



Influence of Principals' Workload Management on Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Thika West Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract: Principals' management of teachers' workload is crucial in determining teacher performance in schools. However, in Thika West Sub-county, teacher performance has been a persistent challenge, with many teachers being unable to cover the syllabus in time, resulting in low student academic performance in examinations. This study sought to examine the influence of principals' management of workload on teacher performance in public secondary schools. The distributed leadership theory and teacher performance theory guided the study. The study adopted a mixed methodology and, thus, applied a concurrent triangulation research design. The target population comprised 724 respondents: 14 principals, 708 teachers, and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education, from which a sample of 257 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. This resulted in a sample of 10 principals, 245 teachers, and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative form. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) and presented using tables. The study found that teacher performance has been low because many teachers do not cover the syllabus on time, which has led to low student academic performance in KCSE. This has been partially attributed to principals' management of teachers' workload. Thus, principals should conduct regular workload audits and redistribute duties fairly, ensuring that teaching, administrative, and co-curricular responsibilities are balanced according to teachers' capacity, subject demands, and available resources.

Keywords: Public, Secondary schools, Teacher performance, Principals, Workload management

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1. Introduction

Teachers hold a pivotal role in shaping the future of individuals and society. According to Harris (2022), beyond merely imparting knowledge, they inspire, mentor, and nurture curiosity. In Austria, Kiener, Huber, and Pollock (2020) posit that teachers act as role models, fostering values such as integrity, discipline, and resilience. They adapt to diverse learning needs, enabling every student to achieve their personal best. In the words of Pérez, Rodríguez, and Martínez (2021), teachers also

play a significant role in identifying talents and guiding career paths. To fulfill these noble roles, they need to adopt pedagogical strategies to enhance their performance. Kunter (2023) posits that teacher performance entails work output, delivery of subject matter, classroom management, creativity in teaching methods, and emotional intelligence. Effective teacher performance ensures students stay motivated, engaged, and achieve academic success. According to Tanguy (2023), teacher performance also involves continuous self-evaluation and professional development to adapt to

changing educational needs. Beyond academics, teacher performance shapes a positive school culture by fostering ethical behavior, collaboration, and respect, ultimately influencing the holistic growth of young minds. On many occasions, this entails the rate at which teachers cover the syllabus in time, the quality of instruction, and the academic performance of their students. However, teacher performance has been low, with many teachers unable to cover the syllabus on time and their students registering low exam grades.

For instance, in the Netherlands, a report authored by Hooge and De Vries (2021) indicates that only 30.8% of teachers are able to cover their syllabus in time, and with only 59.4% of their students performing well in national assessments. In the same token, in Austria, Müller and König (2022) assert that 25% of teachers experience burnout, which negatively impacts their performance. This was supported by a report from the Austrian Education Ministry (2021), which indicated that only 44.9% of teachers complete their syllabi and work volumes on time, and their students tend to register low academic grades. This has been blamed on a number of factors, including challenges teachers face, such as how principals manage teachers' workloads. Principals' management of teachers' workload refers to the deliberate actions taken by school leaders to organize, distribute, monitor, and optimize teachers' instructional and non-instructional responsibilities to ensure efficiency, well-being, and improved instructional outcomes. According to Morris (2026), workload management is a core dimension of instructional leadership, emphasizing not only task allocation but also reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, supporting planning time, and fostering collaborative teaching environments. Morris (2026) further notes that workload is a major determinant of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition, while effective workload management by principals is strongly associated with improved teacher job satisfaction and performance. Workload management activities include setting realistic deadlines, fair task distribution, and prioritization of tasks.

In the United States, principals play a critical role in managing teacher workload through distributed leadership structures, instructional coaching, and scheduling systems that reduce non-teaching responsibilities. According to Eryilmaz, Kennedy, Strietholt, Johansson, and Bäckström (2025), supportive leadership and reduced administrative burden significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction and instructional effectiveness. Teachers who perceive principals as supportive report higher engagement and improved classroom outcomes, largely because principals help streamline tasks and prioritize instructional time (Eryilmaz et al., 2025). Similarly, in Brazil, UNESCO (2023) posits that school leadership reforms under decentralized education systems have encouraged principals to adopt participatory management approaches, delegating administrative tasks

