

**SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE IN URBAN LOW SOCIO-
ECONOMIC SETTING: A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN KIBERA, KENYA**

Submitted by

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the Australian Catholic University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), National Council for Science and Technology (NCST), Kenya; Kenyan Ministry of Education; Nairobi City Director of Education and the participating public primary schools in Kenya.

Statement of Authorship

The work in this thesis is all my own. I received some clerical assistance with organisation of the meetings in the school, data entry and transcription of some audio recordings. I also received the assistance of a professional editor for language and some formatting corrections. Finally all work, conceptual development and analysis was discussed with my supervisors who made suggestions, gave advice and asked questions which help me in clarifying my ideas, and on structuring the thesis. I also received some assistance with formatting pictures and diagrams.

Signature:

Date:

19/11/2015

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the many people who have encouraged and supported me throughout this journey

My late father Alfred Okaya Milambo and my mother Julia Apondi Okaya who from onset were determined to nurture my education pursuit

My wife Josephine Mupa Masai and children Alfred Okaya, Daniel Milambo, Alvina Apondi and Billy Masai without whose love, patience, encouragement and support this would not have been possible

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii
Statement of Contributions to Jointly Published Work.....	xiv
Additional Publications	xv
Editorial Assistance	xv
Glossary of Acronyms	xvi
Abstract.....	xviii
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Context of the Study: Kenya.....	2
Primary Education in Kenya	3
School Feeding Program.....	4
Kibera Slum	6
Challenges facing Primary Education in Kenya	7
School-based Management in Kenya	8
Statement of the Problem	11
Purpose of the Study.....	12
Significance of the Study.....	13
Conceptual Framework for the Study	15
Definitions of the Terminology.....	17
Overview of the Thesis.....	18
Conclusion	20
Chapter 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	21
Conceptualising Quality Education.....	21
Improving Quality of Education for the Poor.....	26
Global Interventions	27
School-based Management	28
Theories of School-based Management.....	31
Models of School-based Management.....	33
Levels of School-based Management	37

School boards at school level.....	37
School boards for more than one school.....	38
School boards at two levels.....	39
Membership of School Boards.....	40
Decision-Making and School Boards	44
School Climate.....	46
Interactions	50
The Head Teacher and the School Board	52
Teacher-parent Partnerships.....	56
Parental Involvement	61
Paradoxes, Tensions and Dilemmas	62
School Board Effectiveness.....	66
Studies in Kenya	70
Conclusion.....	72
Chapter 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	74
Invitational Education Theory and Practice	74
People	76
Place.....	76
Processes	77
Policies.....	78
Programs	79
Ecological Systems Theory	82
Pragmatism.....	87
Epistemological Stance.....	87
Methodological Stance	88
Axiological Stance	90
Ontological Stance	91
Causal Linkages	93
Rationale	93
Application of Pragmatism	95
Conclusion.....	96

Chapter 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	97
Sample	97
Research Design.....	98
Sequential Explorative Mixed Method Design.....	101
First Stage – Quantitative Stage	106
Second Stage – Qualitative Stage.....	107
Methods of Data Collection.....	110
Pilot Study.....	111
Quantitative Methods of Data Collection	111
<i>Inviting School Survey –Revised Questionnaire</i>	112
<i>Parents’ Questionnaire</i>	113
<i>Board members’ Questionnaire</i>	113
<i>National Examination Results</i>	114
<i>Revision of Questionnaires</i>	114
Qualitative Methods of Data Collection	114
Validity.....	115
Focus Group Discussion	117
<i>Teachers’ Interview Guide</i>	119
<i>Parents’ Interview Guide</i>	119
<i>School board Interview Guide</i>	119
<i>Revision of Interview Guides</i>	120
Field Observations	120
Procedure for Data Collection	121
Ethical issues.....	122
Challenges Experienced During Data Collection	123
Delay in Acquiring Relevant Information.....	123
Teachers’ Strike.....	123
Kenya Certificate Primary Examinations	124
Schools Over-Researched	124
Political Interference.....	125
Conclusion	125

Chapter 5: DATA ANALYSES 126

Multi-Level Modelling Technique.....	126
Definition of Multilevel Modelling Technique.....	127
Weakness in Multilevel Modelling	128
Application of Multilevel Modelling in this Study	129
Quantitative Data Analysis.....	131
Cleaning Data and Diagnostics.....	131
Missing Values.....	132
Multicollinearity.....	132
Descriptive Statistics.....	132
Inferential Statistics.....	133
Significance Level.....	133
Factor Analysis.....	133
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Post Hoc Test.....	133
Regression Analysis	134
Correlational Analysis	136
Qualitative Data Analysis.....	137
Coding.....	137
Taxonomy	138
Preliminary Analysis	138
Within-Case Analysis	138
Across-Case Analysis	139
Conclusion.....	140

Chapter 6: SURVEY RESULTS 141

Diagnostics Statistics	142
Participants	142
Settings	143
Performance Trends	144
School Climate.....	146
Parental Involvement	149
Public School Board Practices.....	151
Parents' Perception.....	152
Perception of Board Members	154

Regression Analysis	155
School Board Effects on KCPE Scores	155
School Board Effects on Parental Involvement	157
School Board Effects on School Climate.....	158
Correlational Analysis	161
Conclusion	163
Chapter 7: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	164
Participants.....	164
School Climate	164
People.....	165
Place.....	167
Processes	170
Policies	171
Programs	172
Parental Involvement.....	174
Discussion.....	176
Conclusion	177
Chapter 8: SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN KENYA	178
Participants.....	179
Composition.....	179
Meetings	180
Role of the Head teacher	184
Support for Teaching and Learning	184
Budgets and Fiscal Management	186
Physical Environment.....	190
Interactions.....	191
Decision Making	193
Programs	194
Policies.....	197
Challenges.....	198
Challenges to Academic Achievement	198
Challenges to the School Boards.....	201

Discussion.....	202
Conclusion.....	204
Chapter 9: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.....	206
Contrasting Results	206
Vignettes.....	208
<i>Tau</i> School Board.....	208
<i>Omega</i> School Board.....	209
Pupils' Performance.....	210
The Head Teacher	212
Gender.....	214
Selection Processes.....	214
Relationships	215
Parent-Teacher Relationship	216
Pupil-Teacher Relationship.....	218
School Climate.....	219
Summary of Similarities and Differences	223
Conclusion.....	225
Chapter 10: PARADOXES, TENSIONS AND DILEMMAS	227
Paradoxes.....	227
Paradox 1: Board's Decision Making and Support to Teaching & Learning	228
Paradox 2: Board's Self-concept.....	230
Paradox 3: Large Class Size	231
Paradox 4: Enrolment of pupils from higher socioeconomic settings.....	233
Paradox 5: Exiting Free Public Education for Fee Paying Private Education.....	235
Paradox 6: Conducting Remedial Lessons Despite State ban	237
Tensions	240
Tension 1: Use of Corporal Punishment.....	240
Tension 2: Huge Gender Disparity in Staffing of Teachers	241
Tension 3: Board – Head teacher Relationship.....	243
Dilemma	244
Dilemma 1: National Politics.....	244
Dilemma 2: Board Elections	249

Discussion.....	250
Conclusion	251
Chapter 11: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	252
Introduction.....	252
Summary of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions	253
Question 1: Participants' perceptions.....	254
<i>School Climate</i>	254
<i>Parental Involvement</i>	254
<i>Academic Achievement</i>	255
Question 2: Operation of the school boards	256
Question 3: Perceived efficacy of the school boards	257
<i>Espoused Model</i>	258
<i>Operating Model</i>	259
<i>Effective Model</i>	261
Question 4: School boards' dilemmas.....	264
Question 5: Perception of the Board and practice.....	264
Research Design.....	265
Research Methods	265
<i>Quantitative data collection</i>	266
<i>Inviting School Survey – Revised (ISS-R)</i>	266
<i>Parents' Questionnaire (PQ)</i>	266
<i>School Board Members' Questionnaire (SBMQ)</i>	266
<i>Qualitative data collection</i>	267
The Role of the Researcher.....	268
Limitations and Delimitations.....	269
Impact of the Study	270
Conclusion	271
Recommendations	273
Government Level	273
<i>Capacity development</i>	273
<i>Providing support to the board</i>	274
<i>Building Networks</i>	274
<i>Introduction of the Invitational Education Theory and Practice</i>	274

<i>Election considerations</i>	275
School Level	275
<i>Listening and Communicating Effectively</i>	275
<i>Educating Parents</i>	276
<i>Shared Vision</i>	276
<i>Improving Election of Members</i>	277
Directions for Further Research.....	278
References	279
APPENDICES	A-1
Appendix 1: Map of Kenya	A-1
Appendix 2: Kibera Slum, Kenya.....	A-2
Appendix 3: Management Theories	A-3
Appendix 4: Grade 8 Pupils' ISS-R Questionnaire	A-5
Appendix 5: Teachers' ISS-R Questionnaire	A-7
Appendix 6: Parents' Questionnaire (PQ).....	A-9
Appendix 7: School Board Members' Questionnaire (SBMQ).....	A-11
Appendix 8: Teachers' Interview Protocol	A-13
Appendix 9: Parents' Interview Protocol.....	A-14
Appendix 10: School Board Members' Interview Protocol.....	A-15
Appendix 11: Revision of Teachers' ISS-R Questionnaires	A-16
Appendix 12: Revision of Parents' Questionnaires	A-17
Appendix 13: Revision of Pupils' ISS-R Questionnaires	A-18
Appendix 14: Revision of Interview Protocols	A-19
Teachers	A-19
Parents.....	A-19
School Board Members	A-20
Appendix 15: KCPE scores 2002 to 2011.....	A-21
Appendix 16: KCPE scores 2012 to 2013.....	A-22
Appendix 17: Australian Catholic University's (ACU) HREC clearance	A-23
Appendix 18: National Council for Science & Technology (NCST)'s clearance.....	A-24
Appendix 19: District Commissioner Clearance	A-25
Appendix 20: Clearance from <i>Rho</i>	A-26
Appendix 21: Clearance from <i>Upsilon</i>	A-27

