite a priority globally. For instance, in Canada, high school retention has been on the increase from 11% to nearly 14% between the year 2000 to 2012 (Duke, 2020). This was because the government of Canada, by empowering principals' transformational leadership, have put in place a stay in school program with broader economic and

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