

## Contribution of principals' Stress on their Work Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Kisumu County, Kenya.

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### Abstract

Globally, stress problem has become a concern in the management of public secondary schools. The majority of the principals are often stressed to the point that they decide to quite being principals, others commit suicide while some of them sometimes sleep on their jobs. Stress comes about when the principal is subjected to unusual situations such as indiscipline among the students, lack of enough teachers, and work overload due to ever changing administrative roles in schools. Principals who are stressed cannot manage their schools effectively, hence there is need to examine the contribution of principals' stress in their work performance in schools. The objective of this study was to examine the contribution of principals' stress on their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. The study adopted the Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS) developed by Levine Ursin (1991). The target population was two hundred and twenty principals, two hundred and twenty deputy principals and seven Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) in the county. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools, while purposive, stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to select both principals and the deputy principals in various categories of schools. Saturated sampling technique was used to select Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Instruments for data collection included questionnaire, document analysis and interview schedule. Questionnaire was used to collect information from both principals and the deputy principals and interview schedule was used to collect data from the Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Document analysis was employed to gather information about the principals' transfers, category of schools and performance of the students in the national examinations from the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education department respectively. The research design was descriptive survey that used qualitative analysis and quantitative statistics in analyzing the data. The results were presented qualitatively into emerging themes and then reported in verbatim form, while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean, percentage and standard deviation using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Programme (SPSS). The study established that the major contribution of stress on principals' work in their stations include ineffective administrative work ( $M = 3.89, SD = 0.907$ ), teachers working under stressed principals are also stressed ( $M = 3.89, SD = 0.791$ ), poor development of schools ( $M = 3.82, SD = 0.878$ ), poor relationship between the school and other stakeholders ( $M = 3.76, SD = 1.035$ ), poor performance in KCSE exams ( $M = 3.63, SD = 1.012$ ), at times leads to the achievement of some objectives ( $M = 3.45, SD = 0.970$ ) and demoralizes other people from joining teaching profession ( $M = 3.35, SD = 1.269$ ) respectively. The study recommended that the government of Kenya through (TSC) should employ more trained counselors and locate them at strategic places like schools, within each sub-county to help principals in solving stress issues and request for more funds from developed countries to build more hospitals, train and employ more doctors to treat teachers, principals and other people who suffer from stress related diseases such as cancer and hypertension since 80% of the diseases are caused by stress.

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

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### I. Introduction and Literature Review

The term stress is defined in different ways by various scholars and researchers. Brimm (2001) describes stress as any action or situation that places physical or psychological demands on an individual. Kyriacou (2001) also describes stress as negative emotion, such as anger, anxiety, frustration or depression resulting from some negative aspects of one's work as an employee. Further, Yambo, Kindiki and Tuitoek (2012) state that the term stress is undue pressure put on someone, which is beyond his/her coping abilities. Therefore, stress is viewed as pressure or worry caused by the problems in somebody's life (Turnbull et al., 2010). Similarly, Bett (2016) also states that accumulated stress may lead to burnout. Burnout is the condition of someone who is mentally, emotionally or physically exhausted from demands of jobs. The medical dictionary (2012) further add that people with burnout do not have adequate skills to cope or to adapt to what is causing the

burnout. Burnout is most frequently measured using Maslach's Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout is mediated through various active and passive coping mechanisms and is a result of the accumulation of positive and negative oriented emotional responses that have risen through coping mechanisms.

Wells (2013) reports that stress has been identified as the greatest obstacle to achieving goals in life. Stress may cause fear in an individual which may lead the capacity to derail people on their track and reduce defeat regularly (Kimani, 2015). In 2008, report from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics in USA, revealed that the increasing demand placed on principals lead to a greater stress. It was reported that 35 percent of the 415,000 education administrators in the United States worked more than 40 hours per week (United States Bureau of labor, 2008). Yambo et al. (2012) asserts that principals of public secondary schools are also stressed up to the point that some of them have committed suicide, quitted the teaching profession while others continue to be leaders of their schools but sleep on their jobs (Yambo, et al., 2012). According to Campbell et al. (2007), the 12 A team carried out a research in USA on how stress affect leadership with 230 respondents (principals), they found out that eighty eight percent (88%) of leaders reported that too much work was a primary source of stress in their lives and that having a leadership role increases the level of stress (Campbell, et al., 2007). The team further found that more than two-thirds of surveyed leaders believed that their stress level was higher than it was five years ago (Campbell et al., 2007). This finding concurs with that of Philips, Sen and McNamee (2007) who found that secondary school principals have a higher level of stress when working with students discipline and allocating educational resources. The causes of stress that were most reported included parents, workload, government initiatives and time frame for changes (Philips, et al., 2007).