Appendix 22: Information Letter to Participants [Questionnaire]	A-28
Appendix 23: Information letter to participants [Survey]	A-29
Appendix 24: Information Letter to Participants [Interview]	A-30
Appendix 25: Informed Consent Form.....	A-31
Appendix 26: Results of Little's MCAR Tests.....	A-32
Appendix 27: The variance inflation factors (VIF).....	A-33
Appendix 28: Residual Plots: KCPE-School Board Practice	A-34
Appendix 29: Residual Plots: School Climate-School Board Practice	A-35
Appendix 30: Residual Plots: Parental Involvement-School Board Practice	A-36
Appendix 31: Results of Principal Component Analysis	A-37
Appendix 32: Factor loadings from responses by school board members	A-38
Appendix 33: Summary of Study Participants.....	A-39
Appendix 34: Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables	A-40
Appendix 35: Table on Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)	A-42
Appendix 36: Results of Post Hoc Tests on School Climate.....	A-43
Appendix 37: Results of Post Hoc Tests on Parental Involvement	A-44
Appendix 38: Results of Post Hoc Tests on school board practice	A-45
Appendix 39: Comparative Analysis — <i>People</i>	A-46
Appendix 40: Comparative Analysis — <i>Place</i>	A-47
Appendix 41: Comparative Analysis — <i>Processes</i>	A-48
Appendix 42: Comparative Analysis — <i>Policies</i>	A-49
Appendix 43: Comparative Analysis — <i>Programs</i>	A-50

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Definition of terms	17
Table 3.1 The five ‘P’s of Invitational Education Theory and Practice	80
Table 3.2 Key beliefs of pragmatism	94
Table 4.1 A summary of sequential exploratory mixed-method design	108
Table 4.2 Methods of data collection.....	110
Table 6.1 School demographics.....	144
Table 6.2 Overall perception of school climate.....	146
Table 6.3 Participants’ perception about climate disaggregated by school	148
Table 6.4 Mean rating of parental involvement disaggregated by school	150
Table 6.5 Frequency of parental involvement.....	152
Table 6.6 Parents’ perception on board’s contribution disaggregated by school.....	153
Table 6.7 Board members’ perception about their practice	154
Table 6.8 Model used to determine boards’ effect on KCPE scores	156
Table 6.9 Model used to determine board’s effect on parental involvement.....	157
Table 6.10 Model used to determine board’s effect on school climate	159
Table 6.11 Pearson’s correlations	161
Table 7.1 Pupils’ perception of their school climate	168
Table 8.1 School levies introduced by school boards.....	188
Table 9.1 Comparative analysis: Similarities and difference	224
Table 10.1 Post Hoc Test: Parents’ Level of Education & Income	233

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework of the function of the board	15
Figure 2.1 School board effectiveness model	69
Figure 4.1 Typology of mixed research	103
Figure 4.2 A Sequential Explorative Mixed Method Design	105
Figure 5.1 Participants nested within schools.....	130
Figure 5.2 With-in Case Analysis Conceptual Framework.....	139
Figure 6.1 KCPE scores for the period 2002 to 2013	145
Figure 9.1 Deviation of KCPE School Mean from National Mean	210
Figure 11.1 The Espoused model of school board governance	258
Figure 11.2 Operating model of school board governance	259
Figure 11.3 The Effective model of school board governance.....	262

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I acknowledge that my my contribution to the above paper is seventy percent (70%).



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I acknowledge that my my contribution to the above paper is ten percent (10%).



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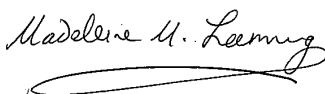
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Additional Publications

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- Okaya, T. M. (2012b). *Kenyan Education Reports since Independence: A Review of their Purpose, Recommendations and Achievements*. Paper presented at the 1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference Nairobi, Kenya.
- Okaya, T. M. (2012c). *The Role of Standards in Improving the Quality of Public Education*. Paper presented at the Umalusi 2012 Conference Standards in Education and Training: The Challenge, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Okaya, T. M. (2013a). *eLearning for Aging Classroom Teachers in Kenya*. Paper presented at the 2013 eLearning Innovation Conference: An International ICT Conference for Innovators, Leaders, and Educators, Nairobi, Kenya.
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Glossary of Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meetings
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AUD	Australian Dollar
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DfEE	Department for Education England
DoE	Department of Education – United Kingdom
DV	Dependent Variables
EFA	Education for All
ELHE	Educational Leadership in Higher Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
IETP	Invitational Educational Theory and Practice
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
IRIN	International Regional Information Network
ISS-R	Invitational Schools Survey- Revised
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
KPPSBA	Kenya Public Primary School Board Association
LEA	Local Education Authority

LSD	Least Square Difference
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
MCAR	Missing Completely at Random
MD	Mean Difference
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MML	Multilevel Model
MoE	Ministry of Education – Kenya
MP	Member of Parliament
NARC	National Alliance Rainbow Party
NCST	National Council for Science and Technology
NGA	National Governors' Association
NGA	National Governors' Association
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PQ	Parents' Questionnaire
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTTC	Primary Teachers' Training College
SASA	South African School Act
SBM	School-based management
SBMQ	School Board Members' Questionnaire
SD	Standard Deviation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFP	School Feeding Program
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States
VIF	Variance Inflation Factors
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Abstract

The global trend in the management of public school systems is systematic decentralisation of authority and responsibility to the school level. The local community, through their representatives in the school boards or committees, are mandated to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations. This devolution of authority and responsibility to school level decision-makers is intended to ensure transparency, accountability, ownership and provision of quality education. Although the public primary school boards have been in existence in Kenya since the 1980s, they became more prominent after the introduction of free primary education in 2003 and the determination to realise the education for all goal in the year 2015.

In urban low socioeconomic settings such as Kibera slum, the boards operate under extremely difficult conditions. Most of the board members are low income earners with relatively low levels of education, and yet they are expected to provide effective and strategic leadership to the schools. Paradoxically, some schools within this setting have performed much better than schools in well-off settings. It is not clear, though, if the performance of such schools could be attributable in any way to their school boards. This study was necessitated by the paucity of literature on the efficacy of public primary school boards in developing nations and in urban low socioeconomic settings.

Invitational Education Theory and Practice, Ecological System Theory, and Pragmatism provided the theoretical framework used to describe the operation and impact of public primary school boards in Kibera slum in Kenya. Kibera is the largest informal settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa and one of the five largest slums in the world. According to *invitational theory*, a school is considered inviting if the physical environment, people, processes, policies and programs are conducive to teaching and learning. *Ecological systems theory* posits that a child's development is affected by both family and ecological factors (social, political, biological and economic conditions). To explore how the public primary school boards are effective in assuring quality education is provided to slum children, despite the internal and external factors, this study adopted the *pragmatic* stance.

There is a growing trend of school-based management movement towards model of corporate governance. Although several models of decentralisation existed their differences were based on where the locus of decision-making lies — administrative,

professional and/or community. Board membership and the relationship between the board and the principal or head teacher were challenging aspects of the governance in most of the developed countries. The overarching goal of this study was to determine, from participants' perspective, how the public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya impacted upon the school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance.

A purposive sample of eight public primary schools which had more than eighty percent of their Grade 8 pupils residing within the slum were selected. Data was collected and analysed through a two stages sequential explorative mixed method design. The first stage involved administration of surveys to 822 Grade 8 pupils, 803 parents and 122 teachers. The second stage was mainly twenty group interviews with 36 teachers, 70 parents and 43 board members from the eight schools. In the first stage, quantitative approach was dominant with a small element of qualitative aspect (open-ended questions); while a qualitative approach was dominant in the second stage with a small element of quantitative data (survey to 43 board members). Field observations and review of public documents such as government reports and records of board meetings were also carried out.

The data collection methods were validated through pilot testing, diagnostic statistics, prolonged field engagement, peer review and triangulation. A multilevel modelling technique using both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse quantitative data. Preliminary, within- and across-case analyses using taxonomical and constant comparative analytical strategies were used to analyse qualitative data. Results showed that regardless of the socioeconomic settings and negative effects of the ecological factors, it is possible for boards to positively influence educational outcomes. The implication of this study is that with the proper capacity development of board members and teachers, along with strong collaboration and teamwork, the school boards' effectiveness can be enhanced. However, there is a need for further research into the operations of the school boards in low socioeconomic areas and in particular their decision-making process, and the role of the head teacher.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Kenya hosts the largest informal settlement in sub-Saharan Africa. It is known as the Kibera slum, which is among the five largest slum areas in the world (Tovrov, 2011). According to the 2010 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) report on reaching marginalised children, there were at least “seventy-two million children who are missing out on their right to education because of the simple fact of where they are born or who their family is” (UNESCO, 2010, p. i). Most of them live in slums similar to Kibera. The goal of improving access to quality education for poor, underprivileged children is of great importance globally.

According to the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) 2014 report, over 140 million children in developing countries are still not attending school, 15 per cent of these are engaged in child labour (considered to be economic exploitation) and a sizeable number face cruel and degrading punishment at home or in school, which is violence against children (UNICEF, 2014a). In addition, the report states that:

Gains and deprivations are unevenly distributed. Children’s chances differ depending on whether their country is *a rich* [developed nation] or a *poor one* [developing nation]; whether they are born girls or boys, into families rich or poor; or whether they live in the countryside or the city – and there, too, whether they live in *well-to-do* areas or impoverished neighborhoods [slums]. (pp. 4-5)

This implies that, in slums such as Kibera, the task of ensuring children’s access to schooling is of primary importance, followed by the provision of education of a quality commensurate with that of schools in more privileged settings.

All states who are members of the United Nations committed themselves in 2000, to eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015 (Easterly, 2009); six of these eight goals prioritised children’s issues, including their access to quality education (United Nations, 1990). The goals are aimed at ensuring that each child has the right to survival, food and nutrition, health and shelter. One of the goals is aimed specifically at providing primary level education to every child. In response, many developing countries, including Kenya, abolished school fees and invested heavily in school building programs (Ahunanya & Akinyemi, 2010). In 2015, a set of seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and

injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030 were adopted to build on the eight anti-poverty targets MDGs (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2015). Among them is the commitment by UN member states to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Context of the Study: Kenya

Kenya occupies approximately 580,367 square kilometres with a population estimated at 45 million, growing at an annual rate of 2.1 per cent (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2015; UNESCO, 2014). The country is bordered by Ethiopia (North), South Sudan (North-West), Tanzania (South), Uganda (West), Somalia (East) and Indian Ocean (South-East) as shown in Appendix 1. It is a democratic country with two levels of government: national and county (Kibua & Mwabu, 2008). The president is the chief of state and head of government, while governors are elected to govern the forty-seven divisions known as 'counties' (CIA, 2014). Devolution of power from the central government to counties was intended to make governance more democratic and to reduce regional disparities (Abuom, 2014).

