



Stakeholder Participation and Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Performance Contracting: Evidence from Public Secondary Schools in Kisii County, Kenya

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Abstract: Performance contracting links institutional priorities to measurable commitments, but implementation also requires stakeholder participation and follow-up. This article examines perceptions of stakeholder involvement and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in public secondary schools in Kisii County, Kenya. It uses a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, drawing on 1,079 usable questionnaires from principals ($n = 173$), teachers ($n = 363$), Board of Management members ($n = 322$), and parent representatives ($n = 221$), along with interviews with six education officers. Questionnaire results are presented descriptively by respondent category, and interview accounts are organized thematically. Category-specific mean scores ranged from 3.33 to 3.38 for stakeholder involvement and from 3.35 to 3.40 for M&E, within the study's predefined moderate band (2.50–3.49). Officers described participation through meetings and consultation but reported variation across schools, limited access to information, resource constraints, incomplete records, and inconsistent follow-up. Questionnaire wording differed across categories; consequently, the results reflect role-specific perceptions rather than measures designed to be equivalent across groups. Small numerical differences are not interpreted as evidence of group differences or a ranking of implementation stages. The findings identify communication, inclusive review, and documented corrective action as processes for further examination. Because the study is cross-sectional and perception-based, with respondents clustered within schools, it does not establish causal effects or population-level differences. The article interprets performance contracting as a participatory cycle of planning, review, feedback, and context-sensitive follow-up rather than target setting alone.

Keywords: performance contracting; stakeholder participation; school leadership; monitoring and evaluation; public secondary schools; Kenya

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1. Introduction

Public organizations increasingly use performance management instruments to clarify priorities, assign responsibilities, monitor progress, and strengthen accountability (Hood, 1991; Mwita, 2000; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 1999). In education, these instruments operate in institutions whose outcomes depend on coordinated work among school

leaders, teachers, governing bodies, parents, and education authorities. A performance contract may specify expected results, but the document alone cannot ensure that the people responsible for delivery understand the targets, have the resources to pursue them, or receive useful feedback during implementation.

Performance contracting is therefore best considered as a cycle rather than a one-off administrative exercise. The cycle includes agreeing on targets, aligning resources and responsibilities, involving relevant stakeholders,

monitoring implementation, communicating findings, and adjusting plans when performance falls short. When the cycle concentrates on initial target formulation and formal accountability while giving less attention to review and feedback, it risks becoming a compliance exercise rather than a tool for organisational learning.

This issue is especially important in public secondary schools. Principals hold formal leadership responsibilities, but service delivery depends on teachers' classroom work, Board of Management decisions, parents' engagement, and support from education officials. Stakeholders who are expected to implement targets need opportunities to contribute to target-setting, explain resource needs, interpret monitoring information, and participate in decisions about corrective action. Unequal access to information or participation may weaken shared ownership even where formal plans and reporting structures exist.

In Kenya, performance contracting is part of public-sector performance management (Republic of Kenya, 2005; Ministry of Public Service, Performance and Delivery Management, 2024). In schools, performance commitments intersect with principals' leadership responsibilities and the work of teachers, Boards of Management, parents' representatives, and education authorities. Kisii County offers a setting to examine how these participants experience consultation, performance information, review, and follow-up. This article focuses on implementation processes rather than assessing examination outcomes or the effectiveness of a particular appraisal instrument.

This article is based on the first author's doctoral thesis (Mitieka, 2026), which examined how four performance-contracting practices of principals—target setting, resource allocation, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation—relate to perceived service delivery in public secondary schools in Kisii County. Two companion articles use the same dataset: one examines organisational culture and its proposed moderating role (Mitieka et al., 2026a), and the other examines the overall association between performance-contracting practices and service delivery (Mitieka et al., 2026b). The present article does not repeat those analyses. Instead, it asks a different, descriptive question: how stakeholders and education officers experience the participation and follow-up stages of the performance-contracting cycle, and where ratings and officers' accounts point to possible weaknesses. Its contribution is an implementation-focused description of voice, information, review, and follow-up across four stakeholder groups, integrated with the accounts of the education officers who supervise principals' contracts.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

This article examines stakeholder participation and monitoring follow-up in the implementation of performance contracting in public secondary schools in Kisii County. It addresses three questions:

1. How were stakeholder involvement and M&E described in the questionnaire responses of each respondent category?
2. What descriptive patterns were evident within the responses of principals, teachers, BOM members, and parents' representatives, recognising differences in questionnaire wording and opportunities to observe school processes?
3. What implementation constraints did education officers identify, and what do the combined findings imply for a more participatory performance-management cycle?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

This article is guided by Stakeholder Theory and Principal-Agent Theory. The theories offer complementary explanations for why participation and monitoring follow-up matter in implementing performance contracting. Stakeholder Theory foregrounds the interests and contributions of groups affected by organisational decisions, while Principal-Agent Theory explains the role of delegated responsibilities, performance information, monitoring, and accountability. Their application here is interpretive: the cross-sectional, perception-based evidence is used to discuss implementation patterns, not to claim that either theory or a particular practice has been causally proven.