A report on secondary education by the World Bank (1999) revealed that the education system, the world over have been ineffective and have failed to address the matter of principals' stress and burnout in secondary schools. This failure has led to less effort towards building a stronger human resource base which is not valuable for schools' development. Therefore, it is important for this study to examine how stress contribute on principals' work performance in schools. In Kenya, secondary school principals have been experiencing some challenges such as students' unrest, bullying among students, poor performance of the students, low salary payment, and frequent uncalled for transfers which are quite unpleasant and cause stress to the principals (Abuga, 2018). For instance, poor performance in KCSE in Kisumu County for six consecutive years is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. KCSE Performance from 2011 to 2017 in Kisumu County.**  
Students who Obtained Grade C+ and above

Year	Total No. of candidates	Candidates with C+ and above	Percentage	Mean grade
2011	10695	3996	37.36	5.751
2012	12190	4361	35.78	5.637
2013	12425	4450	35.81	5.814
2014	13373	5695	42.59	6.167
2015	13319	6201	46.56	6.352
2016	15573	2734	17.56	4.378
2017	16343	2269	13.88	4.025

Source: County Education Office, Kisumu (2018).

Table 1 indicates that the number of candidates who sat for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination from 2011 to 2017 in Kisumu County. There is a clear indication that the number of the enrolled candidates has been increasing tremendously while the number of the candidates who scored grade C+ and above keeps on decreasing and more so below average. The candidates who scored grade C+ and above are normally considered as bright students and they are being selected to join universities under the government sponsorship. Table 1 also reveals that the performance mean grade has also been below average except in the year 2014 and 2015 when the mean grade increased to 6.168% and 6.352% respectively. When the number of candidates who perform well in the national examination continuously decreases while that of low performance increases in the learning institutions, there is a clear indication that some problems might have occurred that need to be solved. Poor performance of the students may demoralize the school principals in their work performance and this may inflict stress among them.

The survey conducted by the Teachers Service Commission in Kenya, revealed that poor performance of the students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination has been caused by; teachers who have poor mastery of their subjects that they teach, some teachers cannot keep their professional records in order, poor time management, poor planning of organizational activities, low financial literacy and behavioral attributes among the teachers (Oduor, 2008).

A survey report, conducted in 2016 / 2017 by Trendy Consulting International Limited, on customer and employees satisfaction, revealed that principals and teachers of secondary schools are unhappy due to lack of motivation and low pay despite putting more effort into their work (Education Staff Reporter, 2017). The

report further found that teacher promotions as per the laid down policy and scheme of service is not appealing to the majority of principals since they have observed anomalies when it comes to upgrading of teachers. That is, there is unfairness, lack of transparency or lack of professionalism in the recruitment of teachers and the deployment of the principals across the counties. This kind of situation triggers stress among the school principals in the country.

### **How to manage stress**

Koome (2007) argued that learning to control responses of stress and to get out of one's own way, has saved companies' money, increased production, encouraged creativity, enables teams to communicate more effectively, reduced the anxieties which surround the process of change, increased the pace of professional learning and development and even reduced accidents and harassment claims. Any organization needs to save money, reduce turn over, increase sales and productivity or improve the quality of work life. It should give consideration to the return on investment of stress management coaching or training.

It has been observed that some principals who are stressed resort to bullying of the employees. Hoe et al. (1999) surveyed English teachers and found out that 35% reported to have been bullied by their managers (principals) in the last 5 years, as opposed to an average of 24% across all occupational sectors. Cooper interpreted this in terms of principals failing to cope with work load and resorting to bullying as a maladaptive coping strategy. According to Ryan et al. (2015), principals can manage stress by keeping "praise files" for keeping positive note from parents, students, colleagues and other school stakeholders. When the principal is stressed, he or she will refer to the file, read the appreciated notes and feel relieved of stress. Praise file is also known as kudos file. The level of stress may also be reduced by getting involved in leisure activities. He further explains that leisure satisfactions are the positive feeling of contentment that results from meeting personal needs through leisure activities. A way of relieving stress is to participate in leisure activities outside the formal working environment which include engaging in a hobby, exercising, trying out new things just for the fun of it and can help increase relaxation prior to tackling a particularly difficult task. When the principal is engaging in a leisure activity, he/she should be fully engaged in leisure activity so that he/she can experience the highest emotional of leisure satisfaction. The purpose is defeated if the principal/manager is still obsessing or stressing about while engaging in leisure activity Ryan et al. (2015).

Stress can also be managed by the principals through proper time management. This means that the school principals should ensure that school block-time table is prepared on time to guide the teachers and the students on what time to teach and learn respectively. He/she should schedule his/her daily activities in school to ensure that each and every activity is attended to. Time management is a cluster of behaviors and that facilitate productivity. Ryan et al. (2015) state that principals who are good planners can eliminate stress easily. The principal can break down larger tasks into smaller ones and creativity and schedule for achieving each small task, makes things more manageable (Ryan et al., 2015 & Kimani, 2015). One study showed that females are better at managing their time than males and felt in better control, set and prioritized goals, and use organized approaches to tasks and work space. It is interesting to note that even though females had a better approach of time management, they still experienced more "self-imposed" stress than males because they do sweat, stuttered, and experience more headaches often due to stress than males. Delegation of duty is also another way of managing stress by school principals. Social support is the way of being assisted by others at work. The principal should seek help from other staff members, BOM, parents, committee, sponsors and Ministry of Education in order to run their schools well. If the main stakeholders cannot give social support to the principal, then he /she will experience more stress (Fullan, 2001).