Every county government is expected to decentralise its services and coordinate its functions in order to serve the interests of the people efficiently at the local level. However, essential services such as education, health and security are under the control of the central government. Within each county there are constituencies (in reality sub-counties) that elect a member of parliament (MP) to legislate on issues of national interest. One of their roles as members of parliament is to maintain a close link with issues affecting their constituencies by providing leadership and taking part in local events and official functions there (Kenya Department of Parliamentary Research Services, 2008). In addition, they are expected to be role models, to motivate their people to seek local solutions to certain issues, and to seek complementary support from the government or other development partners or agencies.

Although Kenya has forty-three different ethnic groups and languages, *Swahili* is the national language spoken by all people and commonly used in public meetings such as parent-teacher meetings, markets and places of worship, that is, in churches and mosques, public *barazas* (public forums) and political campaigns. The medium of instruction at all levels of education and government offices, however, is English, which is associated with the most educated people; it is the second official language

used in Kenya. Although *Swahili* and English are taught at primary level as examinable subjects, teachers are required to use English (except during *Swahili* lessons) to teach all the other subjects in upper primary levels (Grades 4 to 8). Together with *Swahili*, different mother-tongues, depending on location or community, are commonly used as the medium of instruction from pre-school to Grade 3.

Formerly reliant on agriculture, Kenya is now a dynamic centre of economic activity; presently the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to be growing at a rate of 5.1 per cent (Odhiambo, 2008; World Bank, 2015). According to World Bank (2015), agriculture continues to be important, but is increasingly directed at the export market; small industries and tourism are growing while technology is emerging as a potential growth area for the Kenyan economy. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate and the population living below the poverty line are estimated to stand at 40 per cent and 43.4 per cent respectively (Kaminchia, 2014; World Bank, 2015). Out of 187 countries, Kenya was among the bottom 50 countries with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) — a measure used by the United Nations Development Programme for determining a country's development in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and living standard (International Fund for Agriculture Development [IFAD], 2014).

Primary Education in Kenya

The Kenyan education system is divided into three tiers: basic education, upper secondary general, and tertiary or higher education. Basic education constitutes a single program that consists of eight grade levels and begins when a child reaches age 6; it is usually completed at age 13—when they sit for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination. The year before children start basic compulsory education, they are supposed to participate in pre-primary education; however, this is not widely available in poorer districts. Within the last decade, two major steps occurred that had a significant impact on the Kenyan education: the introduction of free and compulsory primary education (FPE) in 2003 (Bold, Kimenyi, Mwabu, & Sanderful, 2010; Kamunde, 2010) and the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, which resulted in new education laws (Republic of Kenya, 2013a).

The introduction of free and compulsory primary education was in line with the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, and now the SDGs, which leads to the realisation of a child's full potential in terms of their personality, talents, mental and physical abilities (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008; UNDP, 2015). The philosophy guiding Kenya's education system has been that every Kenyan has the inalienable right to basic education irrespective of their socioeconomic status (Republic of Kenya, 1968). Under this arrangement, the government provided funds to public primary schools to be managed by school boards as a way of establishing community through local participation (Wangalachi, 2003).

The main objectives of free public education were to expand access, improve the quality and enhance retention. It was assumed that the removal of fees and levies would ease the burden on poor parents and make primary education accessible for all. According to Sifuna (2007),

While the interventions have made significant differences in the lives of many communities by increasing access to education of children who would have been denied schooling, quality indicators (including attrition and completion rates and examination scores) have stagnated at best or declined. (p. 687)

In January 2003, due to abolition of fees, public primary schools in Kenya experienced an exponential rise in enrolment (Bunyi, 2013; Hakijamii, 2010). Enrolment rose by over one million pupils or at least eighteen per cent. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) increased from 88 per cent (87 per cent for girls and 89 per cent for boys) in 2002 to 103 per cent (88 per cent for girls and 105 per cent for boys) in 2003 (Ministry of Education, 2004) and by 2007, the GER stood at 107 per cent (girls 104 per cent and boys 111 per cent) (Republic of Kenya, 2014). The reason for the percentage figures greater than 100 percent lies in accuracy of census data and in the fact that in any year level there are children of different age.

School Feeding Program

In addition to the Free Primary Education (FPE) funds, pupils in disadvantaged areas, such as the slums and arid and semi-arid regions, received free lunches under the school feeding program (SFP). The feeding program is the World Food Programme's initiative in 72 countries and is aimed at improving enrolment and school attendance, reducing the dropout rate due to hunger and to provide important nutrients for

disadvantaged children. Studies tracking the impact of school feeding programs have shown improvements in IQ, immunity to illness and reduced grade repetition and absenteeism, among other benefits (Jyoti, Frongillo, & Jones, 2005; Langeringer, 2011).

In Kenya, the feeding program was introduced in the 1980s, primarily as an incentive to increase enrolment and retention in disadvantaged public primary schools (Langeringer, 2011). The government provides beans (proteins), corn (carbohydrates) and cooking oil (fat) to schools for the pupils' lunch; but parents are expected to provide labour and fuel costs. The lunch is prepared by boiling a mixture of beans and corn with a little bit of fat and salt, popularly known as *githeri*. This type of food is commonly prepared in most homesteads in Kenya (regardless of socioeconomic status) and in most boarding schools. Although public primary schools in the slum receive the same ratio per child, there are differences in how the preparation is handled. Each school is expected to set up its own kitchen and engage a competent person to prepare lunch for the pupils.

In Kibera, hunger, malnutrition, resultant poor health and frequent sicknesses such as malaria, tend to keep pupils from attaining their full potential. Some children are forced to attend school without eating anything in the morning which affects their capacity to pay attention during lessons. They rely upon the meals provided by donors through the government school feeding program. Due to poverty, some children eat their food sparingly so as to take part of it home to their family members. While some carry food home to support their family without being under compulsion, there are others for whom it is a family rule that they must do so or face dire consequences. This will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

Therefore, in Kenya free primary education and the school feeding program have greatly improved access, school attendance and reduced school drop-out rates in public primary schools in the poorest areas such as the Kibera slum. However, there does not appear to have been much improvement in the provision of quality education. Sifuna (2007) observed that in Kenya,

...efforts to ensure and maintain quality in primary education face serious challenges, including mainly inadequate funding to ensure the provision of essential teaching and learning materials, appropriate infrastructure as well as a sufficient number of competent teachers. (p. 687)

Kibera Slum

Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, has a population of approximately four million, of whom about three-quarters live in the surrounding informal settlements or slums (Ngware, Oketch, & Ezech, 2011; Oxfam GB, 2009; Sana & Okombo, 2012; World Bank, 2014b). These slums are a result of an unprecedented rate of urban growth, fuelled by sizeable migration from rural areas in search of employment and other opportunities. They are characterised by illegal, unplanned settlements and are strongly associated with urban poverty (Mubila, 2012; UN-Habitat, 2010).

There are ten large, densely populated slums surrounding Nairobi city and several smaller ones that are growing. Kibera is the oldest and the largest slum in sub-Saharan Africa (International Regional Information Network [IRIN], 2011; Mubila, 2012; Tooley & Dixon, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2010), characterised by extreme squalor and abject poverty (Karanja & Makau, 2009; Lucheli, 2011). Sana and Okombo (2012) identified six socioeconomic challenges of the Nairobi slums as land-based conflicts, pressure on housing, landlord-tenant conflicts, insecurity, low levels of civil awareness and poor state of service delivery. The UN-Habitat report stated that due to poor service delivery and negligence by the government, Kibera slum (see Appendix 2) was:

... characterised by severe poverty, poor access to clean water, overflowing open sewers, huge heaps of rubbish, overly crowded mud houses, constant threat of eviction, and widespread criminality, delinquency and unemployment. (UN-HABITAT, 2010, p. 47)

This study was purposefully based in Kibera to target schools in one of the most disadvantaged settings in Kenya and in sub-Saharan Africa.

Residents of the Kibera slum have no access to proper housing, safe water and sanitation and often reside in dwellings situated on marginal and dangerous land. Provision of quality free education would give many children living in Kibera a window of hope for a better future. However, according to some critics, free primary education has not been beneficial to the very poor (Tooley, Dixon, & Stanfield, 2008). They argue that the program has failed to provide adequate resources towards improving quality education, which has forced some families living in the slums to send their children to fee-paying private schools (Hakijamii, 2010; Tooley, 2007; Tooley & Dixon, 2005). Tooley and Dixon (2005) also made a disturbing observation: the low ratio of teaching to non-teaching activity in public schools for families of low

socioeconomic status compared with that of private schools. They attribute this deterioration of standards in government schools to a lack of teacher accountability, strong teacher unions, poor infrastructure, overcrowded classes and poor management.

Due to poverty, there are many cases of boys and girls dropping out of primary school in Kibera, in spite of the absence of tuition fees (Sana & Okombo, 2012). The environment in the slums discourages education for girls. Typically, some of them drop out due to early pregnancy, early marriage, and because there are no role models to inspire them (Allavida Kenya, 2012). The majority of male pupils drop out of school after Grade 8 in order to fend for themselves and their families. In general, the trend is that only ten per cent of pupils who begin school at the age of six reach Form Four (the exit level for secondary education in Kenya). Those who do well in their fourth form examinations would qualify to join tertiary institutions, including colleges and universities, across the nation. The myriad challenges facing public schools and pupils in the slums have a profoundly negative impact on the quality of education provided by such schools.

Challenges facing Primary Education in Kenya

When free primary education was officially launched in 2003, the Kenyan government formed a Task Force on the Implementation of Free Primary Education to guide the progression of this initiative (Republic of Kenya, 2003). The task force recommended the stoppage of all types of fees, levies and user charges paid by parents that had, for many years, pushed a large number of children and youth out of school. These charges were to be supplanted by public funding so as to make primary education free. The abolition of school fees in 2003 triggered an increase in enrolment of children at school (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2003, 2004; Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, & Ezech, 2010; Republic of Kenya, 2003; Tooley, Dixon, & Stanfield, 2008). Approximately 1.3 million additional children turned up for school in 2003: this was an increase of 17.6 per cent in enrolments from 6.131 million in 2002 to 7.208 million in 2003 (Republic of Kenya, 2014).

As Kenya approaches the 2015 deadline and also prepares to mark the third anniversary under a new constitutional dispensation, concerns have been raised on whether the country is on the right path towards fulfilling its duty and commitments to providing quality education to all children. The education sector has also been afflicted

by a number of challenges that seem to have negated the gains made (Changalwa, 2013; Sifuna, 2007). One of the major challenges is to satisfy the greater public demand for quality education (Bunyi, 2013). Issues such as infrastructural inequities, dilapidated facilities in most public schools, teacher welfare concerns resulting in frequent strikes, mushrooming of private schools, acute shortage of teachers, and mismanagement of funds, are commonplace.