to non-teaching staff and promoting collaborative lesson planning. UNESCO (2023) further notes that this has been associated with improved teacher morale and higher student achievement in urban public schools. In India, principals' workload management practices are shaped by large class sizes and resource constraints. According to Kingdon (2020), effective principals prioritize task rationalization, ensuring teachers focus more on instruction than administrative documentation. In other words, schools where principals actively reduce clerical workload report higher teacher productivity and reduced burnout rates. Across Africa, teacher workload remains a major challenge due to staffing shortages and expanding enrolments. However, Ogunode, Adegbite, and Musa (2022) assert that principals have increasingly adopted adaptive leadership strategies to mitigate workload pressures. In Nigeria, principals often redistribute teaching loads equitably and introduce peer-support teaching systems to balance workload demands. In South Africa, a survey undertaken by Selebano, Huisamen, and Pellissier (2025) shows that principals who implement structured workload allocation models improve teacher well-being and reduce burnout, thereby enhancing instructional quality. In Kenya, the scenario is the same since principals play an essential role in shaping teachers' performance in schools by employing a range of workload management strategies. Ochieng (2023) posits that such practices have led to higher job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and improved job performance. In other words, principals in public schools have been reported to use collaborative planning sessions to reduce individual teacher preparation load, thereby improving instructional consistency and learner performance.

This corroborates the assertions of Musyoki, Mulwa, and Mwanza (2024) that the role of workload management in enhancing teacher performance is increasingly recognized, particularly in multinational corporations and the growing tech sector. In Thika West Sub-county, principals and their management of workload therein have been at the center of teacher performance in public secondary schools. However, teacher performance has been low, with many unable to cover the syllabus and workload on time, and their students registering dismal exam results. For instance, a survey undertaken by Kamau (2021) found that approximately 43.7% of teachers in Thika West Sub-county often fail to complete their designated syllabi within the academic term, adversely affecting student preparedness for exams. In the same vein, Njiru (2023) observed that schools in Thika West Sub-county consistently underperform in national examinations, registering 38.9% in the KCSE compared to schools in other sub-counties and the national aggregate. These point to the gravity of low teacher performance. Despite this state of affairs, few empirical studies had interrogated the extent to which principals' management of workload influences teacher performance in public secondary schools; thus, the study.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To assess the status of teacher performance in public secondary schools in Thika West Sub-county.
2. To examine the influence of principals' management of workload on teacher performance in public secondary schools in Thika West Sub-county.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Empirical Literature

Workload management is a critical factor influencing teacher performance across various sectors and regions. Effective workload management ensures that teachers are neither overburdened nor underutilized, leading to optimal performance and job satisfaction. In France, a study carried out by Martin and Dubois (2023) found that a centralized administration characterizes the education system. However, individual school principals are increasingly autonomous in managing school-level issues, including workload distribution. According to Martin and Dubois (2023), principals who engaged in participatory management, by involving teachers in decision-making regarding timetabling and task delegation, contributed to reduced burnout and improved teaching quality. French teachers reported that workload was not only a matter of hours but also of emotional and administrative burden. When principals prioritized pedagogical support over administrative surveillance, teachers reported greater job satisfaction and better classroom performance. Moreover, a national survey undertaken by the French Ministry of Education (2022) indicated that 61% of teachers linked performance outcomes directly to the level of support they received from school leadership. Schools where principals allowed flexibility in lesson planning, collaborative grading, and reduced non-teaching duties demonstrated better student outcomes in standardized assessments. This indicates that managing workload effectively can foster an environment conducive to high teacher performance. In Haiti, the World Bank (2020) asserts that workload management remains a critical challenge. For instance, research by Trust and Whalen (2020) suggests that schools in Haiti could improve performance by adopting more flexible workload management practices, such as job sharing or remote work. However, these practices are not widespread due to economic and infrastructural challenges. In Malaysia, the balance between work and life has become a growing concern as the country transitions toward a developed economy. Ismail, Abdullah, and Roslan (2020) carried out a study, which revealed that a key driver for enhancing workload management is Malaysia's increasing participation in the global economy and the demands of multinational companies.

To corroborate these assertions, Zhang, Qin, and Ren (2021) undertook a study that revealed that heavy workloads lead to higher levels of stress and burnout, negatively affecting teacher performance. In the context of education, a study by Afsar and Masood (2023) found that schools with more structured workload management strategies, including flexible working hours and task delegation, reported higher performance and better teacher retention. Malaysian teachers in these environments showed increased engagement and performance when workloads were balanced, alleviating their work-related stress. New Zealand has been a leader focusing more on teacher welfare and progressive labour laws. Research shows that effective workload management in New Zealand is closely linked with enhanced performance (Kelliher, Richardson & Webster, 2023). The country's approach focuses not only on reducing working hours but also on fostering supportive environments where teachers can manage their workload without sacrificing personal time. A study conducted by Thompson and Voss (2023) found that teachers in New Zealand who experienced a balanced workload demonstrated higher job satisfaction, lower turnover, and higher performance. The study further established that New Zealand's labor laws, including paid parental leave and flexible work arrangements, make it easier for teachers to manage personal and professional responsibilities. The result is a highly engaged workforce, with teachers reporting greater motivation and productivity due to improved workload management practices. These findings indicate that effective workload management strategies, such as flexible work arrangements, adequate staffing, and regular workload assessments, are essential for enhancing teacher performance.