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, associated with Freeman (1984), holds that organizations should recognize and engage the groups that affect or are affected by their decisions. In public secondary schools, relevant stakeholders include principals, teachers, Boards of Management, parent representatives, and education officials. Because their knowledge and responsibilities differ, participation should go beyond merely receiving information after decisions are made. Opportunities to contribute to target setting, raise implementation constraints, review progress, and discuss responses can make performance commitments more informed and more collectively understood. In this paper, the theory helps interpret the participation ratings across respondent categories and supports attention to item-level differences rather than assuming that formal representation guarantees meaningful voice.

2.1.2 Principal-Agent Theory

Principal-Agent Theory examines relationships in which one party delegates responsibilities to another and faces challenges in observing performance or ensuring that agreed tasks are carried out (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Eisenhardt, 1989). Performance contracting reflects this concern through agreed targets, assigned responsibilities, reporting, monitoring, and review. However, accountability depends on the quality and use of information: monitoring findings need to be communicated, barriers investigated, and corrective actions followed up. The theory therefore

provides a lens for interpreting ratings, communicating monitoring findings, and acting when targets are missed. In school settings, accountability should be balanced with practical support (see Torres, 2024), because staffing shortages, inadequate resources, and delayed funding can constrain performance even when responsibilities are clear.

Taken together, the theories suggest that performance contracting works best when stakeholders can contribute and when monitoring information leads to transparent discussion and follow-up. The two perspectives are not identical: Principal–Agent Theory emphasises monitoring and control of delegated work, whereas Stakeholder Theory emphasises inclusion and legitimate claims. Using them together treats monitoring as something that must be communicated and discussed with those responsible for delivery, rather than merely enforced. The theories do not imply that all implementation problems result from weak participation or accountability; the qualitative findings also identify structural constraints.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework positions stakeholder participation and monitoring follow-up as two connected dimensions of the performance-contracting implementation process. Stakeholder participation involves opportunities to contribute to priorities, communicate needs, and participate in implementation reviews. Monitoring follow-up concerns communicating findings, identifying reasons for missed targets, agreeing on corrective action, and checking whether agreed actions are completed. Resource and operational constraints, including staffing limitations, inadequate resources, delayed funding, and limited time—are contextual conditions that may shape both processes. The framework proposes that stronger participation and more consistent follow-up are associated with more shared and accountable implementation; this paper does not test a causal pathway or estimate the effect of these practices on service-delivery outcomes.

Table 1: Conceptual framework for participation and follow-up

Core process	Key dimensions reflected in this study	Proposed implementation contribution
Stakeholder participation	Input into school priorities and targets; communication of operational needs; involvement of principals, teachers, BOM members, and parents’ representatives	More informed priorities and greater shared understanding of responsibilities
Monitoring and follow-up	Communication of monitoring findings; discussion of missed targets; agreed corrective action; subsequent review of action taken	More transparent accountability and a more continuous implementation cycle
Contextual conditions	Resource adequacy; staffing; timing of funding; time available for review; regularity of follow-up	May enable or constrain participation and follow-up
Implementation focus	Shared implementation, feedback, and completion of agreed actions	The paper interprets these as plausible process contributions, not measured causal effects

Note. The framework guides interpretation; the study does not estimate causal effects among its components.

2.3 Performance contracting as a continuous management cycle

Performance contracting links agreed objectives to indicators, responsibilities, and review (OECD, 1999; Ministry of Public Service, Performance and Delivery Management, 2024). Its value depends on the quality of the full implementation cycle. Target setting provides direction, but targets need to be realistic, communicated, and connected to operational responsibilities. Resource allocation translates priorities into practical capacity. Stakeholder involvement supports coordination and ownership, while monitoring and evaluation provide information about progress and the need for adjustment. These elements are interdependent: a target without resources may be unattainable, monitoring without

communication may not lead to action, and participation without access to relevant information may be largely symbolic. Where the underlying practices are applied skilfully and consistently, performance contracting is associated with better service delivery; where they are applied mechanically, it can become a ritual of compliance (Mwita, 2000). Evidence on goal setting similarly indicates that specific targets are most useful when accompanied by feedback on progress (Locke & Latham, 2002), and reviews of public-service improvement point to management processes alongside resources as sources of performance (Boyne, 2003). In Kenya, performance contracting has been examined in relation to service delivery, for example in Huduma Centres (Wesonga et al., 2020).

Principal–Agent Theory highlights the importance of clarifying responsibilities, making performance observable,

and aligning delegated tasks with accountability (Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). However, formal accountability arrangements are not sufficient on their own. A school is a multi-actor organisation in which performance information must travel across roles and decisions often require cooperation. A cycle-oriented perspective therefore places attention on the relational processes through which targets are understood, resourced, reviewed, and revised.