A big factor militating against the provision of quality education is poverty. Kenya's school drop-out rate has increased, due to the fact that many parents cannot afford the cost of educational demands as well as meeting other basic needs. Although the introduction of free primary education and school feeding programs has contributed positively to enrolment rates, they have not guaranteed quality education for children from poor backgrounds. The *Uwezo* report (Uwezo Kenya, 2012), summed it up; explaining that while a majority of children are now in school, they do not seem to be learning much. *Uwezo* means 'capability' in Swahili. *Uwezo* is a five-year initiative that aims to improve literacy and numeracy in children aged from six to sixteen years in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Their approach to social change is driven by community concerns and emphasises public engagement and accountability (Uwezo Kenya, 2014).

There are other school-based factors such as teacher-effectiveness (Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu, & Nthinguri, 2013), school climate (Marshall, 2004), and leadership styles, among others, that could be affecting the provision of quality education. However, school-based management is one factor rarely mentioned in education discourse as affecting the quality of schooling, yet it is crucial to the mitigation of the aforementioned issues.

School-based Management in Kenya

Several strategies have been used to improve the quality of education for the poor, including the provision of physical infrastructure, the introduction of free basic education and school feeding programs for schools. Another strategy which has been adopted worldwide, including in Kenya, as a means of improving quality education in all schools—especially those in disadvantaged communities—is devolution of authority and responsibility at school level. In Kenya, the government set up school

boards as a way of improving the quality of education in public primary schools and addressing the above-mentioned issues.

School boards are expected to mobilise parents, sponsors and the local community to support their school in creating an environment that is conducive to learning, providing additional resources, prudently managing the available resources, and supporting teachers and pupils. Being part of the community, the school board is in a position to harness the positive aspects of an impoverished community, such as the parents' desire to see their children become successful. Several suggestions for improving the quality of education in the slum have been proposed, such as:

- greater accountability to parents and community (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000; French, Peevely, & Stanley, 2008);
- increasing parental involvement (Gokyer, 2010; Mintrom, 2009);
- closer supervision of teaching and learning and provision of incentives to teachers and pupils (Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, & Ezech, 2010); and
- improving school administration and offering strategic leadership (Benta & Enose, 2010).

However, while most of the above strategies have received considerable attention in research and in literature, school-based management has been overlooked in developing nations despite being effective in the provision of quality education in developed nations (Cranston, 2001). It is not yet known whether it is beneficial for public primary schools in impoverished areas like Kibera, and has seldom been the focus of empirical research (Benta & Enose, 2010; French et al., 2008; Gamage, Sipple, & Partridge, 1996; Hofman, 1995; Land, 2002; Reynolds, 1985). The lack of knowledge on the operation of these boards is likely to impede the provision of quality education to children from most disadvantaged background in Kenya and other developing nations.

Since the 1980s, school boards have been used by the Kenyan government to run public schools, despite limited information about their effectiveness. The boards have been used to: increase school accountability (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003); boost student achievement; improve administrative efficiency; address challenges in teaching and learning; involve parents and the local community among others. The public primary school boards were officially set up by the government to achieve efficient and

effective school management to enhance quality education (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2003). They are vested with authority by the government to oversee the management of schools with a view to achieving efficient and effective school management to enhance quality education (Republic of Kenya, 1980).

School boards were meant to open up the management mechanism to staff, parents and members of the public. It was assumed that by widening the spectrum of school management by including parent and community representatives, the schools would be better managed. The roles and functions of the public primary school board are well summarised in the Basic Education Act, 2013 Part VIII sub-section 59, which states that:

The functions of the Board of Management of a basic education institution shall be to:

- (a) promote the best interests of the institution and ensure its development;
- (b) promote quality education for all pupils;
- (c) ensure and assure the provision of proper and adequate physical facilities;
- (d) manage the institution's affairs in accordance with the rules and regulations governing the occupational safety and health;
- (e) advise the ministry of education on the staffing needs of the institution;
- (f) determine cases of pupils' discipline;
- (g) prepare a comprehensive termly report on all areas of its mandate and submit the report to the ministry of education;
- (h) facilitate and ensure the provision of guidance and counselling to all learners;
- (i) provide for the welfare and observe the human rights and ensure safety of the pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff at the institution;
- (j) encourage a culture of dialogue and participatory democratic governance at the institution;
- (k) promote the spirit of cohesion, integration, peace, tolerance, inclusion, elimination of hate speech, and elimination of tribalism at the institution;
- (l) encourage the learners, teachers and non-teaching staff and other, parents and the community, and other stakeholders to render voluntary services to the institution;
- (m) allow reasonable use of the facilities of the institution for community, social and other lawful purposes, subject to such reasonable and equitable conditions as it may determine including the charging of a fee;
- (n) administer and manage the resources of the institution;
- (o) receive, collect and account for any funds accruing to the institution; and

- (p) recruit, employ and remunerate such number of non-teaching staff. (Republic of Kenya, 2013, pp. 254-255)

These functions can be categorised as: (1) advocacy; (2) monitory; (3) resource mobilisation and maintenance; (4) compliancy; (5) advisory; (6) inclusiveness and (7) accountability. The boards were formed to help schools set goals and performance targets, ensure smooth operation, prepare annual school plans and budgets, and establish effective channels of communications. The efficiency and effectiveness of these boards in a given context, such as operating within a slum, is unknown.

Statement of the Problem

School-based management is a profoundly controversial strategy: it is highly regarded in one instance (i.e., in Australia) (Gamage, Sipple, & Partridge, 1996) and subject to opprobrium in another instance (i.e., in the United States of America) (Land, 2002). In Kenya, school-based management is considered crucial to the provision of quality education in public primary schools; so much so that the government has delegated extensive functions to school boards. Conspicuously absent, though, has been an examination of the effectiveness of these boards in carrying out these functions. As in most developing nations, studies of public primary schools boards in slums have been missing. In the Kenyan context and in public primary schools in particular, the board effectiveness is plagued by a lack of conceptual clarity and a number of potentially unexplained paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas.

Several studies have linked stagnation in school achievement to lack of effective governance, and these studies have argued that organisational and managerial processes within the school are significant determinants of pupil outcomes (Reynolds, 1985; Sell, 2005). Yet the characteristics, experience, governance styles and achievement of school boards in informal urban settlements are largely unknown, and no study has attempted to focus on school board governance of public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings, in either Kenya or other developing countries in Africa.

Although the quality of education provided to children from extremely poor settings is of great concern both nationally and internationally, the effectiveness of public primary school boards, which is a key determinant (Fullan & Watson, 2000; Heyward, Cannon, & Sarjono, 2011), is unknown. The critical question that

educationists and all stakeholders seek to answer when thinking about school effectiveness is: Are school boards doing their job, or could more effective methods of school governance exist today? (Sell, 2005). Sell states that the responsibilities, struggles and accomplishments of school boards have been constantly evolving as education policy changes. Yet there is insufficient research in developing nations to understand the characteristics of school boards, their roles and responsibilities, how those responsibilities are carried out, and whether policy implementation looks different in formal and informal settlements (Sell, 2005).

There is an urgent need, therefore, to examine purposes and practices of public primary school boards in extremely poor settings, which are critical in shaping the quality of education provided to millions of disadvantaged children living in slums worldwide. This study on public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings was necessitated by the paucity of literature on their operations, which is considered an impediment to policy formulation and/or review in Kenya and other developing nations. Consequently, this study examined the operations of the public primary school boards: their achievements, challenges, dilemmas, tensions and paradoxes. Their effectiveness was based on three areas of concern identified:

1. pupils' scores in the national examination;
2. school climate; and
3. parental involvement.

Purpose of the Study

The main concern of this study is to describe clearly the operations and impact of public primary school boards in informal settlements in Kenya on the school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance. Specifically this study focuses on:

1. the effectiveness of school boards in the context of Kibera, as reflected by their impact on the school climate, enhancement of pupils' performance, involvement of parents and community, and
2. differences in perception of their effectiveness among board members, teachers and parents as well as paradoxes, dilemmas, and tensions that might arise from the existence and operations of the school boards.

The overarching research question for this study is: How do public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya impact upon the school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance? Through an inductive approach, I will venture a generalisation about the characteristics of an effective public primary school board in an extremely poor setting as perceived and experienced by pupils, parents, teachers and board members.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the impact of this research will:

1. bring school boards more prominently into public and scholarly debate on public education;
2. improve the leadership, management and governance of public schools in slums worldwide;
3. provide requisite information needed for possible future capacity development of the board members;
4. provide empirical evidence of the effect of school governance on school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance, and
5. improve the quality of education provided to the most disadvantaged children.

Debate on school-based management in developed countries has been raging among scholars, who are divided on its effectiveness. Decentralisation of decision-making, increasing local authority and enhancing autonomy have been common features in the organisation of public education in many countries even though in some countries it has been subject to opprobrium (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000). Critics argue that school boards should be abolished, since they are outdated and incapable of leading education reforms effectively (Land, 2002). These critics go further to state that school boards are a hindrance to capable and knowledgeable administration, that they are mostly politically charged, and that they have outlived their usefulness (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger, 1994; Danzberger et al., 1987). They posit that such boards are inhabited by inexperienced lay people meddling in a complex profession (Sell, 2005). Those supporting school-based management argue that education is too important to leave solely to educators and administrators, and that the boards provide a

balance between the needs of students and families with the zeal of specialists and also provide a link between schools and communities (Sell, 2005; Smoley, 1999).

The current study's finding will contribute to this debate in the context of developing countries. It will provide empirical evidence of the effects of school-based management on the quality of schooling. One concern raised by the critics of school-based management is the benefit of the involving lay people in school governance. This study will provide valuable information and insights about the involvement of such people in school governance – their perspectives, their practices and whether or not their involvement is beneficial. It is important to note that most public primary school boards in Kibera slums are composed of parents of low socioeconomic status.