### **Effects of stress**

According to Powell and Cheshire (2004), the National Union of Teachers reported that stress is one of the biggest problem facing principals today and that it is the main health and safety concern in four out of five schools. Compared to other occupational groups (such as doctors, dentists, nurses), teachers experience low job satisfaction and poor mental health. Stress may show some signs in a person and also affects the work he or she does. Fullan (2001) explains how principals are expected to do so much work with so much less resources. It is for this reason that so many school administrators are abandoning administrative positions while others quit the profession. Robin (2010) adds that principals leave teaching profession prematurely due to extreme anxiety, depression and pressures caused by ever changing educational standards, evolving technological advances and various external issues. As these principals quit the profession, the teachers who are working under them are also demoralized in their work. This results into lack of commitment and poor attitude towards teaching, hence leading to poor performance of students in KCSE exams. Cosgrove (2000) asserts that teachers quit the profession prematurely as their principals do. This results into shortage of teachers, causing poor coverage of the syllabus. This leads to poor relationship with other school stakeholders such as Parents Teachers Association (PTA), the community, education officers hence lack of support towards school's development.

A study by Peltzer et al. (2009), on the relationship between job stress and stress related illnesses among teachers in South Africa, revealed that educators suffered from extremely high level of stress and that stress can be linked to an array of physiological conditions such as Gastrointestinal tract problems, sleeping disorders, cardiovascular diseases, strokes, asthma, confusion and high blood pressure among others. This finding concurs with that of National Association of Head Teachers (2000) which found that 40% of the respondents reported having problems of stress in the previous year, 20% considered that they drank too much and 15% believed that they were alcoholics 25% suffered from serious stress related health problems including hypertension insomnia, depression and gastrointestinal disorders. It has been observed that 80% of all modern diseases originate from stress (Peltzer et al., 2009). When the principal is suffering from one or more of these diseases, automatically he/she will not perform the duties of the school well. A sick principal may get involved into laissez – faire kind of leadership. That is, the principal may not be held accountable for the school issues, fail to make decisions and absent himself/herself from school without the consent of the school administration (Fleet, 1988). This finding concurs with that of Hoogh and Hartog (2009) who posited that principals who are overly stressed often have difficulty in producing quality education which can impact students' learning in a negative way. They further explain that burnout can have consequences that are negative and detrimental for the organization and their employees. Some of these consequences may include decreased job productivity, reduced job commitment, increased absenteeism and job attrition which may lead to greater job turn-over rates which negatively impact the entire organizational structure of the school and its stakeholders.

Fullan (2001) states that successful leadership is marked by leaders who are enthusiastic. He further identified five components of leaders who can successfully impact change. The five components include moral purpose, knowledge building, understanding change, relationship and coherence making. However, a stressful principal will not fulfill all these requirements, since he/she becomes hopeless, lack physiological stamina and energy and not enthusiastic in nature. This kind of behaviour will lead into low quality of management of schools and quitting from leadership. Dubrin (2006) argues that stress can be productive for everyone when given in moderation and is disastrous when it is extremely high since it causes stress related diseases which may lead to the poor health and death of employees.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report, about 30 percent of death are due to five leading behavioral and dietary risks such as high body mass index, low fruit and vegetables intake, lack of physical activity, tobacco and alcohol use, cancer – causing viral infections are responsible for up to 20% of cancer deaths in low and middle-income countries (Jamah, 2014). Speaking on the economics of cancer, the head of the Health in Africa Initiative and the lead specialist at the International Finance Co-operation said that cancer kills more people than HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined (Jamah, 2014). The international cancer conference in Nairobi noted that cancer is caused by stress thus; stress needs to be prevented at all cost. Therefore, the government has planned to set aside sh. 3.4 billion each year for cancer screening to boost the fight against the killer disease, thus there is need to expand care services in Kenya by contracting more centers in the country. On this notion, the head of Nairobi, cancer registry at the Kenya Medical Research Institute stressed the need to advocate for more resources to support Cancer Registries in the country.