2.4 Stakeholder voice and implementation

Stakeholder involvement is more than informing people that a target exists. Meaningful involvement includes opportunities to contribute to planning, communicate operational needs, discuss progress, and participate in responses to emerging difficulties. In schools, teachers may hold essential information about staffing, teaching materials, syllabus coverage, learner welfare, and implementation constraints. Boards and parents' representatives may contribute to governance oversight and community perspectives. When these groups have limited access to targets or monitoring results, formal plans may not become shared priorities.

Kenyan studies generally link stakeholder participation to ownership, accountability, and resource mobilization, while distinguishing substantive participation from participation that exists only formally (Ogol et al., 2020). Evidence from Kisii County links BOM-provided teaching and learning resources to students' academic performance (Machuma & Ogochi, 2024), and Wafula et al. (2024) report that collaborative stakeholder engagement influenced the implementation of teacher professional development. Nabibya et al. (2023), studying school infrastructure projects, treated M&E of stakeholder participation as a determinant of implementation, implying that participation must be sustained and assessed, not merely recorded. These studies examine the consequences of involvement; the present article examines how far it is perceived to be in place.

Participation also has an information dimension. People cannot contribute effectively to review if they do not know the targets, indicators, current performance, or decisions made after monitoring. Accordingly, transparency and feedback are integral to stakeholder involvement. They allow stakeholders to understand the rationale for decisions and to identify whether agreed actions have been completed.

Local evidence also highlights issues that stakeholders need to raise during planning and review. Mitioka and Mudulia (2019) reported staffing shortages and limited participation in teacher professional development in Masaba South Sub-County, while Mitioka (2025) reported constraints in staffing and teaching-learning resources. These studies provide a contextual basis for involving teachers and governing bodies in identifying needs and discussing feasible priorities. They did not directly test stakeholder participation in performance contracting; the present study examines stakeholders' perceptions of that process.

2.5 Monitoring, feedback, and corrective action

Monitoring is useful when information is timely, credible, understandable, and connected to decisions. A system that measures performance but does not communicate findings or revisit plans may produce reports without improvement. Follow-up includes identifying gaps, assigning responsibility for action, checking progress, and reviewing whether the response worked. Kenyan evidence suggests that systematic monitoring accompanied by timely feedback supports curriculum implementation, whereas monitoring perceived as fault-finding can demoralise staff (Sululu et al., 2023), and that structured monitoring with constructive feedback is associated with more consistent syllabus coverage (Chepkoech & Cheboi, 2024). Resource constraints can complicate this process, but they also increase the importance of using evidence to prioritise limited resources.

The present study adds descriptive accounts from four stakeholder categories and education officers. The categories occupy different roles and do not necessarily observe or rate the same processes. Their responses are therefore treated as complementary perspectives rather than interchangeable measures or competing accounts of a single verified condition.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Location

The study was anchored in a pragmatist paradigm and adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. This design brings quantitative and qualitative evidence together by collecting the two strands concurrently, analysing them separately, and integrating the findings during interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The parent study combined a cross-sectional correlational survey with semi-structured interviews with education officers. The questionnaire strand described respondents' perceptions of school practices, while the interview strand provided supervisory accounts of implementation and its constraints. Combining the strands enabled the article to consider the ratings alongside explanations of participation, communication, review, and follow-up.

The study was conducted in Kisii County, south-western Kenya, covering nine sub-counties and a school system of about 355 public secondary schools. The setting included national, extra-county, county, and sub-county schools. This article focuses on stakeholder involvement and monitoring and evaluation, two of the four practices examined in the parent study. It uses the survey results descriptively and integrates them with officers' accounts; regression and moderation analyses are reported separately. Because the evidence was collected at one point in time, the design describes perceptions and implementation experiences without establishing temporal or causal relationships.

3.2 Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population comprised 14,200 questionnaire-eligible participants and ten education officers (14,210 people in total): 355 principals, 9,585 teachers, 3,195 BOM members, 1,065 parents' representatives, the County Director of Education, and the nine Sub-County Directors of Education (records of the Office of the County Director of Education). Sampling was multistage, with the school as the primary sampling unit. Schools were first stratified by sub-county, with each sub-county represented in proportion to its number of schools, and the required number of schools was selected randomly within each stratum. The principal of each sampled school was included, and teachers, BOM members, and parents' representatives were selected by simple random sampling from lists within the sampled schools. The County Director and the nine Sub-County Directors, being few and information-rich, were all targeted for interviews because of their supervisory responsibilities.