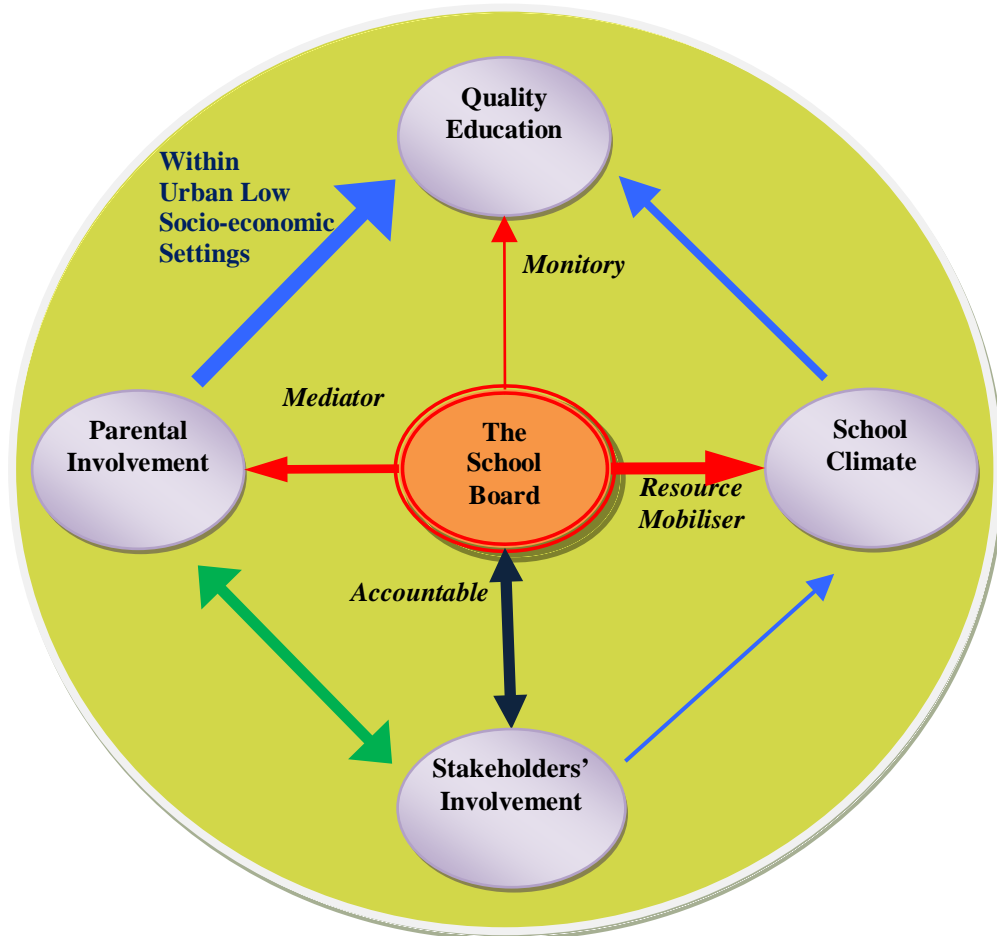
Knowledge of the operations of school boards will help in developing the board members' capacities to contribute positively to policy formulation. Currently, most education policies in Kenya have been written using the *top-bottom* approach, where the policy makers fail to engage the public from the beginning of the processes. For example, when the Kenya Education Bill 2010 was drafted, the only forum for public engagement was during the national stakeholders' conference where resolutions were passed without exhaustive deliberation (Bonyo, 2012). This is despite the fact that most of these educational policies being drafted are to be implemented at the school level by the boards. Therefore, this study provides a report of the self-evaluation of board members of public primary schools in the slum and the views of the people they serve. All of this is relevant to any future capacity development initiative.

According to Hanushek and Wößmann (2007), through public education governments are able to provide formal training for children from poor families to become full citizens, who are able to participate in our shared social, economic, and political life. Sifuna (2007) postulated that "there is overwhelming evidence that education improves health and productivity, and the poorest people are said to benefit most" (p. 689). School boards are charged with the responsibility of setting the school climate, supporting teaching and learning, and making public schools the epicentre of provision of quality education. The findings of this study provide information that can be used to improve the leadership, management and governance of these boards, which will have a concomitant effect on pupils' performance.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The school board is considered the central and most important aspect (World Bank, 2007b) in achieving quality education in public education in slum areas. The contributing components considered in this study are summarised in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. Conceptual framework of the function of the board



In this proposed conceptual framework, school boards are perceived as the central most important aspect for the provision of quality education in urban low socioeconomic settings. According to this model, these boards function in four separate dimensions proposed by Kogan (1984): accountable, monitory, resource mobiliser and mediator.

In the accounting role, the school board's purpose is to ensure that the school is working effectively within the policies set by central and local governments, and that it is answerable to its clients. The board is accountable to the stakeholders who include pupils, teachers, parents, government, sponsors/donors, well-wishers and community

(Henry, Dickey, & Areson, 1991). The school board is expected to inform the community about what it has done to improve learning outcomes. The school board has fiscal responsibility: to receive, collect and account for any funds accruing to the institution (Republic of Kenya, 2013). They are expected to prepare development plans, raise funds from any available and legal source, and oversee how funds are utilised.

In its monitoring role, the school board is supposed to follow closely how teachers do their work (to support them) and on pupils' progress. By monitoring teaching and learning, the board is able to obtain information about what happens in the classroom, both progress and problems. This is to enable the school board to make strategic decisions and to mitigate negative influences that would threaten the provision of quality education. As the resource mobiliser, the school board exists to provide resources, and network on behalf of the school. The governing body accords unquestioning trust to the professionals. When it acts as the mediator, the school board represents the diverse interests which have a stake in the school, promotes consensus among them, and enables them to influence the school. In this role, the school board will encourage parental involvement in school affairs.

However, some degree of ambiguity in respect to the roles of the head teacher and the governing body has been noted (Levacic, 1995). Kogan (1984) says that governing bodies' lack of role clarity was a salient factor, and pointed out that

it is expecting a lot of the members of any institution that they should operate as rulers, advisers, mediators and assistants at one and the same time and doubly difficult when they belong to an institution that is as spasmodic in its operation as a governing body. (p. 36)

Therefore, my principal thesis is that the public primary school board in Kenya, in exercising its mandate, has a threefold interest: to set an inviting school climate, enhance parental involvement, and improve pupils' performances.

Definitions of the Terminology

For clarity, the following operational definitions are provided in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Academic Achievement	Performance measured in terms of pupils' results on standardized tests (Mintrom, 2009). In this study it refers to previous years' Grade eight (8) attained scores in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), administered by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) an accredited examination body in Kenya.
Perception	A view, opinion, idea, or way of seeing the phenomenon and a process by which an individual organises and interprets the phenomenon under study in order to give a meaning (Mailler, 2006; Mezias & Starbuck, 2003; Okaya, 2009).
Public primary school	A registered institution for education of children, which receives government funding. They implement the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) (KICD, 2015) authorised curriculum and teachers are employees of the government.
School board	An advisory body of parents formally constituted to manage the affairs of a public primary school. The body is a form of school-based management approach in which decision-making authority is delegated to individual schools (Bandur, 2011; Gamage et al., 1996)
School board effectiveness	The degree to which objectives of school board or council are achieved and the extent to which problems, characteristic of slums that impede teaching and learning are remedied. In this study, the degree of school boards' efficacy will be determined by its impact on the school climate, enhancing pupils' performance in KCPE, and involvement of parents and community.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis presents findings on the perceived efficacy of school boards in setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving pupils' performance in eight public primary schools in Kibera, an informal urban low socio-economic settlement in Kenya. Perceptions of members of the board, parents, teachers and Grade 8 pupils were collected using a mixed methods approach. Results allowed for a comparative analysis of two public primary schools in the slum, that were perceived to have the most effective and the most ineffective school board.

Through the lens of the participants, the most preferred governance models for the schools were unearthed, best practices identified and the tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes experienced by these boards explained. Scores from national examinations for a period of twelve years, showing trends in academic performance, were used as one form of evidence of school board effectiveness. Finally, the study explores possible links between school board governance and effectiveness.

Chapter One introduces the research problem and places it in the context of the Kenyan education system; the state of public primary schools in the slum and school-based management are described in brief. A description of the conceptual framework used to guide this study is given at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Two presents a review of related literature. In particular, it explores the elusive meaning of the term *quality education*, the links between quality and school governance. Theories of school-based management and ways in which governance is practised in developed and developing nations are discussed. Some other aspects of the board including elections of members, decision making, interaction, teacher – parent partnerships, paradoxes, tensions, and dilemmas are discussed.

Chapter Three discusses three theoretical frameworks used in this study: the invitational education theory and practice, ecological system theory, and pragmatism. The theories, philosophical underpinnings and suitability to this study are presented.

Chapter Four focuses upon research design and methods, describing the sample used for the study, how data was collected and validated and ethical considerations. This chapter provides a description of the sequential exploratory mixed method design and discusses the methods of data collections used in this study.

Chapter Five describes the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected in the two stages. The chapter is organised in two parts: (a) discussion of multilevel modelling technique used to analyse quantitative data; and (b) how qualitative data was analysed in three steps: preliminary analysis, within-case, and across-case analysis.

Chapter Six presents survey results of the study, using descriptive and inferential statistics. National and individual school Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) mean scores for a period of twelve years from 2002 to 2013 are discussed as one measure of effectiveness. Mean perception of participants, overall and disaggregated by school, on their school climate, parental involvement and school board practice are presented. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression results used to determine the interrelation between variables (dependent [KCPE scores, parental involvement & school] and independent [school board practice]) are discussed. The chapter is concluded by summarising key findings, including identified paradoxes.

Chapter Seven will synthesise qualitative results from the interviews with parents, teachers, pupils and board members with quantitative results from the surveys in order to explore the perception of pupils and parents of the school climate and parental involvement, which were the other measures of effectiveness used. The ways in which the school boards influence the school climate and encourage parental involvement will also be explored in this chapter.

Chapter Eight discussed school-based management in Kenya as intended by policy makers (*Espoused Theory*) and the actual practice (*Theory-in-Use*) of the boards in slums. Vignettes of two schools chosen based on the perception of participants in the schools are presented and compared.

Chapter Nine is an in-depth comparative analysis of two schools that represent both ends of effectiveness spectrum: the schools judged to be the most and least effective in setting their school climate continuum according to the participants. Similarities and differences in perception between the two schools emanating from both qualitative and quantitative analysis are discussed.

Chapter Ten presents discussions on the paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions that the boards in public primary schools in Kibera slums experience. These paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions were identified from the analyses reported in Chapters Six and Seven, including data from interviews with teachers, parents and board members.

In conclusion, Chapter Eleven presents the main findings of this study and its recommendations. The focus is upon what the study has achieved and makes recommendations on how the primary schools boards in informal settings can be made more effective in providing quality education.

