

## Abstract

Education is essential for achieving success. This study aimed to examine the impact of institution-based practices regarding the use of learning materials on student academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in public secondary schools located in Makueni County, Kenya. The research was grounded in Path-goal Theory and employed a descriptive research design. The target population included 380 public secondary schools, 380 principals, 1,520 teachers, and 1,140 student leaders. A combination of simple random sampling, stratified sampling, and purposive sampling techniques was utilized to determine the sample size. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to principals, teachers, and student leaders, while scheduled interviews were exclusively conducted with the principals. The validity of the research instruments was verified by experts from the School of Education, and reliability was assessed using the test-retest method. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which facilitated the generation of descriptive statistics and the application of the chi-square test. The analysis involved frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 level of significance using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient based on the study objectives, leading to conclusions and recommendations. The study found a high correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.62, indicating that the availability of learning materials in public secondary schools in Makueni County positively influences student performance in KCSE. The study recommended that the Kenyan government, through the Ministry of Education, should ensure the provision of necessary instructional materials and establish child-friendly schools by offering financial and logistical support. Furthermore, the study emphasized that while motivation and leadership play significant roles, they must be supported by adequate resources that enhance teaching and learning. As noted by various stakeholders, students are eager to learn; however, their efforts are often hindered by insufficient tools to assist them in their academic pursuits. Addressing this issue is not only a managerial responsibility but also a critical policy imperative.