Sample sizes for the four questionnaire categories were calculated with Yamane's (1967) formula, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, using $e = 0.05$, with reported allocations totalling 1,219 questionnaires (Table 2). In total, 1,079 questionnaires were returned and sufficiently complete for analysis, a usable return rate of 88.52%. Return rates were 92.02% for principals, 94.53% for teachers, 90.45% for BOM members, and 75.95% for parents' representatives; parents' representatives are therefore under-represented relative to the sample, and the study did not establish the reasons for non-response or compare respondents with non-respondents. Interviews were completed with six of the ten targeted officers: the County Director of Education and five of the nine Sub-County Directors. The formula informed the questionnaire allocations; it does not, by itself, establish estimation precision under the multistage sampling design.

Table 2: Target population, sample, and questionnaire return rate by respondent category

Respondent category	Target population	Questionnaire allocation / interview target	Usable returned	Return rate (%)	Share of usable sample (%)
Principals	355	188	173	92.02	16.03
Teachers	9,585	384	363	94.53	33.64
BOM members	3,195	356	322	90.45	29.84
Parents' representatives	1,065	291	221	75.95	20.48
Questionnaire respondents	14,200	1,219	1,079	88.52	100.00
Education officers (interviews)	10	10	6	60.00	–

Note. Authors' survey data (parent study, Kisii County, 2026). Target-population figures are from the Office of the County Director of Education, Kisii County. Questionnaire return rate = usable questionnaires returned ÷ questionnaires administered. Interview participation = officers interviewed ÷ officers targeted.

3.3 Research Instrument

The research instruments comprised structured questionnaires, a semi-structured interview schedule, and a document analysis guide, consistent with the questionnaire and interview approaches described by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The questionnaires were administered to principals, teachers, BOM members, and parents' representatives. A principal's version, a teachers' version, and a common version for BOM members and parents' representatives accommodated differences in respondent roles. Documentary evidence provided context in the parent study; documentary findings are not reported in this article.

The questionnaire items relevant to this article used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The ten stakeholder-involvement items

covered participation in target development, consultation, departmental planning, communication of expectations, progress review, BOM support, parents' involvement in school priorities, opportunities for feedback, consideration of feedback, and perceived ownership. The ten M&E items addressed regular monitoring, monitoring mechanisms, information collection, preparation and use of reports, evaluation against indicators, communication of findings, corrective action, use of findings in later target setting, and perceived accountability. The intended index for each practice was the mean of its ten items. Table 3 presents the reported index means, while Tables 4 and 5 presents the reported item means. Respondent-level scoring and item-level denominators are unavailable for independent recalculation.

Questionnaire wording was adapted to respondent roles. Teachers' statements generally concerned their own targets and performance, whereas BOM members' and parents' representatives' statements concerned school processes. Some adaptations changed the substantive referent, not merely the grammatical perspective. Tables 4 and 5 therefore present category-specific means under organising topics, with known wording differences identified in the notes. These topic labels do not establish item equivalence. No pooled item estimates or between-category significance tests are reported in this article. The ten-item mean scores are retained as descriptive summaries of each questionnaire version, not as validated equivalent scales across categories.

The semi-structured interview schedule elicited education officers' accounts of stakeholder involvement, planning, feedback, accountability, monitoring, use of findings, and practical implementation constraints. Its contribution was to provide supervisory perspectives alongside questionnaire ratings. These accounts were not treated as substitutes for the experiences of teachers, BOM members, or parents' representatives.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Face and content validity were assessed through expert review by the university supervisors and other experts in educational administration and performance management. The instruments were pretested with the supervisors and a small number of respondents before being piloted in public secondary schools in neighbouring Nyamira County, which shares comparable characteristics with Kisii County. No pilot school participated in the main study. Of the 40 pilot questionnaires administered, 37 were returned, representing a 92.5% return rate. The reported validity evidence comprised theory-based instrument development, expert review, and item-total correlations, most of which exceeded 0.30. Factor analysis was not undertaken with the 37 pilot responses; consequently, the underlying factor structure was not established.

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Pilot coefficients were .87 for stakeholder involvement and .84 for M&E, both exceeding the study's adopted .70 criterion. These values provide evidence of internal consistency in the pilot responses, but do not establish main-sample reliability, construct validity, or measurement equivalence across respondent categories. Since role adaptations changed some item referents, the questionnaire versions are interpreted separately, and their index means are treated as descriptive summaries rather than equivalent validated scales.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Mount Kenya University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MKU/ISERC/6549), a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI/P/26/4193710), and authorisation was obtained

from the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education in Kisii County. The research team visited the sampled schools to explain the study, obtain informed consent, and schedule administration at convenient times. Questionnaires were administered and retrieved within agreed timelines. Interviews were conducted in the officers' offices at agreed times, audio-recorded with permission, and transcribed verbatim.