Conclusion

The realisation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is of great importance and a priority in most developing nations. Kenya has put tremendous effort in meeting the MDGs, but has failed to achieve them by 2015 (UNDP, 2015). Reports indicate provision of low quality of education by Kenyan public primary schools is evident in low literacy and numeracy levels (Ligami, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Access and provision of quality education to all children is prioritised in these goals, yet over one million children in developing countries are still out of school. Mostly the children from the most unprivileged setting such as those in the slum are likely to fall in this category. School-based management adopted in most developed countries has been used to improve access, retention and quality of education, but a paucity of literature has led to its opacity in developing countries. In Kenya, the public primary school boards which are central to the provision of quality education are rarely the focus of research and their efficacy and operations remains unknown.

Therefore, the present study is intended to investigate the efficacy of public primary schools boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting in Kenya, answering the question of how the school boards operations impact on the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. A two stage sequentially explorative mixed method design— quantitative followed by qualitative— was used to explicate the operation of these boards; their practices, challenges, paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions will provide information to policy makers relevant for improvement of these boards and realisation of the MDGs. The perceptions of participants on school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performances will be used to determine the boards' efficacy on four dimensions: accountable, monitory, resource mobiliser and mediator.

The next chapter discusses the literature on school-based management theories and practice, drawing upon the experiences of developed and developing nations.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a definition and discussion of quality of education and how it can be improved in extremely poor settings. Discussion of global interventions, theories, models and levels of school-based management follows, drawing from both developing and developed nations such as South Africa, Australia and the UK. Next, there is a discussion of how the school boards are constituted, and whether or not they represent their communities. The chapter then turns to an examination of other aspects of school climate, and explores the importance of personal interaction, the role of the schools' head teachers, the parent – teacher partnership, the decision-making process, and the ways in which school climate can be measured. The chapter also presents the rationale for using the Inviting School Survey – Revised (ISS-R) instruments, and concludes by highlighting key findings from literature on school-based management in urban low socio-economic settings and sub-questions that were the focus of this study.

Conceptualising Quality Education

In most nations improving quality is probably the top most important task facing any institution (Sallis, 2014). Although during the past decade much has been done globally to provide quality basic education for all children, it is not clear if public primary schools within the slum are providing it. Most debates on quality of education have focused on learning outcomes, the relevance of curriculum to labour markets (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007), and/or the pupils' social, cultural, and political environment and conditions of learning, including teachers and facilities (Ngware et al., 2011). According to Bunyi (2013), “while there is consensus on the fact that quality education is critical to the attainment of individual and national goals, there is no agreement on what exactly education quality means” (p. 679). The concept of quality is enigmatic, perplexing, and difficult to define and measure—and of great importance to many implicated in education, such as parents (Sallis, 2014; Sifuna, 2007; Tam, 2010).

Many studies have deprecated pupil achievement as an indicator of educational quality, in that it is considered to be encouraging rote learning and ignoring the

development of individual talent and creative thinking (Hassan, 2012). However, achievements should be interpreted in the context of the system that produced them. In the school context, evidence of quality education is provided not only when the students' scores are high but also by considering other key determinants of results such as provision of teachers, buildings, equipment, security, and curriculum among others (Ngware et al., 2011). In this study, quality education is assumed to be provided if the school is inviting, parents are happy to support the school, and that the school's KCPE mean scores are above the national mean. School effectiveness is enhanced through paying attention to the development of three domains: academic, psycho-motor, and affective (Hassan, 2012).

Since the introduction of free primary education, the government of Kenya has reiterated her commitment to providing quality education to all children (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The government acknowledges the importance of provision of quality education to economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities. For families and children living in slums quality education is seen as a means to break the poverty cycle. Quality of education is still a slippery and a relative concept, which is difficult to define (Harvey & Green, 1993; Van Kemenade, Pupius, & Hardjono, 2008). Depending on what one looks, at quality of education will mean different things to different people. According to Harvey and Greene (1993) quality can be viewed in five interrelated concepts: "exceptional, as perfection (or consistency), as fitness for purpose, as value for money and as transformative" (p. 9). The most popular view in Kenya is the one which associates education quality with students' scores in tests and examinations (Bunyi, 2013). This view is held by many parents in Kibera slum, who think that the school which produces many Grade 8 pupils with higher scores in KCPE provides quality education. Indeed, for many parents this is the key in choosing the schools for their children. This view is limiting and obscures key aspects of education quality which cannot be determined by examination scores.

According to Bassey (1999) quality education means acquiring useful knowledge and skills in order to achieve a high quality life, to develop personally and socially as good people, and creating wealth in order to increase the gross national product. Bassey argues that quality education should provide one with experiences to nurture his/her "personal and social well-being towards worthwhile living and the acquisition, development, transmission, conservation, discovery and renewal of worthwhile

culture” (p. 38). He views educational activities by pupils (experience, acquisition, and development), teachers (nurture, development, and transmission), scholars (conservation) and professionals as leading to worthwhile living and worthwhile culture. Governments may attempt to define what is transmitted to children in schools as worthwhile culture, while mission statements devised by school governance and teachers shows what, to them, constitutes worthwhile living (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2011). Some view education as being about the quality of life and democratic freedom (Hassan, 2012). The purpose of education is to help people to realise their potential in all areas of worthwhile human activity.

Garvin (1984) proposed five concepts of quality: “transcendent, product-based, user-based, manufacturing-based and value-based approaches” (para. 4). In the transcendent approach quality is both absolute and universally recognisable — what people will refer to as perfect or excellent through their experience. This view is similar to what Harvey and Green (1993) referred to as exceptional. The second conceptualisation of quality was the product-based approach which adopts the input-process-output framework. According to view, “quality is precise and measurable ... differences in quality reflects differences in the quantity of some ingredients or attribute possessed by a product” (Garvin, 1984, para. 6). According to this view point, quality education could be attained through employment of adequate teachers, proper pre- and in-service teacher training, and provision of adequate teaching and learning resources among others. The output would then be measured in terms of test scores and graduation rates (Sifuna, 2009). This would imply that quality education would be costly and out of reach to schools operating in low socioeconomic setting such as Kibera slum.

The user-based approach proposed by Garvin (1984) is subjective and idiosyncratic based on personal view of quality which will of course vary depending on the user.. In the education context quality education is conceptualised from the viewpoint of the learner and the parents. The viewpoint is likely to lead to overemphasis on certain aspects of quality of education which learners and parents feel are important while other critical aspect could be ignored or overlooked. United Nations member states like Kenya committed themselves to provide holistic education to all children (Kagwiria & Amukowa, 2013) according to Article 29 of the Convention of the Right (United Nations Human Commission for Human Rights [UNHCR], 2015) of the child:

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

1. The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
2. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
3. The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
4. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
5. The development of respect for the natural environment. (p. 9)

This goes beyond a user-based approach to a more generally accepted holistic view of quality education.

The manufacturing-based approach emphasises on compliance and reducing costs through ensuring precision in production. According to Garvin (1984), the manufacturing-based approach foci are: “on the supply side of the equation, and are primarily concerned with engineering and manufacturing practice” (para. 13). Contextualising the manufacturing-approach in education quality implies that quality depends on the quality of teachers. This was supported by Hanushek (2011) when he stated that, “improving the quality of instruction is a central component to virtually all proposals to raise school quality” (p. 1051).

There has been a paradigm shift in recent times from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness; quality education is viewed as the extent to which students are actively involved in learning and how their performance in examination. In a value-based approach, quality is “a measure of excellence is being equated with value, which is a measure of worth” (Garvin, 1984, para. 18). Most parents in Kibera slum who sent their children to private fee-paying schools seem to view quality from a value-based approach, since they regard education quality in term of learners’ proficiency in English.

Others such as Bunyi (2013) have postulated that quality education is responsive to the needs of pupils, their families, and communities. According to this interpretation, quality education is synonymous with relevance in education and is perceived as the

effects that education is expected to have on the individual pupils and on society. Despite the lack of an agreed definition of quality education, there is consensus that it is associated with improvements in academic performance of pupils and improvements in their socioeconomic status (Sifuna, 2009). According to UNESCO (2010), the “ultimate measure of any education system is not the numbers of children in school but what, and how well, they learn” (p.7); and that is an issue which worries poor parents in the slums like Kibera.

Measuring quality education is not at all straightforward and is complicated further by conflicting viewpoints. Undeniably, in Kenya there is over-emphasis on test scores at the expense of other educational indicators such those which enhance affective and psychomotor domains (Boit, Njoki, & Chang'ach, 2012). According UNICEF quality education is a multifaceted concept which must encompass a broader definition involving pupils, content, processes, environments and outcomes (UNICEF, 2000). The viewpoint adopted in this study is that quality education is multifaceted and encompasses aspects that can be measured, and experienced. Some of the aspects considered in this study include the interactions within school, processes, program, policies and educational outcomes. The concept of ‘quality education’ in this study will be measured by:

1. how *inviting* a school is [school climate]
2. what home – school partnerships are like [parental involvement]
3. how many children pass national examination reflected by the school overall mean score [pupils’ performance].

Research has shown students’ scores improve greatly when parents are involved in their children’s education (Department for Education England [DfEE], 2014; Kimunya, 2005) and when people are happy with their school climate (Earley, 2003; Ranson, Arnott, McKeown, Martin, & Smith, 2005; Tam, 2010). Therefore, it is possible to determine the effectiveness of school boards through the analysis of the intersection of these three areas from the perspectives and experiences of pupils, teachers, parents and board members. Although school board governance does not directly influence pupils’ performance, it has a powerful, indirect influence, by setting a positive school climate, encouraging parental involvement in school affairs, making beneficial decisions, and exercising or offering prudent strategic leadership.

Improving Quality of Education for the Poor

According to UNICEF (2000), all children, irrespective of their background, race or gender, have a right to a quality education, which includes good health for pupils, a safe environment and acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills for their future progression. However, those from extremely poor settings, like the slums, learn under very difficult circumstances, such as attending schools on an empty stomach, learning in crowded classrooms or being taught by inadequate teachers. These factors, internal and external or ecological, threaten slum students' acquisition of quality education, despite having untapped potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavour. In Kenya, like most developing countries, a strong determinant of later-life income and opportunities is the educational qualification. Through education, children from urban low socioeconomic settings such as Kibera have an opportunity to break the poverty cycle.

There are many and varied well-documented links between student socio-economic status and educational outcomes (Spaull, 2011). In reality, children from poor families frequently receive inferior education, which disadvantages them in the labour-market and entrenches their poverty. The intergenerational effects of this inadequate education mean that children of impoverished parents are likely to be poor themselves. Unless greater efforts are made both at national and school level to improve the quality of education provided to the poor, children growing up in poor families will continue generally to emerge from school with lower scores than those in families from a higher socioeconomic group.