In Africa, the scenario is the same, with recognition that managing staff workload is key to improving their performance. For instance, research carried out in Ghana by Mensah, Amponsah-Tawiah, and Adu (2022) revealed that high workloads negatively affect teachers' ability to maintain work-life harmony, resulting in diminished performance. Mensah et al. (2022) emphasize that efficient workload management, supported by flexible schedules and ample leave, not only reduces burnout but also enhances teacher morale.

In South Africa, Nzimakwe (2023) found that workload management is a key management activity. Nzimakwe (2023) further notes that effective workload distribution and supportive managerial policies are associated with increased job satisfaction and performance. In Rwanda, the rapid growth of sectors such as ICT has heightened the relevance of work-life balance practices. According to Habimana and Uwizeye (2021), effective staff workload management has encouraged creativity and efficiency among teachers. In other words, schools that focus on clear task allocation and foster autonomy have reported markedly improved individual and team performance. In Uganda, Namaganda, Oketcho,

Maniple, and Viadro (2025) conducted a national assessment using the Workload Indicators of Staffing Need (WISN) method to evaluate staffing levels in public health facilities. The study revealed that health centers had fewer nurses and midwives than required, resulting in excessive workload pressure. In Kenya, the scenario is the same, with many studies indicating a relationship between workload management and teacher performance. For instance, while the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) provides guidelines on teacher workload, implementation varies significantly across counties.

A study by Wanjiru and Otieno (2023) in public secondary schools across Nairobi and Kisumu counties found that principals who actively monitored teacher workload, allocated duties equitably, and protected planning time were associated with higher teacher efficacy and lower absenteeism. In contrast, schools where principals overloaded teachers, often assigning them multiple administrative and extracurricular responsibilities, recorded higher levels of teacher stress, frequent absenteeism, and declining student performance. In the same token, a study carried out by Fafila, Njihia, and Mwaniki (2024) found that manageable workloads positively impact teacher performance. Teachers with reasonable workloads demonstrated higher motivation and performance, thereby improving service delivery. Similarly, research carried out in Nairobi County by Kageche, Kithinji, and Thuba (2024) found that workload stress significantly influences performance, with 79.8% of respondents reporting that workload stress factors affect their performance to a great extent. In Thika West Sub-county, a study conducted by Njoroge and Muthoni (2023) specifically examined the effects of workload management on teacher performance in the sub-county's public secondary schools. Principals in the region faced pressure to meet performance targets amidst teacher shortages, leading to frequent overloads. Nonetheless, Njoroge and Muthoni (2023) found that schools with proactive principals who conducted regular workload audits and redistributed tasks during high-pressure periods, such as exam seasons, reported higher teacher motivation and improved classroom delivery.

According to Njoroge and Muthoni (2023), teachers in Thika West cited the importance of regular consultations with principals regarding workload allocation. Those who participated in school management meetings or were given leadership roles felt a greater sense of ownership, which positively influenced their performance. Conversely, in schools where principals failed to recognize workload disparities or ignored complaints, teachers were demoralized, leading to poor preparation and disengagement. However, further research was needed, as Njoroge and Muthoni (2023) and other reviewed studies did not fully examine the extent to which specific workload management activities

undertaken by principals influence teacher performance in public secondary schools; hence, the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the distributed leadership theory, as articulated by Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001), a leadership framework that shifts emphasis from a single, heroic leader to a shared, collective form of leadership practice distributed across multiple actors within an organization. The core principles of Distributed Leadership Theory rest on the ideas of collaboration, shared responsibility, and the interaction between people and their organizational context. First, leadership is viewed as a collective practice rather than an individual trait, meaning that principals, heads of departments, and teachers all contribute to leadership functions depending on expertise and situational demands. Second, leadership is distributed across formal and informal roles, acknowledging that influence in schools often comes from individuals who may not hold official leadership titles but possess pedagogical expertise or peer influence. Third, the theory emphasizes the importance of interaction between leaders and their environment; routines, tools, and organizational structures within schools shape leadership outcomes. Fourth, accountability and decision-making are shared, which promotes ownership of school goals among teachers and enhances commitment to instructional improvement. Finally, Distributed Leadership Theory underscores adaptability, allowing leadership responsibilities to shift in response to changing school needs, such as workload demands, curriculum changes, and teacher support systems.