Stress also leads to depression, which is a killer disease in the world (Mugambi, 2019). According to the scientist Dr. Mugambi, (2019), today 350 million people suffer from depression with effect on work, socialization, school and families. At worst, depression can lead to suicide, with 800,000 people taking their lives annually (Mugambi, 2019). Depressed men, teachers inclusive, are four times more likely to commit suicide than depressed women. This means that in many respects, men fair worse than women in health. That is, one woman in 8 men will experience depression of same stage of their lives, yet the cases are under-reported (Mugambi, 2019). The rising rate of suicide, murder and other crimes globally, is a clear indication how society is struggling with depression. Depression is treatable with talking therapies, cognitive behavioral therapy, behavioral activation or anti-depressant medication or a combination of them. The classic presentation of depression is deep sadness, lethargy, and change in appetite, sleeping pattern changes, anxiety, reduced concentration, indecisiveness, guilt, hopelessness, and thoughts of self-harm (Mugambi, 2019). Men mask or deny the symptoms and are more likely to experience “stealth” depression symptoms, including mood fluctuation, feeling aggressive, hostile or irritable fights, dangerous driving, compulsive gambling, drug abuse, isolation and low libido. Other commonly overlooked signs of depression in men are backache, headache, insomnia, sexual dysfunction or engaging in unsafe sex (Mugambi, 2019).

### **Causes of stress**

Mugambi (2019) reports also that the causes of depression are complex and diverse, including genetic and personality factors, adverse life experiences and life stressors. Some of the triggers to depression in men include stress at work, at home, relationship problems, health problems, family responsibilities, financial constraints, retirement and loss of independence, death of a loved one, poor coping skills, impotence or erectile dysfunction, alcohol or drug abuse and childhood trauma (Mugambi, 2019).

He explains that Masculinity plays an important role in depression. That is, the society's confusion over what define masculinity creates unnecessary pressure on men. There is a perception that men should be tough, self-reliant and in control of their emotions. Boys hear such similar statements while growing up and internalize them. In their adulthood as men, they struggle to find a place in a society which expects them to be "real men" but also be "emotionally sensitive". These stereotype motions compounded with stigma associated with having mental illness make it difficult for depressed make to seek help.

However, Mugambi (2019) believes that depressed school principals, especially males can be helped through, early identification of depression and go for treatment, seeking help from relatives, workmates and friends who may contact the clinicians and should also accompany them for such appointments. Principals who are depressed still need other help such as offering support, and encouragement. Comments about suicide by the depressed principal should not be ignored, as they may turn to be real, hence needed to be taken into consideration, joint physical and social activities and reporting any concerns about side effects of depression (Mugambi, 2019).

For depressed men, self-help steps include; seeking professional help, social support, eating healthy, reducing intake of caffeine, alcohol and foods with high levels of chemicals preservatives or hormones, eating more omega 3 fatty acids and other foods, rich in mood-enhancing nutrients such as bananas and spinach. These are some of the strategies that an individual principal may apply to curb stress in any kind of environment. It is advisable that people should challenge negative thinking and they should remember that, thoughts are not facts. More so together, our voices can fight that real men do not talk about their troubles. In doing so, we can usher in a positive conversation to replace the long standing, detrimental silence on depression in men (Mugambi, 2019).

With all that has been discussed and reviewed above, it was evident that no research focused on the contribution of principals' stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County. Therefore, it was against this information that the researcher intended to establish the contribution of principals' stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County.

### **Statement of the problem**

Principals in public secondary schools face a lot of challenges in the leadership of their schools that sometimes put a lot of demand and pressure on their work and sometimes make one to be stressed up, become moody, sick and not able to perform administrative work effectively (Fullan, 2001). Yet, the majority of school principals are not aware of the contribution of their stress in their work performance at schools. (Wells, 2013) postulates that leaders of organizations should be aware of the effects of their stress on the job that they do, so that they may try to avoid and control it by all means for quality work. However, due to lack of information on how principals' stress contribute on their work performance in schools, there was need to examine contribution of principals' stress in their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya.

### **Objective of the Study**

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

## **II. Methodology**

The study used descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design depicts the state of affairs as it exists (Kothari, 2004). Orodho (2008) also noted that descriptive survey allows the researcher to collect information, summarize, interpret and present for the purpose of clarification by interview or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals. This research design was also suitable for the study because the researcher was not able to have control over the variables and only reported what had happened in the field. Consequently, research design was chosen for the study due to the fact that it was appropriate for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents. The research design was employed in the study because it enabled the researcher to describe the contribution of principals' stress on their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County.

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

The study was conducted in Kisumu County which comprised of 7 sub-counties namely; Nyakach, Muhoroni, Nyando, Kisumu East, Kisumu Central, Kisumu West and Seme. Kisumu County is situated within nyanza region, Kenya. The study was carried out in Kisumu County because it is an area in which some principals have quitted principal ship due to stress, have also suffered and died of stress related diseases such as cancer and diabetes (Wanzala, 2015). Population of the study comprised of 220 principals, 220 deputy principals and 7 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SQASOs) in Kisumu County. The sample size was obtained from the population based on 30% of the respondents who participated in the study.