Another hindrance to providing quality education in extremely poor settings is the attitude of parents. Attitude is a subjective assessment of the consequences of people's behaviour and determines whether people like or dislike some particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Yang, 2013). Negative attitudes towards education by parents are the single most important factor that can influence children's attitude towards their education, and which ultimately results in lower educational attainment. According to Gamage (1996) children from low socioeconomic status families tend to have low self-concept about their academic abilities. They are also more likely to be pessimistic about the relevance of school results in life, and to exhibit higher levels of hyperactivity, behavioural problems and peer problems.

While it is easy to understand why affluent schools generally outperform poor schools, it is less clear why certain poor schools succeed when other, equally poor schools, fail. Is this difference due to variations in school management, socio-economic status, and the provision of textbooks? Or is it due perhaps to differences in teacher quality, parental education, and preschool education? Holding socioeconomic status, teacher quality, and government funding constant, the present study tries to establish if the variations in school climate, parents' attitude, and pupils' performance in schools in the slums is due to school board governance.

Global Interventions

International interventions and policy decisions such as free primary education, the school feeding program, child-friendly schools and sponsors have inspired several interventions that have done a good deal to provide quality education for children from poor backgrounds. In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) decided that education for all by the year 2000 was the world's number one development agenda item (UNESCO, 1995; UNICEF, 2014b). The EFA declaration is an expanded version of the UN Millennium Development Goals and it encompasses programs, activities and services in all sectors, whether public and private, and aimed at meeting the basic needs of all people both within and outside school. The declaration aims to ensure that all people are able to benefit from educational opportunities intended to meet their basic learning needs (Shoraku, 2008).

In April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, the World Education Forum confirmed the conference's basic stance and reiterated the importance of a good quality of education (Fiske, 2000). Since 1990, developing nations have been aiming to achieve the second of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal, Universal Primary Education (UPE). Unfortunately, Africa as a region is not on course to achieve UPE (Europafrika, 2009). Nevertheless, most African states were able to achieve significant increases in initial intake and enrolment rates in spite of low per capita incomes, low GDP, high population growth, high levels of conflict, and life threatening diseases such HIV/AIDS. A continuing high rate of pupils dropping out of primary education, compounded by a low quality of provision, has reduced the impact of these achievements.

According to the *2009 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR)*, “too many children are receiving an education of such poor quality that they leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills” (UNESCO, 2009 p.1). The GMR report highlighted the crucial role of improved governance for tackling the problem of poor quality of education and provided evidence to support the idea that advocacy and accountability are critical strategies for increasing access, improving pupils’ performance, and empowering people to provide their children with high quality education (Shoraku, 2008). Despite school boards being the local bodies that have potential to accelerate the achievement of UPE goals in developing nations, this potential has not been fully utilised, possibly due to the opacity surrounding their operations.

School-based Management

Decentralization is not a ‘quick fix’ for the management problems of developing countries. (Rondinelli, Nellis, & Cheema, 1983, p. 8)

The success and sustainability of these interventions through school-based management depend on the attitude, commitment and ability of the local stakeholders especially the school boards. In some countries in East Asia, school-based management was introduced to reduce inequalities in access and improve quality of education (Shoraku, 2008). School-based management has been viewed as a means to deepen the participation of local community in making decisions which are relevant to schools, and as a strategy to expand access to education and improve its quality. It empowers local stakeholders in the education community such as teachers, parents and others while improving the effectiveness of school reform and improving school quality and increasing resources available for schools. Di Gropello (2005) defined school-based management as the:

... decentralization mechanism that shifts certain decision-making powers to the school level, emphasizing the role of community, and parental management in school affairs. The SBM programs aim to increase enrollments, efficiency, and parental and local community participation. (p. 1)

According to Bandur (2011), “school-based management, with the devolution of authority and responsibility to school level decision-makers; has become the most prominent feature of public school management systems in most countries around the world” (p. 316). It is the transfer of decision-making, responsibility for planning,

management, resource mobilisation and/or authority over school governance from the government to the school level (Rondinelli & Nellis, 1989; World Bank, 2014a). Bandur (2011) defined School-based management as a:

pragmatic approach to a formal alteration of the bureaucratic model of school administration with a more democratic structure, and as an approach of making the decision-making process more inclusive by involving principals/head teachers, teachers, parents, citizens, and the students. (p.22)

School-based management is a form of education decentralisation from the national level to either state or municipal or school levels. Zajda and Gamage (2012) define decentralisation in education as the process of delegating or devolving authority and responsibility by the central government to local schools. According to Caldwell (2005), school-based management is a “systematic decentralisation to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards, and accountability” (p.1).

In the contemporary world, school-based management with devolution of authority has become a common phenomenon (Gamage et al., 1996; Zajda & Gamage, 2012). It has different names: site-based management, shared decision-making, school-based decision-making, school-site decision-making or school-based curriculum development. Its core is the idea of participatory decision-making at the school site by school boards. It is seen as a means of promoting democracy, efficiency and accountability and a way of being more responsive to the community, with better management and governance (Heyward, Cannon, & Sarjono, 2011). It enhances the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of public education, enabling conditions for improved teaching and learning that caters to local needs (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000; Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, & Santibáñez, 2009 ; Caldwell, 2005; Heyward et al., 2011).

There is extensive research that links the type of administration, teacher factors and student factors to pupils’ performance, but one aspect that is conspicuously absent has been research into links between school-board governance and pupils’ performance. A World Bank assessment of thirteen impact evaluations found that the dynamics in the school could be changed by involving parents more closely in the daily life of the school (World Bank, 2007a). Teachers who changed their actions found that those

changes impacted positively on repetition rates, failure rates, learning outcomes, and on dropout rates (World Bank, 2007a, 2010). Although school-based management has been linked to improved learning outcomes, according to Heyward et al. (2011), “the purpose and value of school-based management extends beyond improving learning outcomes” (p. 3).

There is limited research that substantively relates the characteristics of local school boards to effective governance that fosters students’ academic achievement (Land, 2002). Lack of comprehensive research on the impact of student performance of school board practices has been the main obstacle in understanding effective school characteristics (Sell, 2005). Some studies have suggested that local school boards influence academic success levels of a school (French et al., 2008; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). According to French et al., (2008) they do so by:

establishing a vision for educational excellence, advocating for the vision among internal and external stakeholders, providing adequate resources necessary to establish an infrastructure and environment conducive for learning, and setting aside the finances necessary for new technologies while holding members of each level of education process accountable for the students’ overall achievement levels. (p. 215)

Although the public primary school boards have been in existence in Kenya since the 1980s, they became more prominent after the introduction of free primary education in 2003. They were given more power and were mandated to oversee the management of resources disbursed to school by the government, parents and stakeholders on behalf of the local community. Ideally, the government delegated roles and functions to these boards that were traditionally the role of the ministry of education, such as recruitment of teachers. What is missing, though, is the knowledge of their operation and performance within their specific context, such as being in the slum. This study of public primary school boards in an informal, urban low socioeconomic setting is relevant and worthwhile in the context of realising the EFA and Millennium Development Goals that Kenya aspired to achieve by 2015 (UNESCO, 2010).

Theories of School-based Management

School-based management (SBM), defined as the decentralisation of decision-making authority to the school site, is one of the most popular strategies in developed nations (Alava, Halttunen, & Risku, 2012; Caldwell, 2005; Gamage, 1998; Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004) with growing popularity in developing nations (Bandur, 2011; Lewis & Naidoo, 2004; Oswald, 1995). It has been used to ensure prudence and accountability in managing school resources, implementing curriculum and personnel decisions among others. However, although school-based management is about decentralisation of decision-making processes and authority to a local unit such as the schools, municipalities or districts, there are many variations of how it is practised from one nation to another.

According to Oswald (1995), lack of knowledge of how school-based management works may prevent its successful implementation. A further complication is that many commentators use the terms ‘school-based management’ and ‘school-based governance’ interchangeably; for example Bandur, 2011; Lewis & Naidoo, 2004; Oswald, 1995 refer to ‘school-based management’, whereas Murphy and Beck (1995) use the term ‘school-based governance’. Nevertheless, there are a number of relevant theories that should be examined. Weiler (1993) proposed three models: redistributive, effectiveness and learning culture. He explains:

The ‘redistributive model’ deals with top-bottom distribution of power, the ‘effectiveness model’ focuses on financial aspects and cost effectiveness of decentralisation and the ‘learning culture’ model addresses cultural diversity and curricula adaptability to local needs. (p. 55)

Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1989) proposed four categories: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and deregulation or privatisation. They distinguished these based on different degrees of transfer of authority:

1. *deconcentration* – shifting authority for implementation of rules and spatial relocation of decision making, or the transfer of some administrative responsibility or authority to lower levels within central government ministries or agencies;
2. *delegation* – assignment of specific decision making authority to local government;

3. *devolution* – transfer of responsibility for governing to municipalities or provinces and transfer of power and responsibility to the state; and
4. *deregulation* or *privatisation* – transfer of responsibility to voluntary organisations or allowed them to be performed by private enterprises.

Another category of school-based management, suggested by Murphy and Beck (1995) and Leithwood and Menzies (1998), was based on where the locus of decision-making lies. They categorised the school-based management as either administrative or professional or community. *Administrative* school-based management is focused on increased efficiency in the use of resources and on accountability through the head teacher and is concerned with delegation of authority from the central office to the head teacher. The goal of *Professional* control school-based management is to improve teachers' performance and effectiveness through focusing on their role and place in decision-making structures. In contrast, *community* site-based management is more concerned with the schools' accountability to parents and the community at large, as well as the relevance of the curriculum with regard to societal values and community preferences.

Farrell (2005) went beyond the ideas of transfer of authority and locus of decision-making to focus on corporate governance. She describes five governance theories: agency theory, resource dependence theory, stewardship theory, stakeholder theory, and management hegemony theory, all of which are theories of corporate governance. She suggests the use of these corporate governance theories in determining the extent to which governing bodies (school boards/councils) participate in strategic activity within schools. She cites several similarities between company and school governance, such as an accountability process. She argues that the role of governing body is devising strategy, and that it being constituted by non-executive part-time members, justifies the use of corporate theoretical frameworks to explain school governance. Appendix 3 provides a summary description of the management theories commonly adapted in decentralisation.