In the context of this study, this theory is suitable because it provides a lens for understanding how workload management is not solely a top-down administrative task but a shared organizational process. In many public secondary schools, principals are responsible for allocating teaching loads, coordinating timetables, and ensuring equitable distribution of responsibilities. However, the effectiveness of these tasks often depends on collaboration with deputy principals, heads of departments, and teachers themselves. Through a distributed leadership approach, workload management becomes more participatory, allowing teachers to contribute to decision-making about subject assignments, co-curricular responsibilities, and committee work, which can reduce burnout and improve morale. Furthermore, the theory helps explain how teacher performance is influenced not just by workload quantity but by the quality of leadership interactions surrounding that workload. When leadership is distributed, teachers are more likely to experience fairness, transparency, and professional trust in workload allocation processes. This can enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness. Conversely, when workload management is centralized and lacks

shared input, it may lead to perceptions of inequity and excessive pressure, negatively affecting performance.

This theory, therefore, provides a framework for analyzing how collaborative leadership structures within schools mediate the relationship between principals' workload management practices and teacher outcomes. Further, this theory is suitable because it aligns with contemporary reforms in education systems that emphasize school-based management and participatory governance. Public secondary schools often operate in complex environments with limited resources and high teacher demands, making it unrealistic for principals to manage all leadership functions alone. In other words, this theory allows for the optimization of available human capital within the school, ensuring that expertise is utilized efficiently in managing workloads and supporting instructional quality. Ultimately, this theory offers a comprehensive lens for examining how shared leadership practices can improve both the management of teachers' workload and their overall performance in public secondary schools.

This study was also guided by the teacher performance theory, whose proponent was Medley (1982). This theory is premised on the idea that teaching is both an art and a science, requiring a blend of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and interpersonal abilities. One of the core principles is the emphasis on reflective practice. Teachers are encouraged to continually assess their methods and effectiveness, seeking improvement through self-evaluation and feedback from peers and supervisors. This theory encompasses a variety of principles and applications that are critical in understanding the dynamics of educational environments.

This theory posits that teacher effectiveness is not solely determined by their knowledge or skills but is significantly influenced by their ability to engage students, foster motivation, and create a conducive learning atmosphere. The belief that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student outcomes through their performance reflects their pedagogical strategies, emotional engagement, and interpersonal relationships with students. One of the foundational principles of teacher performance theory is the importance of teacher enthusiasm and self-efficacy. Another key principle is the holistic evaluation of teacher performance. This involves assessing not just student outcomes, but also the teacher's ability to create a conducive learning environment, engage students, and adapt to diverse learning needs. This theory also underscores the importance of professional development. It advocates for ongoing learning opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and stay updated with the latest educational research and methodologies. This principle is closely tied to the belief that teaching is a dynamic profession requiring continual adaptation and growth. In practice, this theory is often used to guide the development of

teacher evaluation systems. Thus, this theory is relevant in that it underscores the vitality of its principles of reflective practice, holistic evaluation, and continuous professional development, which are integral to improving teaching effectiveness. In other words, it influences teacher evaluation systems, training programs, and ongoing professional development efforts, all aimed at enhancing the quality of education and student success. Its applications in educational settings underscore the necessity for teachers to engage in continuous professional development and to adopt pedagogical strategies that foster a supportive learning environment.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methodology and, thus, applied a concurrent triangulation research design. The target population comprised 724 respondents: 14 principals, 708 teachers, and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC and MoE). A sample of 257 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. Stratified sampling was used to create five strata based on the number of zones in Thika West Sub-county. From each zone, two principals were selected using purposive sampling. All Sub-county Directors of Education were also purposively included. From each zone, 49 teachers were selected using simple random sampling, resulting in a final sample of 10 principals, 245 teachers, and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers, and interviews were conducted with principals and Sub-county Directors of Education. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the research objectives and presented in narrative form. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, and means, and inferentially using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25), and presented using tables. In this study, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained from Mount Kenya Ethical Review Committee (MKU ERC) before embarking on data collection processes. The researcher undertook to keep private any information given by the respondents that touched on their personal lives. The researcher assured the respondents that no private information would be divulged to a third party. The nature and the purpose of the research were explained to the respondents by the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents the procedure that would be followed during the data collection so that they could participate willingly. The raw data collected were filed for easy reference. Once the data were analyzed, computer printouts were filed while soft copies were stored in storage devices such as CDs and flash discs.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, findings of the study as per the objectives of the study are outlined, along with highlighting the presentation of findings and discussions.

4.1 Response Rates

In this study, 245 questionnaires were administered to teachers, and, in return, 241 questionnaires were filled out and returned. In the same token, the researcher interviewed nine (9) principals and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE). This yielded response rates shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Principals	10	9	90.0
Teachers	245	241	98.4
Sub-county Directors of Education	2	2	100.0
Total	257	252	98.1

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 1 shows that principals registered a response rate of 90.0%, teachers registered 98.4%, whereas the Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE) registered a 100.0% response rate. This yielded an average response rate of 98.1%, consistent with Creswell's (2018) assertion that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important because it enabled the researcher to generalize the study's outcomes to the target population.