These participants were selected for the study because they have reliable information about principals' stress in public schools in the region. Population of the study is displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Study Population**

Population	Number
Principals	220
Deputy Principals	220
SCQASOs	7
Total	447

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

Kumar (2011) states that a sample is a sub-set of a population for the study. The sample size for the principals and the deputy principals was calculated proportionately using 30% of each category of the respondents, as agreed by Mugenda and Mugenda (2009). Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to sample 66 principals and 66 deputy principals of public secondary schools. Saturated sampling method was also employed to sample 7 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SQASOs) for the study because their number was small and could be well managed in the study (Cozby, 2001). Therefore, the total number of all sampled participants in the study was 139. The sampled participants in the study is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Population Sample**

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

### Instruments for Data Collection

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

### Questionnaire

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

### Principals' Questionnaire

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

### Interview Schedule

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

### Document Analysis

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

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

### **Data Analysis**

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

#### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

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

#### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

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

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### **Contribution of principals' Stress on their Work Performance in Public Secondary Schools**

The study sought to determine the contribution of principals' stress on their work performance in public secondary schools in Kisumu County. In order to determine this aspect, the study adopted the use of thirteen itemized-likert scale questionnaire that was administered to the principals. The specific aspects of stress that were assessed include; quitting the teaching profession, poor performance in KCSE examination, demoralizing people from the teaching profession, ineffective performance in administrative duties, committing suicide, poor public relation, poor development of school projects and students drop out. Using the responses; Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) or Strongly Disagree (1), the principals were asked to rate by ticking the most appropriate degree to which they agree or disagree to the statements based on the actual situation in their schools. The response of the principals were then analyzed in form of descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation, and presented in Table 4.

**Table 4 : Views of Principals on Contribution of Stress on their Work Performance**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Stress leads to quitting teaching profession.	10(16.1%)	18(29.0%)	8(12.9%)	16(25.8%)	10(16.1%)	2.97	1.367
It makes principals drop their leadership positions.	4(6.5%)	22(35.5%)	8(12.9%)	20(32.3%)	8(12.9%)	3.10	1.211
It leads to poor performance in KCSE exams.	2(3.2%)	10(16.1%)	5(8.1%)	37(59.7%)	8(12.9%)	3.63	1.012
It demoralizes other people from joining teaching profession.	6(9.7%)	14(22.6%)	4(6.5%)	28(45.2%)	10(16.1%)	3.35	1.269
It leads to death of principals.	5(8.1%)	13(21.0%)	9(14.5%)	27(43.5%)	8(12.9%)	3.32	1.184
It leads to ineffective performance in administrative work.	1(1.6%)	5(8.1%)	8(12.9%)	34(54.8%)	14(22.6%)	3.89	.907
It may lead to the commitment of suicide by the school principals	10(16.1%)	16(25.8%)	11(17.7%)	20(32.3%)	5(8.1%)	2.90	1.251
It leads to Laissez - fare kind of leadership style.	7(11.3%)	18(29.0%)	11(17.7%)	21(33.9%)	5(5.1%)	2.98	1.194
It leads to poor relationship between the school and other stakeholders.	4(6.5%)	4(6.5%)	6(9.7%)	37(59.7%)	11(17.7%)	3.76	1.035
Teachers working under stressed principals will also be stressed	1(1.6%)	4(6.5%)	5(8.1%)	43(69.4%)	9(14.5%)	3.89	.791
It leads to poor development of school projects.	2(3.2%)	4(6.5%)	6(9.7%)	41(66.1%)	9(14.5%)	3.82	.878
At times, stress may lead to the achievement of some objectives	3(4.8%)	8(12.9%)	13(21.0%)	34(54.8%)	4(6.5%)	3.45	.970

**Key: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree and SD-Standard Deviation.**

**Source: Survey data (2019)**

Table 4 indicates that 10(16.1%) principals strongly disagreed and 18(29.0%) disagreed with the statement that stress leads to quitting teaching profession while 8(12.9%) principals were undecided, 16(25.8%) agreed and 10(16.1%) strongly agreed that stress leads to quitting the teaching profession. Therefore, suggesting that the principals' stress level moderately contributed to principals quitting teaching profession, since 28(45.1%) principals disagreed and 26(44.9%) agreed, with the mean rating of 2.97 at a standard deviation of 1.367.

The research findings in Table 4 indicates that 4(6.5%) principals strongly disagreed, 22(35.5%) disagreed, 8(12.9%) undecided, 20(32.3%) agreed and 8(12.9%) strongly agreed that stress leads to principals dropping their position of leadership. This indicates that in total 26(42.0%) principals disagreed while 28(45.2%) agreed with the construct that stress led the principals to drop their leadership positions. The mean rating of 3.10 at a standard deviation of 1.211 shows that principals' stress level moderately lead to principals dropping their position of leadership.

The findings in Table 4 indicate that 2(3.2%) principals strongly disagreed, 10(16.1%) disagreed, 5(8.1%) undecided, 37(59.7%) agreed and 8(12.9%) strongly agreed that stress leads to poor performance in KCSE examinations. This implied, 45(72.6%) principals in total agreed that principals' stress level highly contributed to students' poor performance in examination at a mean rating of 3.63 and standard deviation of 1.012.