3.6 Data Analysis

Questionnaire data were cleaned, coded, and analysed in SPSS version 26 in the parent study. The present analysis summarises category-specific item means and ten-item mean scores. Each questionnaire version is interpreted in relation to its wording and respondent role. Because respondents were sampled within schools and the versions were not established as equivalent measures, the article does not pool item responses across categories or test between-category differences. The reported means are unweighted descriptions of the samples achieved, not estimates of county-wide implementation. Standard deviations of respondent-level scores and confidence intervals are not reported. Numerical contrasts are used to identify questions for further examination rather than to establish differences in implementation quality.

For descriptive interpretation, the study used the following fixed bands; these are conventions rather than validated implementation thresholds: 1.00–1.49 very low, 1.50–2.49 low, 2.50–3.49 moderate, 3.50–4.49 high, and 4.50–5.00 very high.

Interview data were analysed thematically in four stages: familiarisation with the transcripts, initial coding, categorisation of related codes, and development of overarching themes, with an audit trail maintained. The themes follow the topics of the interview schedule and should be read as organised summaries of what the officers said in response to those topics rather than as categories that emerged independently of the questions. Excerpts are attributed generally to education officers; individual officers are not identified. Integration took place at the interpretation stage by comparing survey patterns with the themes (Table 6).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Mount Kenya University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MKU/ISERC/6549), and research licensing was obtained from NACOSTI (NACOSTI/P/26/4193710). Administrative authorisation was also obtained from the County Commissioner and County Director of Education in Kisii County. Participants received an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, what participation involved, and how the information would be used. Written informed consent was obtained before participation, and permission was obtained before audio-recording interviews.

Participation was voluntary. Participants could decline a question or withdraw without penalty, and no inducements

were offered. Confidentiality was protected through identification codes; participant and school names were not recorded in the research instruments or reports. Electronic data were stored in password-protected files and physical documents in locked storage, with retention governed by university regulations. No minors participated. Interview excerpts are presented without identifying individual education officers, and the results are reported in aggregate or thematic form. The ethics approval and consent statements are also provided in the Declarations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Moderate ratings across involvement and follow-up

The category-specific mean scores fell within the predefined moderate range (Table 3). Stakeholder-involvement scores ranged from 3.33 among teachers to 3.38 among parents’ representatives; M&E scores ranged from 3.35 among BOM members to 3.40 among parents’ representatives. These summaries refer to the respective questionnaire versions. Their numerical proximity does not establish equivalent perceptions or an absence of differences. “Moderate” denotes the study’s interpretation band, not a finding that respondents generally selected the neutral response option.

Table 3: Stakeholder-involvement and M&E index means by respondent category

Respondent category	n	Stakeholder involvement mean	Monitoring and evaluation mean
Principals	173	3.34	3.38
Teachers	363	3.33	3.37
BOM members	322	3.34	3.35
Parents’ representatives	221	3.38	3.40

Note. Authors’ survey data (parent study, Kisii County, 2026). Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Each mean summarises ten items in the corresponding questionnaire version. Wording and referents differed across versions, and measurement equivalence was

not established. The values describe the achieved respondent samples and are not school-level or county population estimates. Respondent-level score SDs are not reported. The study’s predefined moderate band was 2.50–3.49.

4.2 Item-level ratings

Stakeholder-involvement item means occupied a narrow range within each category: 3.27–3.45 among principals, 3.26–3.38 among teachers, 3.28–3.42 among BOM members, and 3.28–3.46 among parents’ representatives

(Table 4). Principals gave their highest mean rating to teachers’ participation in progress review (3.45) and their lowest to teachers’ involvement in target development (3.27). These within-category observations do not establish that one implementation stage was consistently stronger than another. The questionnaire versions and respondent roles must be considered when interpreting each column.

Table 4: Stakeholder-involvement topics: descriptive item means by respondent category

Topic / organising label	Prin.	Teach.	BOM	Par.
Teachers are involved in developing school performance targets	3.27	3.37	3.37	3.44
Teachers are consulted before targets are assigned	3.30	3.38	3.42	3.45
HODs involve teachers in departmental performance planning	3.35	3.29	3.37	3.38
Principal communicates performance expectations clearly	3.38	3.32	3.34	3.46
Teachers participate in reviewing progress towards targets	3.45	3.36	3.30	3.42
BOM participates in supporting achievement of targets	3.34	3.33	3.34	3.34
Parents' representatives participate in important priorities	3.34	3.27	3.32	3.32
Feedback / identifying implementation challenges (wording differs by category)	3.36	3.31	3.30	3.35
Feedback considered in decisions (wording differs by category)	3.37	3.36	3.28	3.28
Stakeholder involvement has improved ownership	3.29	3.26	3.36	3.42

Note. Authors' survey data (parent study, Kisii County, 2026), as reported in Mitieka (2026). Abbreviations represent respondent categories as follows: Prin. = principals (n = 173); Teach. = teachers (n = 363); BOM = Board of Management members (n = 322); Par. = parents' representatives (n = 221); HODs = heads of department. The sample sizes identify the total respondent categories and do not represent confirmed valid response counts for every individual item. Values reflect the reported means for the respective questionnaire versions. Row labels are designed to organise related topics and do not necessarily represent verbatim questionnaire statements. Specifically, in the feedback and challenges row, principals rated stakeholders' contributions to identifying challenges, whereas the other versions addressed opportunities to provide feedback. In the next row, principals rated consideration of general stakeholder feedback, whereas the other versions referred specifically to teacher feedback. Consequently, these means

should be interpreted vertically within columns rather than as equivalent comparative measures across categories.