4.2 Status of Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of teacher performance in public secondary schools in Thika West Sub-county. This was measured by assessing how often teachers cover the syllabus on time and KCSE performance (mean points) between 2020 and 2024. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Syllabus Coverage by Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

Frequency of Timely Syllabus Coverage by Teachers	Number of Teachers	
	f	%
Often	71	29.5
Rarely	133	55.2
Never	37	15.4

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 2 shows that most of the teachers, 133(55.3%), rarely cover syllabus in time, 71(29.5%) often do whereas 37(15.4%) never do. During the interviews, principals also stated that most teachers do not cover the syllabus in time. Principal, P1, noted;

In my school, I have had cases where teachers do not cover the syllabus in time to allow students adequate time for revision.

These findings corroborate the assertions of Hofman and ve Hofman (2024) that, in the Netherlands, a performing or competent teacher is regarded as one who is able to

cover the syllabus in time and teach a particular subject very well, that is, one who perceives his or her teaching competence and believes that they can exert a positive effect on students' achievement. In the same token, a study carried out in Thika West Sub-county by Kamau (2025) highlights that delays in syllabus coverage are most notable during the third term, with many teachers struggling to complete the content before national exams. This trend has been linked to teachers' tendency to focus on exam-centric topics and neglect other essential areas, leading to an incomplete educational experience for students. The researcher further assessed the status of performance in KCSE for the last five years. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: KCSE Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Thika West Sub-county

KCSE Results in Mean Scores	Years of Examination				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	%	%	%	%	%
1-2.9 points (Poor)	40.2	43.5	44.2	47.3	48.9
3-4.9 points (Below Average)	36.9	35.1	34.9	33.5	32.5
5-6.9 points (Fair)	15.4	15.1	14.8	13.7	13.4
7-8.9 points (Good)	5.3	4.4	4.3	3.8	3.6
9-11.9 points (Excellent)	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 3 shows that the academic performance of students in KCSE has been on a downward trend for the last five years. These findings corroborate the findings of a report by MoE (2026) that the performance of students in Thika West Sub-county in KCSE has been on a downward trend. This calls into question the level of teacher performance and strategies therein, which principals develop to motivate teachers. These findings affirm the

fact that teacher performance entails several aspects, such as increased efforts to achieve high output, innovation to discover new superior ways of doing things, enhanced attitudes to treat customers, in this case students, with respect, and the overall performance of schools in terms of syllabus coverage and academic performance. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Teachers' Views on the Status of their Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Test Items	Ratings					Composite Mean
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
	%	%	%	%	%	
Teachers consistently complete the syllabus within the term	34.0	19.5	10.4	13.7	22.4	3.29
Teachers meet the academic targets set by public secondary schools	36.5	19.5	8.3	13.7	22.0	3.35
Teachers have their students perform well in internal and external assessments	38.2	19.9	8.3	14.5	19.1	3.44
Teachers receive positive feedback on their teaching from students and administrators	39.4	20.7	8.3	12.4	19.1	3.49
Teachers are motivated and committed to delivering quality teaching	45.6	20.7	6.2	10.4	17.0	3.68
Overall Composite Mean						3.45

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 4 indicates a moderate to high level of teacher performance in public secondary schools, as evidenced by an overall composite mean of 3.45, suggesting that teachers generally agree that they demonstrate satisfactory effectiveness in fulfilling their professional responsibilities. However, the relatively lower mean for syllabus completion ($M = 3.29$) suggests inconsistencies in curriculum implementation, potentially attributed to workload pressures, inadequate instructional resources, or disruptions in the school calendar. Likewise, meeting academic targets ($M = 3.35$) indicates moderate achievement, implying room for improvement in instructional outcomes. Similarly, teachers receiving positive feedback from students and administrators ($M = 3.49$) and students' performance in assessments ($M = 3.44$) demonstrate that teaching effectiveness is moderately recognized within schools. The test item on teachers' motivation and commitment to delivering quality teaching recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.68$),

implying that teachers are perceived to possess a relatively strong sense of dedication toward instructional delivery. These findings align with recent literature emphasizing that teacher motivation, instructional commitment, and professional support significantly influence educational performance. For example, UNESCO (2023) observed that motivated teachers are more likely to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, research by OECD (2023) reported that teacher effectiveness is positively associated with professional recognition and supportive school leadership. These findings indicate that, while teacher performance is generally positive, interventions aimed at strengthening syllabus coverage, instructional support, and achievement of academic targets may further enhance educational outcomes in public secondary schools.