Further explanation of the findings displayed in Table 4 indicates that 6(9.7%) principals strongly disagreed, 14(22.6%) disagreed, 4(6.5%) undecided, 28(45.2%) agreed and 10(16.1%) strongly agreed that principals' stress demoralizes others from joining teaching profession. In total, 38(61.3%) principals agreed that stress could demoralize other people from joining teaching profession while 20(32.3%) disagreed. The mean rating of 3.35 at a standard deviation of 1.269 meant the principals' stress level moderately demoralized others from joining teaching profession.

Similarly, Table 4 indicates that 5(8.1%) principals strongly disagreed, 13(21.0%) disagreed, 9(14.5%) undecided, 27(43.5%) agreed and 8(12.9%) strongly disagreed with the construct that stress can lead to principals' death. A total of 35(56.4%) supported the view that stress moderately leads to death of principals at a mean rating of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 1.184.

Table 4 also shows that 1(1.6%) principals strongly disagreed, 5(8.1%) disagreed, 8(12.9%) undecided, 34(54.8%) agreed and 14(22.6%) strongly disagreed with the construct that stress can lead to ineffective performance in administrative work. The statistics indicates that a total of 48(77.4%) principals were of the view



that stress highly leads to ineffective performance in administrative work at a mean rating of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.907.

At the same time, the results displays in Table 4 shows that 10(16.1%) principals strongly disagreed, 16(25.8%) disagreed, 11(17.7%) undecided, 20(32.3%) agreed and 5(8.1%) strongly agreed that stress may compel a principal to commit suicide. In total, 26(41.9%) principals disagreed while 25(40.4%) agreed. However, the mean rating of 2.90 at a standard deviation of 1.251 suggest that stress could moderately compel a principal to commit suicide.

Further research findings in Table 4 indicate that 7(11.3%) principals strongly disagreed, 18(29.0%) disagreed, 11(17.7%) undecided, 21(33.9%) agreed and 5(8.1%) strongly agreed that stress can lead to Laissez – fare kind of leadership. This implied, 26(42.0%) principals in total agreed and 25(39.0%) disagreed that stress can lead to Laissez – fare kind of leadership. Therefore, the mean rating of 2.98 at a standard deviation of 1.194 suggest that the principals' were undecided on whether stress level could moderately lead to Laissez – fare kind of leadership.

Moreover, when looking again at Table 4 the result shows that 4(6.5%) principals strongly disagreed, 4(6.5%) disagreed, 6(9.7%) undecided, 37(59.7%) agreed and 11(17.7%) strongly disagreed with the construct that stress can lead to poor relationship between the school and other stakeholders. The mean rating of 3.76 at a standard deviation of 1.035 indicates that the principals' stress level highly lead to poor public relation with other stakeholders and a total of 48(77.4%) principals were in support of this.

Another result displayed in Table 4 reveals also that 1(1.6%) principals strongly disagreed, 4(6.5%) disagreed, 5(8.1%) undecided, 43(69.4%) agreed and 9(14.5%) strongly agreed with the construct that teachers working under stressed principals can also be stressed. This meant a total of 52(83.9%) principals were highly in support that teachers working under stressed principals can also be stressed at a mean rating of 3.89 at a standard deviation of 0.791.

Last but not the end, Table 4 indicates that 2(3.2%) principals strongly disagreed, 4(6.5%) disagreed, 6(9.7%) undecided, 41(66.1%) agreed and 9(14.5%) strongly agreed that stress leads to poor development of school projects. This implied, 50(80.6%) principals agreed that principals' stress level highly lead to poor development of school projects at a mean rating of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.878.

Lastly, the results in Table 4 indicate that 3(4.8%) principals strongly disagreed, 8(12.9%) disagreed, 13(21.0%) undecided, 34(54.8%) agreed and 4(6.5%) strongly agreed that at times, stress may lead to the achievement of some objectives. The statistics indicates that at a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 0.970, 38(61.3%) principals were in support of the view that at times, principals' stress level may highly lead to the achievement of some objectives that is, stress may lead to the achievement of a desired goal. This means it helps in getting rid of unwanted behavior or associate. Stress may lead to focusing on improving the school activities due to the fact that it creates high level of commitment (Fullan, 2001). This was also confirmed when the researcher asked one of the Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (Nyando) during the interview session, if it is good for a leader to have stress. He stated that;

Yes, a certain degree of stress is not bad for a leader. That's is, basic stress is healthy and can propel leaders to seek solutions to the challenges that they face in their schools, since some level of stress ensures that deadlines are met as per the requirements of the government policy. However, too much stress can cause physical harm. For instance, problems such as depression, heart diseases and insomnia

Furthermore, in order to determine the contribution of principals' stress in school management, the deputy principals were asked to identify the contribution of principals' stress on school administration, based on their experience. Their responses from the open ended questions were sorted and thematically analyzed. Some of the contributions of the principals' stress were identified as; irrational decision making, low academic performance, disunity or lack of teamwork among the staff, poor relations, students indiscipline, illnesses that can lead to death or health challenges, low enrolment, and emotional and physical fatigue. Moreover, the deputy principals noted that principals' stress affects the work performance of the teachers in the following ways; demotivates teachers, instills negative attitude towards work, lowers performance output, and can cause misjudgments and displaced aggression.