M&E item means are shown separately by respondent category in Table 5. Principals rated regular monitoring at 3.46 and the use of results in subsequent target setting at 3.31. Teachers' ratings ranged from 3.29 for monitoring of their own performance to 3.45 for improved accountability. Among BOM members, reported means ranged from 3.27 for report preparation to 3.44 for systematic information collection and use of reports to identify improvement areas. Parents' representatives rated regular monitoring at 3.50 and improved accountability at 3.31. These are descriptive observations within questionnaire versions. They do not demonstrate that information collection is stronger than corrective action or that respondent categories differ in their assessments.

Table 5: Monitoring-and-evaluation topics: descriptive item means by respondent category

Topic / organising label	Prin.	Teach.	BOM	Par.
Progress towards targets is monitored regularly	3.46	3.29	3.35	3.50
School has clear monitoring mechanisms	3.42	3.35	3.37	3.45
Performance information is collected systematically	3.41	3.42	3.44	3.44
Performance reports are prepared regularly	3.45	3.38	3.27	3.39
Reports are used to identify areas requiring improvement	3.33	3.38	3.44	3.36
Performance is evaluated against predetermined indicators	3.32	3.34	3.37	3.43
Monitoring findings are communicated to stakeholders	3.35	3.41	3.31	3.33
Corrective measures are taken when targets are not achieved	3.34	3.34	3.29	3.33
M&E results inform subsequent target setting	3.31	3.35	3.30	3.41
M&E has improved accountability	3.43	3.45	3.36	3.31

Note. Authors' survey data (parent study, Kisii County, 2026). Abbreviations, sample-size qualifications, and response scale as in Table 4. Row labels group related topics rather than identical statements. Teachers' items concerned their own performance: for example, regular monitoring referred to monitoring against their agreed targets. In the use-of-reports row, teachers rated receipt of performance feedback; in the communication row, they rated discussion of their performance results. These are distinct from school-level report use and communication to stakeholders and must be interpreted separately. No pooled estimates or significance tests are presented.

4.3 Role-specific descriptive observations

The category-specific means provide perspectives on implementation rather than a test of stakeholder differences. Similar numerical scores may reflect different processes, expectations, access to information, or response tendencies. Neither statistical equivalence nor agreement about objectively verified practice can be inferred from these summaries.

Two observations warrant further examination. Principals rated report preparation at 3.45, while BOM members rated the corresponding school-level topic at 3.27; whether this reflects differences in access to reports cannot be determined here. Parents' representatives rated regular monitoring at 3.50, compared with 3.33 for communication and corrective action and 3.31 for improved accountability. This pattern raises questions about the visibility and use of monitoring information but does not establish an

implementation gap. Parents' representatives may have limited opportunities to observe departmental planning or teacher-feedback processes, and their questionnaire return rate was the lowest (75.95%).

4.4 Education officers' accounts

Interviews with the County Director and five Sub-County Directors produced four themes on stakeholder involvement and four on monitoring and evaluation (Table 6). On involvement, officers described implementation of principals' contracts as shared work: "The principal cannot deliver all the targets individually," as one put it. Participation was said to occur through staff, departmental and Board meetings, but "the level of participation depends on the school," with some principals consulting widely and others keeping decisions within the administration. Officers noted that teachers explain "what is working and what is not working" during review meetings, whereas the involvement of the Board and parents in regular review "is not always consistent." They cited limited time, inadequate information, differing stakeholder priorities, resource constraints, and irregular meeting attendance; as one officer observed, some parents "are willing to participate but do not have sufficient information about school performance targets."

On M&E, officers described monitoring through school visits, record reviews, reports, and meetings that compare progress with agreed targets, and stressed that evaluation "is based on evidence" and holds principals accountable. They also said that findings "should not remain in the report" but

should inform corrective action and later target setting. Challenges included inadequate time and resources, incomplete school records, competing duties, inconsistent reporting, and limited follow-up: “Monitoring may identify a problem, but follow-up can be affected by limited resources and competing priorities.” These constraints help

contextualise the moderate survey ratings for review and feedback. If funds are delayed or staffing is insufficient, the performance-management process needs a way to record the constraint, reassess priorities, and agree realistic corrective actions.