4.3 Principals' Workload Management and Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to examine how principals' workload management influences teacher performance in public secondary schools. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Teachers' Views on the Influence of Workload Management on Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Test Items	Ratings					Composite Mean
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
	%	%	%	%	%	
In public secondary schools, the workload is fairly distributed throughout the term	20.7	16.6	20.7	21.2	20.7	2.95
In public secondary schools, the number of lessons teachers teach per week is not manageable	22.8	18.7	18.7	18.7	21.2	3.03
Teachers rarely have sufficient time for lesson preparation and marking	25.7	18.3	16.6	18.7	20.7	3.10
In public secondary schools, non-teaching duties assigned to teachers interfere with teaching	22.8	16.6	18.7	20.7	21.2	2.99
Public secondary school administration supports adjustments in workload when necessary	49.8	20.7	8.3	10.8	10.4	3.89
Overall Composite Mean						3.19

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 5 shows that the findings on teacher workload in public secondary schools revealed an overall composite mean of 3.19, suggesting a moderate perception regarding workload management and institutional support. This implies that, while teachers encounter notable workload challenges, some support mechanisms exist to reduce excessive pressure. The findings indicate mixed perceptions concerning fairness in workload distribution, lesson allocation, lesson preparation time, non-teaching duties, and administrative support. Few teachers, 50(20.7%), strongly agreed with the statement concerning whether workload is fairly distributed throughout the term, which recorded a composite mean of 2.95, indicating that respondents moderately disagreed with the fairness of workload distribution. This finding indicates that teachers may experience uneven workload patterns, where some periods of the academic term are more demanding than others. Such inconsistency may negatively affect teacher morale, productivity, and instructional quality. When workload is concentrated in particular periods, teachers may struggle to balance teaching responsibilities with assessment and student support. Similarly, 55(22.8%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement regarding the manageability of the number of lessons taught per week, producing a mean score of 3.03, indicating moderate agreement that lesson loads are difficult to manage. This finding implies that many teachers perceive teaching schedules as demanding and potentially overwhelming. Excessive lesson allocation can limit teachers' ability to prepare effectively, provide quality feedback, and maintain instructional effectiveness. Heavy teaching schedules

may further contribute to fatigue and reduced classroom engagement.

Slightly more than a quarter, 62(25.7%), of the teachers recorded a composite mean of 3.10 for the statement that they rarely have sufficient time for lesson preparation and marking. This result suggests that inadequate preparation time remains a concern among teachers in public secondary schools. Teachers require adequate time for planning lessons, evaluating student performance, and preparing instructional materials to improve learning outcomes. Limited preparation time may compromise instructional quality and increase professional stress.

Further, the statement that non-teaching duties interfere with teaching recorded a mean of 2.99, indicating moderate agreement among teachers (55, 22.8%). This implies that teachers are often required to perform responsibilities beyond classroom instruction, including administrative tasks, co-curricular supervision, and school management activities. Such responsibilities may consume valuable instructional time and contribute to workload pressure.

Teachers burdened with multiple obligations may struggle to maintain efficiency in curriculum delivery. However, the statement on whether school administration supports adjustments in workload when necessary recorded the highest composite mean of 3.89. This finding indicates that respondents generally acknowledged the role of school administrators in addressing workload concerns. Administrative support may include adjusting teaching schedules, redistributing

responsibilities, and providing professional encouragement during periods of increased workload. Such support is important in promoting teacher well-being and enhancing job satisfaction.

These findings are consistent with the findings of a study carried out by Ab. Wahab, Abdul Rahman, Mahat, Salleh Hudin, Ramdan, Ab Razak, and Mohd Yadi (2024) established that excessive workload, administrative obligations, and insufficient preparation time significantly affect teacher well-being and professional performance. The review emphasized that excessive demands often result in emotional exhaustion and reduced effectiveness among educators. Similarly, research on teachers' workplace stress conducted in Thika West Sub-county by Mwangi and Kamau (2025) found that excessive workload and administrative burdens negatively influenced instructional quality and teacher motivation, while supportive working conditions improved teaching effectiveness.

The study emphasized the importance of institutional support in minimizing burnout and sustaining professional commitment. Mwangi and Kamau (2025) also revealed that non-teaching responsibilities continue to be a major contributor to teacher dissatisfaction and

attrition. They reported that teachers frequently cited paperwork, lesson preparation demands, and ancillary duties as barriers to effective teaching and work-life balance. Administrative interventions aimed at workload reduction were therefore recommended to improve teacher retention and performance. These findings indicate that teacher workload in public secondary schools remains a significant concern despite moderate institutional support. From these findings, while school administrations appear responsive to workload adjustments, teachers still face challenges associated with lesson allocation, preparation time, and non-teaching duties.