From the findings of Table 4 it has been identified that both male and female principals leave teaching profession, to join other professions. When they continue to leave the teaching profession, it will affect the economy of the country negatively since expatriates will be employed, thus a lot of money will be spent on their salaries and upkeep.

It has also been recognized that stress can lead to poor leadership of the principal. That is, it has been revealed that when the principal is stressed up, she/he would become arrogant hence will not be able to instill peace and cohesiveness of the staff due to his arrogance. Also, a stressed principal will always be quiet, keep to himself/herself and isolate himself. As a result, there will be no proper communication among the staff members which would result into poor management of the school.

When the principal is stressed, this stress will trickle down to the teachers. When the teachers are also stressed, they would become arrogant, quarrelsome and become negligent in performing their duties. As a result, students will start dropping out of school and get indulged into anti-social activities such as taking drugs. For instance, alcohol, bhang, Kuber, Miraa among others. Such students would be very stubborn in the society as they would "want to harvest what they did not sow". The government will spend a lot on them on medication without any benefit gained from them since they are jobless. That is, more resources will be wasted on such kind of people that would negatively affect the economy of the country.

Fullan (2001) and Wells (2013), observed that 80% of diseases affecting people are stress related ones. Examples of the diseases are: hypertension, ulcers, diabetes, arthritis, insomnia, depression among others. Further, it has been revealed that these diseases mostly lead to death of the principals before reaching their retirement age. It has also been observed that if this stress level cannot be reduced by all means, most principals and teachers would develop mental breakdown, a situation which will force the government to provide the affected principals and teachers early retirement on medical ground and also provide medication to them.

This will impact negatively to the economy of the country as very strong drugs will be needed for treatment and they are too expensive that sometimes they are being imported from overseas countries.

The study has also found that when the principal of a school is stressed, he/she becomes: arrogant, forgetful, and short-tempered and may not be able to organize a meeting with the staff to schedule the school activities. Due to these weaknesses, the teachers will also get relaxed in performing their duties, thus resulting to poor performance of students in the national examination (KCSE). Many failures in secondary schools will also affect the economy of the country negatively because they will increase the number of dependants, apart from the children, and the old.

Furthermore, there are no jobs for those who have completed their education. The more the number of principals are stressed and die of stress related diseases, the more the other people would lose their morale and interest in the teaching profession, thus none of them would wish to join the teaching profession. Therefore, it is very important for the government to be keen enough and find ways of preventing and managing stress among the principals and head teachers in secondary and primary schools respectively, as this will save the economy of the country, motivate and attract more people in the teaching profession. All these can be summarized by a say which states that "prevention is better than cure."

The findings concurs with that of Juma et al. (2016) who carried out a study on factors influencing stress among public secondary school female principals in Rachuonyo North and Homabay Sub Counties, revealed that factors that had high influence of stress among secondary school principals included uncertainty job expectations such as time for disbursement of free secondary education funds, quality of Kenya certificate of secondary examination results ( $M=3.97$ ,  $SD=1.166$ ).

It has been established that stress does not cause much quitting of the principals from the teaching profession. This shows that even though some principals quit from the profession, the majority of them are still tied up in the profession and persevere with all those challenges that face them. This finding concurs with that of Yambo et al. (2012) who carried out a research on high school principals' stress in relation to their job experience in schools in Southern Nyanza region, found out that some principals had quit teaching profession while others continued to be leaders of their schools but sleep on their jobs (Yambo, et al., 2012). Quite a number of principals had dropped principal ship due to stress in this region. This could be caused by work overload, misappropriation of funds or indiscipline cases such as drug abuse and others. This finding is in agreement with that of Yambo et al. (2012) and Koome (2007) who carried out a study in Kenya among principals and found that principals' stress is on the increase such that most of them have dropped being principals due to stress and have joined other departments in the government like the Ministry of Education Quality Assurance and Standards offices, County directors, Teachers Service Commission directors among others.

Stress was also established as affecting negatively the performance of the students in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) as 45(72.6%) principals agreed. This finding agrees with that of Fleet (1988) who asserts that employees who are experiencing too much stress might be absent from work too often, perform at low level and generally incapable of doing their jobs with most effective fashion. That is, a stressed principal will always be short tempered, arrogant and make hasty decisions which cannot compel the teachers to implement curriculum appropriately to enable students pass the national examination. Also, principals stress will be transferred to teachers and to the students, thus stressed students would most likely lack concentration when being taught in class.