Table 6: Joint display: education officers’ accounts and survey results

Theme	Officers’ accounts	Relation to survey results
Shared responsibility in implementation	Targets depend on cooperation among principals, teachers, departments, the Board, and parents.	Each questionnaire version produced a moderate involvement mean. Ratings describe perceptions rather than verified shared responsibility.
Participatory planning and target setting	Meetings, departmental planning, and consultation provide routes for input; depth varies by school.	Planning and consultation items received similar numerical ratings to review items within categories; school-level variation was not analysed.
Feedback, monitoring, and accountability (involvement)	Teachers explain progress and barriers; Board and parent participation in regular review is not always consistent.	Role-specific review ratings provide context, but they do not establish whether Board or parent participation was regular.
Constraints on meaningful participation	Limited time, inadequate information, differing priorities, resource constraints, and irregular attendance.	Constraints were described in interviews rather than directly measured by the reported questionnaire items.
Regular tracking of targets	Monitoring through school visits, record reviews, reports, and meetings against agreed targets.	Regular monitoring means were 3.46 for principals and 3.29 for teachers, whose item concerned their own performance; the two referents differ.
Evidence-based evaluation and accountability	Evaluation rests on records, reports, and results, and is meant to hold principals accountable.	Accountability means ranged from 3.31 for parents’ representatives to 3.45 for teachers. These descriptive scores do not establish an effect of M&E.
Use of findings for corrective action	Findings should inform corrective action and later target setting, not remain in reports.	Corrective-action means ranged from 3.29 to 3.34. No statistical ranking against other topics is established.
Challenges affecting M&E	Inadequate time and resources, incomplete records, competing duties, inconsistent reporting, limited follow-up.	Officers’ accounts identify possible barriers. The survey does not estimate their prevalence or effects.

Note. Thematic summaries of interviews with the County Director of Education and five Sub-County Directors of Education, considered alongside category-specific questionnaire results. The display connects perspectives; it does not independently verify implementation or establish that the strands measured identical processes. Themes follow the interview topics, and no theme frequencies are reported.

4.5 Integrated interpretation

The strands provide complementary rather than interchangeable evidence. Questionnaire summaries

describe moderate category-specific ratings, with small numerical variation across topics. Officers’ accounts describe variation between schools and identify information, resource, record-keeping, and follow-up constraints. The survey does not directly measure all of these constraints or test their relationship with the ratings. Officers’ suggestions that participation is stronger in planning than review are not established by the questionnaire summaries. Integration therefore identifies questions for practical review rather than a statistically demonstrated hierarchy of weaknesses.

The evidence does not show that stakeholder differences caused weaker service delivery, nor does it establish that a particular intervention would improve outcomes. It does, however, identify actionable processes that education leaders can examine who participates in target setting, who sees performance information, how resource needs are discussed, how often targets are reviewed, and whether monitoring findings lead to assigned actions. Agreement with a questionnaire statement is treated as evidence that a practice is perceived to be present, not as verification that it is implemented.

4.6 Discussion

The article contributes a descriptive account of participation and follow-up in one Kenyan county. Mean scores in each questionnaire fell within the predefined moderate range. This classification should not be treated as direct verification of implementation quality or as evidence that all respondents were neutral. Officers' accounts suggest that meetings and monitoring activities coexist with uneven participation and operational constraints. The combined findings support examining the continuity of consultation, review, communication, and follow-up without establishing which stage is weakest. Interpreting performance contracting as a management cycle is consistent with the importance of feedback and organisational processes in performance management (Locke & Latham, 2002; Mwita, 2000).

Numerical contrasts between categories are descriptive observations, not statistically established group differences. The questionnaire versions were not shown to have measurement equivalence, and respondents were sampled within schools. Consequently, neither the proximity of mean scores nor selected differences can establish consensus, disagreement, or differences in implementation quality. Future research should use comparable instruments and school-linked data to distinguish role-specific perceptions from school-level variation.

The theoretical frameworks direct attention to the relationship between information and participation. Principal-Agent Theory highlights the importance of information for oversight, whereas Stakeholder Theory directs attention to access, voice, and legitimate involvement. The present findings do not test these theories. Instead, officers' accounts and role-specific ratings identify communication and follow-up as processes that warrant examination. Constructive monitoring has also been discussed in relation to educational support and accountability (Sululu et al., 2023; Torres, 2024).

The qualitative evidence adds an operational dimension. Inadequate resources, time constraints, incomplete records, and limited follow-up can impede implementation even where formal commitments exist. These constraints do not make target-setting or monitoring unnecessary; they strengthen the case for adaptive review. A useful system distinguishes between lack of effort, constraints outside a school's immediate control, and targets that require revision

or additional support. Because the officers supervise principals' contracts, their accounts represent the supervisory view of the system and are not a substitute for the views of principals, teachers, Board members, or parents. The capacity constraints described by officers can also be considered alongside the staffing and resource shortages reported in Masaba South by Mitieka and Mudulia (2019) and Mitieka (2025). This contextual comparison does not establish that the studies measured the same practices or that such constraints caused the present ratings.