4.4 Inferential Analysis

To verify the influence of workload management on teacher performance, data were collected from the nine (9) principals of the sampled public secondary schools on the number of lessons teachers undertake per week, how often teachers cover the syllabus on time, and academic performance in KCSE in 2025. Results are shown in Table 6:

Table 6: How Often Principals Appraise Teachers and Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Number of Lessons Per Week	How Often Teachers Cover the Syllabus in Time	2025 KCSE Results
28	2	2.14
30	3	3.78
31	5	4.81
34	3	2.80
27	2	3.48
19	2	5.89
29	1	4.99
33	4	6.98
15	3	9.07

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 6 shows that the fewer lessons teachers undertake, the more frequently they cover the syllabus on time, and the higher students' academic performance in KCSE. This indicates that when teachers handle fewer lessons, they can manage their workload more effectively, allowing them sufficient time to prepare for classes, assess learners, and provide individualized attention to students. Adequate preparation enhances the quality of teaching, making lessons more organized, engaging, and easier for students to understand. Furthermore, teachers with manageable lesson loads are less likely to experience fatigue and burnout. This improves classroom attendance consistency and increases productivity, enabling teachers to complete the syllabus within the allocated academic period. Timely syllabus

coverage ensures that students have sufficient time for revision, remedial teaching, and examination preparation before sitting the KCSE. In addition, students benefit academically when teachers are less overwhelmed. Teachers can closely monitor learners' progress, identify areas for improvement, and provide necessary support. Such attention promotes better understanding of subject content, leading to improved performance in examinations. Therefore, research supports the view that reducing teachers' lesson workload positively influences syllabus completion and enhances KCSE academic outcomes among students. Data in Table 6 were run through Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Test Analysis. Results are shown in Table 7:

Table 7: Relationship between the Number of Lessons Teachers Undertake and Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools

		X1	A	B
X1	Pearson Correlation	1	.613*	.584*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.030	.047
	N	9	9	9
A	Pearson Correlation	.613*	1	.808
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030		.098
	N	9	9	9
B	Pearson Correlation	.584*	.808	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.098	
	N	9	9	9

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Key: **X1**- Number of Lessons Teachers Undertake; **A**- How Often Teachers Cover Syllabus in Time, and **B**-2025 KCSE Results

Table 7 shows a strong correlation between principals' management of workload, such as the number of lessons teachers undertake, and teacher performance in public secondary schools ($r(9) = 0.613$ and 0.584 at $p = 0.030$ and 0.047 , respectively, at $\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that effective workload management, particularly regarding the number of lessons teachers undertake, significantly influences teachers' productivity, motivation, and overall effectiveness in delivering quality education. When principals allocate a reasonable number of lessons to teachers, educators are better able to prepare adequately, assess learners effectively, and maintain high standards of classroom instruction. This implies that teachers who are overloaded with excessive lessons often experience fatigue, stress, and burnout, which negatively affect their teaching performance. In contrast, balanced workloads enable teachers to dedicate sufficient time to lesson planning, student evaluation, and participation in co-curricular and professional development activities. Principals who monitor and regulate teaching loads help create a supportive work environment that enhances teacher morale and job satisfaction. This indicates that effective workload management promotes fairness among staff members, reduces conflicts, and improves teamwork within schools. Teachers are more likely to remain committed and motivated when they perceive workload distribution as equitable.

4.5 Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the principals and Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE) also supported the view that teacher workload is not evenly distributed throughout the academic term, resulting in periods of excessive pressure. They acknowledged that workload imbalances often emerge during examination periods, co-curricular activities, and reporting timelines, affecting teachers' efficiency and morale. Principal, P2, stated;

At my school, teacher workload tends to fluctuate with the academic calendar. During examination periods and reporting seasons, teachers become overwhelmed with

marking, lesson recovery, and administrative tasks. Some departments experience heavier workloads than others, especially where staffing shortages exist. Teachers occasionally complain that responsibilities are not equally distributed.

On their part, the Sub-county Directors of Education also expressed similar sentiments. One Sub-County Director of Education noted;

In my observation, workload fairness remains a challenge because schools differ in staffing levels and subject demands. Some teachers are clearly overburdened during peak academic periods.

The other Sub-County Director of Education also stated;

In my sub-county, complaints about unequal workload allocation are common, particularly in schools facing teacher shortages or increased enrolment

The qualitative findings reinforce quantitative results, indicating moderate disagreement regarding workload fairness. Uneven workload distribution appears linked to staffing shortages and seasonal academic demands. Such imbalances may undermine teacher motivation and effectiveness, suggesting the need for equitable scheduling and strategic workload planning by school leadership. Regarding excessive lesson allocation and teaching demands, the interviewees acknowledged that heavy lesson loads remain a major challenge affecting teachers' ability to deliver quality instruction. Principal, P3, stated;

In my school, teachers who handle examination classes often teach many lessons per week, making it difficult for them to prepare or offer

individualized support to learners adequately. Excessive lesson allocation affects teacher energy levels and classroom effectiveness because teachers become physically and mentally exhausted.