It has been observed that stress can lead to the death of principals as a total of 35 (56.4%) principals supported the view. The finding concurs with that of Fleet (1998) who observed that a moderate level of stress is healthy, increase motivation and sparks creativity while too much stress can cause physical problems such as heart attacks, high blood pressure, high level of cholesterol, depression, which are some of the major killer diseases in the world. It further concurs with the finding of Muiruri (2017) who carried out a study on the

Annual Global Burden of Disease by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation of the University of Washington found that women live longer than men because of improvement in education level, rising per capita income, declining levels of fertility, increased vaccination, use of treated nets, improved water and sanitation and array of other health programmes. Life expectancy for men is 64.7 years while that of women is 69 years. The research found that leading causes of premature death globally included; ischemic heart disease which was leading in causing premature death for men in 113 countries and for women in 97 countries. Stroke was second, followed by lower respiratory infections. Others were diarrhea related diseases and road injuries (Muiruri, 2017).

Stress of the principals also contributed to ineffective performance in administrative work. This agrees with the finding of Black (2013) who noted that stress in the modest amounts can be helpful to learning or by increasing awareness and necessary push to accomplish a task while excessive amount of stress and anxiety can have detrimental effects on learning or work performance. That is, a stressed principal will not be able to keep cohesiveness of the staff as he tries to isolate himself, becomes arrogant and not able to communicate well with the Heads of the departments, thus resulting into ineffective administration (Black, 2013).

It has been realized that stress can either compel a principal of a school to commit suicide or not. This is shown as 26(41.9%) principals disagreed while 25 (40.4%) agreed that stress may lead to the commitment of suicide. Of recent, it has been observed that some teachers and school heads in various places within the country, and several officers from other professions have taken off their lives by either hanging or taking poison. In the department of police, police officers have committed suicide by shooting their colleagues and themselves (Waburiri, 2017).

Some school principals and even the students they teach have also committed suicide. This act might have occurred due to lack of effective counseling activity to help depressed principals and students. This can also be caused by negligence of the parents who have neglected their children and opted to focus on their jobs. That is, parents have less time to monitor the activities of their children, both at home and school since everything is left in the hands of the teachers.

Principals were undecided on whether stress can lead to Laissez-faire kind of leadership as 26(42.0%) principals agreed while 20(51.0%) disagreed. This kind of leadership may be the best or the worst of leadership styles (Goodnight, 2011). Laissez-faire is a French phrase for 'let it be'. When applied to leadership, describes leaders who leave people to work on their own. It further abdicate responsibility, avoid making decisions and the staff are given freedom to do their work and set their own deadlines. Therefore, this kind of leadership must be used wisely; otherwise it may destroy the whole organizational productivity.

Stress can also interfere with the relationship between the school principal and other school stakeholders. This is in agreement with that of the United States of Army (1983) which identified eleven basic principles of leadership which a leader must maintain for the success of the school's development and appropriate relationship with school stakeholders. Some of them include; developing a sense of responsibility, supervision of the tasks, keeping your workers informed, knowing your people and caring for their wellbeing among others. These kind of traits cannot be portrayed by a stressed principal due to his arrogance, short temper, isolation and negligence of duty, hence loosing good relationship with other school stakeholders such as members of school committee, Zonal, Sub County and County Education Officers who may provide the school with the required teaching and learning resources.

The finding also revealed that teachers that work under a stressed principal will also be stressed. This was well indicated as a total of the principals (83.9%) were in support of this. Principal's stress can also negatively affect the development of school projects as this was supported by a total number of principals 50(80.6%). This finding concurs with that of Fleet (1988) who observed that a stressful leader lacks emotional intelligence skills of leadership which can bar him from initiating school's development. Such skills include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill (Fleet, 1988).

Finally, the finding also showed that to some extent, stress can also lead to the achievements of some objectives or goals. This finding concurs with the finding of Fleet (1988) who observed that a moderate level of stress is normal, and in fact healthy. Stress causes us to feel excited about what we are doing, increases motivation and sparks creativity. However, too much of it can cause physical problems such as heart attacks, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and psychological problems (Fullan, 2001 & Fleet, 1988).

Other negative contributions of stress in schools and the society in future were also identified by the principals as follows: mental breakdown, health problems, such as depression, dissatisfaction of duty, arrogance, drug abuse, low morale and losing interest in the job, low productivity, and wastage of resources as people will always be concerned by the prevention of stress, since stress related diseases are very costly to afford, hence stress should be avoided by all means so as to eradicate these killer diseases.

In-depth interview using audio recording with one of the SCQASOs in Nyando Sub –County revealed that:

stress impairs decision making, lowers morale and efficiency, and lowers management performance of the principals' leadership." This finding concurs with the findings of Sogunro (2012) who noted that stress can lead to ineffective administrative performance, poor development of school projects, and poor relationship between the teachers and other school stakeholders

#### IV. Conclusion

Stress is a health problem which any employer must address at all cost. Many teachers are affected because they handle various issues in relation to students and parents. Principals of schools are mostly affected and some of them end up being depressed and not enjoying working environment

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