The article's contribution is distinct from an analysis of whether performance-contracting practices are statistically associated with service delivery and from a separate analysis of organisational culture as a proposed moderator. It concentrates on how implementation is experienced across stakeholder groups and on where ratings and officers' accounts point to possible weaknesses in continuity. The findings should therefore be read as a descriptive process account that complements, rather than duplicates, the other analyses derived from the same study.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Stakeholder participation received moderate mean ratings in all four respondent-specific questionnaire versions (3.33–3.38). Officers described consultation through staff, departmental, and Board meetings, while identifying uneven participation, limited information, and inconsistent involvement in review. The conclusion is that participation was perceived to be present but needed closer attention to access, opportunities to contribute, and continuity across the performance cycle. The scores do not establish equivalent measurement or differences between stakeholder categories.

Monitoring and evaluation also received moderate mean ratings (3.35–3.40). Officers described school visits, record reviews, reporting, and meetings, as well as incomplete records, competing responsibilities, resource constraints, and limited follow-up. The conclusion is that monitoring activities should be examined together with communication and completion of corrective action. Taken together, the two strands support practical review of a participatory cycle linking consultation, information, progress review, and follow-up. The cross-sectional evidence does not establish causal effects on service delivery.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for policy and practice

The recommendations address the two practices examined in this article. Stakeholder-participation recommendations respond to moderate involvement ratings and officers' accounts of uneven consultation and access to information. M&E recommendations respond to moderate ratings and accounts of incomplete records, competing duties, and

limited follow-up. They are proposed management responses, not interventions whose effectiveness was tested.

Recommendations on stakeholder participation

- Principals should consult with teachers, BOM members, and parent representatives before performance targets are finalised. Proposed targets, responsibilities, and resource needs should be circulated in accessible language before meetings. Meeting records should distinguish stakeholders' contributions from simple notifications and document how suggestions were considered. These measures address officers' accounts of variable participation and inadequate information; the survey does not establish their causal effect on implementation.
- School leaders and governing bodies should include stakeholder representatives in periodic progress reviews and communicate decisions after each review. Reviews should allow participants to explain practical barriers, including staffing, materials, and delayed funding, and should document the reasons for resource decisions. This recommendation follows the qualitative accounts of inconsistent participation in regular review and the role-specific involvement ratings.

Recommendations on monitoring and evaluation

- Principals and heads of department should maintain a review schedule and consistent records of progress against agreed indicators. Each review should identify unmet targets, distinguish operational constraints from responsibilities within the school's control, and communicate findings to the stakeholders expected to act. The response to incomplete records and inconsistent reporting should include usable reporting formats and guidance rather than additional reporting requirements alone.
- Each monitoring review should end with agreed corrective actions, responsible persons, realistic deadlines, and a date for checking completion. Education authorities should use school reports and visits to follow up on unresolved actions and identify where staffing, funding, or technical support is required. These recommendations respond to officers' accounts of resource constraints and limited follow-up, alongside the reported corrective-action ratings of 3.29–3.34; those scores do not establish a statistically demonstrated ranking of weaknesses.

5.3 Limitations and directions for further research

The study concerns one Kenyan county and does not establish national patterns. Its cross-sectional questionnaire responses describe perceptions rather than independently verified implementation. Respondents were clustered within schools, but school-level dependence was not modelled. The final number of schools represented, and the school-by-sub-county allocation are not documented in this article, limiting assessment of coverage. The unweighted summaries should therefore be interpreted as descriptions of the respondent samples achieved, not population estimates. Differential selection and non-response may also influence

the findings; parents' representatives had the lowest return rate and may have limited opportunities to observe school-internal processes.

Questionnaire wording and referents differed by category, and measurement equivalence was not assessed. The ten-item means summarise the respective versions rather than a common validated scale. In addition, one item in each scale concerns a perceived outcome—ownership or accountability—rather than an implementation practice. Reliability coefficients derive from 37 pilot questionnaires, and main-sample reliability and respondent-level score variability are not reported. The study does not document item-level missingness, the criteria for classifying a questionnaire as usable, or the minimum number of completed items required for a score. These omissions limit assessment of the score calculations and the effect of incomplete responses.

The qualitative findings reflect six of ten targeted education officers and follow the interview topics. They represent supervisory perspectives rather than the full range of stakeholder experiences. Interview dates, duration, language, coding responsibilities, and quotation-level participant identifiers are not documented in this article, limiting assessment of the analytic process. The two strands consequently offer complementary exploratory accounts rather than independent verification of the same practices. Further research should use fully documented sampling and scoring procedures, assess main-sample reliability and instrument validity, employ comparable role-sensitive items, link respondents to schools, and combine stakeholder perceptions with independently verified records and longitudinal follow-up.

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