In the same token, the Sub-County Director of Education noted;

In my assessment, many schools struggle to balance lesson allocation because the number of available teachers is fewer than required by curriculum demands. Overloaded timetables have contributed to teacher stress, particularly where one teacher handles several streams or multiple subjects.

These views further support findings that lesson loads are moderately difficult to manage. Excessive teaching demands may restrict lesson preparation, assessment quality, and learner engagement. Persistent overload risks teacher fatigue and burnout, highlighting the importance of staffing adequacy and realistic timetabling practices in schools. The interviewees stated that insufficient time for instructional preparation and marking due to competing responsibilities.

They emphasized that quality teaching requires adequate preparation time, which many teachers reportedly lack because of heavy schedules. Principal, P4, stated;

At my school, teachers often struggle to find enough time for lesson preparation because much of their day is spent teaching and supervising. Inadequate preparation time affects the quality of teaching since teachers sometimes rush through marking and lesson planning.

One Sub-County Director of Education also stated;

In my observation, lesson preparation remains a challenge in schools with high teacher workloads because teachers have limited time outside of classroom instruction. Teachers require protected time for planning and assessment if curriculum implementation is to improve.

The qualitative findings confirm concerns regarding limited preparation time among teachers. Inadequate time for planning and marking may reduce instructional quality and increase stress. This suggests a need for institutional strategies that protect preparation periods to

improve effectiveness and learner outcomes. They also reported that non-teaching duties interfere with teachers' core instructional responsibilities. Administrative assignments, student supervision, and extracurricular coordination were perceived as significant contributors to workload pressure. Principal, P5;

At my school, teachers are expected to supervise clubs, maintain discipline, and prepare reports in addition to classroom teaching, which significantly increases the workload. Non-teaching duties sometimes interfere with lesson preparation because teachers spend substantial time on administrative requirements.

One of the Sub-County Directors of Education noted;

In my assessment, teachers are increasingly burdened by responsibilities beyond teaching, especially documentation and co-curricular management

The other Sub-County Director of Education further observed;

In my sub-county, teachers often express concerns that additional duties leave them exhausted and less focused on instructional delivery

The findings indicate that non-teaching responsibilities substantially contribute to teacher workload pressure. Excessive ancillary duties may reduce instructional efficiency and job satisfaction. Reducing administrative burdens and redistributing responsibilities could help teachers focus more effectively on teaching and curriculum delivery. On the question of administrative support in managing teacher workload. Despite workload challenges, respondents acknowledged that school administrations often attempt to support teachers through workload adjustments and professional encouragement. Administrative responsiveness was viewed positively in reducing excessive pressure. Principal, P6, noted;

In my school, we try to adjust timetables whenever teachers become overwhelmed, especially during examination periods or staffing shortages. That is, supporting teachers through flexible scheduling and teamwork has helped reduce complaints related to workload.

In the same token, the Sub-county Directors of Education also expressed similar views. One Sub-County Director of Education stated;

In my observation, school principals who actively support teachers tend to experience fewer cases of burnout and absenteeism. Administrative intervention is important in helping teachers cope with workload demands and remain professionally committed.

The qualitative evidence aligns with the high mean score on administrative support, indicating that school leaders play an important buffering role. Supportive interventions such as timetable adjustments and responsibility sharing may improve teacher well-being, motivation, and professional commitment despite persistent workload challenges. In summary, these qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by showing that teacher workload in public secondary schools remains a persistent concern, characterized by unequal distribution of workload, demanding lesson allocation, inadequate preparation time, and interference from non-teaching duties. However, administrative support emerged as an important mitigating factor, suggesting that responsive leadership can reduce workload-related stress and improve teacher well-being and instructional effectiveness.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Many teachers do not cover the syllabus on time, which has occasioned low academic performance among students in KCSE. This has brought into question the effectiveness of principals' management of work-life balance programmes. From the study, measures such as managing teachers' workload, improving time management, promoting staff welfare, and establishing wellness and counseling centers are important. However, they have not fully addressed the deeper challenges affecting teachers' effectiveness. Workload management has often remained theoretical because many schools still face teacher shortages, large classes, and heavy administrative demands. As a result, teachers continue to experience stress and fatigue, which reduces their ability to prepare lessons, assess learners, and give individual attention.

5.2 Recommendations

As a practice, principals should conduct regular workload audits and redistribute duties fairly, ensuring that teaching, administrative, and co-curricular responsibilities are balanced according to teachers' capacity, subject demands, and available resources. As a

policy, the Ministry of Education should shift from school-level administrative strategies to a system-wide teacher performance support policy that directly addresses the root causes of poor teacher performance through clear workload standards for teachers.

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