The focus of this study was to understand the discrepancies between what the policy makers intended to achieve through public primary school boards and their actual practice. Argyris (1976) argues that most of the time the gap between what people intended to do, and what they actually do was due to failure to evaluate their

deeds and rigidity. He postulates that someone's "theory-in-action" is what they do on the basis of their conceptualisation and interpretation of their espoused theory. Theory-in-use governs a person's actions and is not always in line with the espoused theory, yet few people are aware that the theories they *espouse* are not the theories they *use* (O'hare, 1987). The problem is that such a lack of awareness inhibits any possibility of reflection and self-evaluation, which is important for capacity development.

The ideas of Argyris (1976) can be applied to school-board governance. The policies on school boards stipulated in various policy documents can be considered as the espoused theories while their practices can be considered as their theory-in-use. A school board's theory-in-use might be guided by their conceptualisation, interest and interpretation of their functions and the members of the board may not be aware of their inadequacies. Although school boards are an important aspect of policy, there is often a lack of consistency between what the policy says and what actually happens.

Using the governance theories proposed by Farrell (2005), this study draws on the school-based management practices of the developed nations to pursue knowledge of how the public primary school boards in Kenya operate. This study examined both the policy on school boards and the school boards' practice in public schools in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya. I sought to understand the reasons for the gap between what the policy on school boards *espoused* and what was *used*. This study assumes that school board members' practice was due to their interest, conceptualisation and/or interpretation. The knowledge generated from this evaluation would be beneficial for empowerment of the board members and improvement of the policies.

Models of School-based Management

Since the 1980s there has been a global drive in most educational sectors for new forms of corporate management where entrepreneurial patterns are being advocated (Tremblay, Lalancette, & Roseveare, 2012). In this view organisations are centralised and tightly controlled but allowed to operate freely with the aim of creating locally autonomous, yet centrally cohesive institutions (Payne, 2001). Reforms in school-based management are driven by different actors, the objectives of the reforms and the

broader national policy and social context in which they are created (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009).

The initial application of school-based management occurred in developed nations such as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009; Caldwell, 2005; Heyward et al., 2011). Developing nations such as Kenya, South Africa and Indonesia have begun adopting school-based management strategies through the decentralisation of decision-making and responsibilities. However, there are variations from one country or state to another, particularly in the extent to which decentralisation or devolution is implemented, and whether the local school boards are mandatory and have real authority or are advisory (Caldwell, 2005; Oswald, 1995; Zajda & Gamage, 2012). These variations make it difficult to evaluate their strategies and identify the common characteristics for an effective board.

Different nations practise governance based on their political, cultural and social aspirations. However, in most of them the adoption of school-based management was driven by the desire to provide quality education and improve stakeholder participation. Although decentralisation has several benefits it is not a policy panacea, therefore each country needs to choose or design an appropriate decentralisation model for transforming their education system (King & Guerra, 2005). Reform in school-based management in Hong Kong, for example, came about as a result of increased demand for accountability and participation of local stakeholders in running of schools (Au, 2005). Consequently, schools were given a high degree of autonomy over fiscal matters and staffing. In the United States alone, it is estimated that there are more than 800 school-based management models, and globally these models vary even more widely (Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004).

In most countries practising school-based management, school boards or school councils or governing bodies are mandated by their respective governments for a large number of specific reasons. The term which is used for such bodies often varies, so in this study I use the term 'school board'. The school boards are used, for example, in realising greater efficiency, improving parental involvement, increasing teacher self-concept, improving teaching and learning, and increasing participation in decision-making (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Although there are many different models used in different contexts they tend to apply a particular governance theory

such as *agency theory*, *stakeholders' theory*, *stewardship theory*, *administrative control*, among others (Appendix 3).

Countries adopt a particular model of governance in response to societal and political pressures. For example in England and Wales the stakeholder model of school-based management was adopted and driven by the desire to promote higher standards of education and to strengthen stakeholder participation (Farrell, 2005). Another country that tended to use the stakeholder model is South Africa (Heystek, 2011). Apart from ensuring high quality education in schools, the governing bodies in post-apartheid South Africa were expected to play an important role in democratisation and to realise inclusiveness in education (Sayed & Carrim, 1998). The South African “governing bodies were democratically elected and thus they comply with representative democratic expectations, but they were found to be less successful in the participative democratic model because of factors such the parents’ literacy and expectations, the negative perceptions of head teachers and parents, and the availability of parents to attend governing body meetings” (Heystek, 2011, p. 455).

The *stakeholder approach* suggests that the role of the board is to represent the interests of the client groups served by board members by incorporating different stakeholders on the board (Cornforth, 2004). This is the most popularly adopted perspective in education, particularly school governance, since the board is composed by representation from different stakeholders: parents, education officials, teachers and students. One challenge of adopting the *stakeholder's approach* was that of politics as stated by Cornforth (2004) that:

this leads to a political role for boards, negotiating and resolving the potentially conflicting interests of different stakeholder groups in order to determine the objectives of the organisation and set policy. (p. 17)

The *compliance model* or the ‘principal-agent theory’ is the preferred school-based management model in the United States of America (Hess, 2002; Sebring et al., 1995; Wohlstetter & Sebring, 2000). The model is based on the idea that the managers are *agents* of the shareholders (or board) and assumes that “the owners of an enterprise (the head teacher) and those that manage it (the agent) will have different interests” (Cornforth, 2004, p.14). According to this theory, the purpose of the board is to control the manager (head teacher or superintendent or head teacher) while, the board “should be independent of management, and their primary role is one of ensuring managerial

compliance” (Cornforth, 2004, p.14). The local school councils, in America, are the bodies mandated to govern public schools in a school district (Zajda & Gamage, 2012). School councils are responsible for policy formulation, and governing public education at the school level. Resnick and Bryant (2010) stated that these councils were responsible for “making sure that education requirements are met while translating local values and priorities into policies to meet the goals and aspirations of parents, taxpayers and local businesses” (p. 11).

Finland uses the *administrative control model* proposed by Leithwood and Menzies (1998) where decision making is shifted from one level of hierarchy to another such as from the district to the school by granting increased authority to the school head teachers (Murphy & Beck, 1995). Head teachers play a central role in the management of Finnish primary schools. Today in Finland, a school’s “operating environment is as a profit centre run by the head teacher as the manager of strategy, finances, administration, human resources, pedagogy and performance, as well as being a diverse service centre” (Alava, Halttunen, & Risku, 2012, p. 20). The municipal board’s role is to ensure close working relationships between the school and parents, and to play a key role in drawing up goals, objectives, policies, and procedures for home–school cooperation (Risku, Björk, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2012). Municipal boards are responsible for managing the school staff, ensuring the well-being and success of the students, and they play a central role in recruiting new teachers and other staff.

In Kenya, school boards were intended to operate on the *stewardship model* proposed by Cornforth (2004). Stewardship theory is based on the idea that board members and shareholders operate as partners and that the manager’s tend to be “collectively oriented and intrinsically motivated” and to be working towards the same interests of the organisation as board managers.

The theory assumes that the managers want to do a good job and will act as effective stewards of an organisation’s resources. The theory emphasises trust, close social ties between managers and board members, and consequently greater respect for the views of managers and board members within the organisation. This approach is based on partnership and the role of the board to improve organisational performance rather than to ensure compliance or conformance. (Cornforth, 2004, p. 15)

What is unclear, though, is whether the public primary school boards in the slums have been able to operate on the *stewardship model* effectively.

The effectiveness of school-based management can only be determined within a particular context (i.e. rural, urban etc.), but even within a given context practices could still differ. Drawing from school-based management practices in developed and developing nations, this study critically examines the operation of public primary schools boards within the slum in Kenya to determine how their effectiveness is perceived by pupils, teachers, parents and board members. Such a study is important for implementation and realisation of the millennium development goals (UNESCO, 2010; UNICEF, 2014a). This study will also identify current board practices, challenges, dilemma, tensions, and paradoxes.

Levels of School-based Management

As discussed in earlier sections, there are differences in the implementation of school-based management between countries. Depending on a country, a single board could be responsible for an individual school or group of schools or two separate boards run a single school. Review of literature showed that Australia, United Kingdom and Indonesia are among the countries where a single board runs an individual school. In Finland and United States of America, a single board was responsible for running more than one school. The case of South Africa was unique because a single school would be operated by two different but interrelated boards. These three levels of school-based management are likely to be faced with unique challenges. The three levels of school-based management are discussed below:

School boards at school level

Local governments can improve service provision and maintenance by devolving responsibilities to administrative units, such as the school boards. Using a devolution model, schools are supposed to be separate, autonomous, and independent with little or no direct control from centralised authorities. They are mandated by law to exercise their authority and carry out their functions within recognised boundaries (Cornforth, 2004). However, devolution of educational functions is likely to create disparities between schools, communities, and socioeconomic status. Example of countries that use the *devolution model* are Australia and Indonesia where school-based management is implemented as the school level by either a school council or committee.

Australia has developed a system of school administration which has a tradition of community involvement in school governance (Bush & Gamage, 2001; Gamage, 1996). The school councils are allowed to enter into contracts, agreements and arrangements; establish trusts and act as trustee, and take any other action that is necessary or convenient to be done (State of Victoria, 2009). They are expected to:

1. assist in the efficient governance of the school;
2. ensure that the decisions affecting the students are made, with their best interest in mind; and
3. enhance the educational opportunities of the students at the school. (State of Victoria, 2009, p. 2)

In East Asian countries such as Indonesia, school-based management is usually enacted by school committees and community councils consisting of members of the local community (King & Guerra, 2005). These committees are given some decision-making authority over day-to-day school operations, but not complete control. In the case of Indonesia school-based management was introduced to reduce disparities in access and quality between urban and rural areas within a country, between states and/or between schools (Shoraku, 2008).

As in Australia and Indonesia, the Kenyan school-based management strategy is implemented at the school level. The public primary school boards are in charge of fiscal management; school development; monitoring teaching and learning; linking school with home and the surrounding community; formulation of school ethos; and compliancy with legal provision and policies governing education in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1999, 2003, 2013). They are supposed to carry out their functions in close consultation with all stakeholders – parents, teachers, public, ministry officials and the local community.

School boards for more than one school

In countries where school-based management is implemented across a group of schools, such as in Finland and in the United States, different governance models operate. In Finland, local municipalities take a major role in educational leadership (OECD, 2007). The schools are mostly owned by the municipalities who provide most of the school resources and employ teachers and also play a key role in *curriculum planning and development* (Hargreaves, Halász, & Pont, 2007). The municipalities

have a constitutional autonomy and are the main providers of education (Alava et al., 2012; Risku & Kanervio, 2012).

Public education in the United States of America is run in locally managed school districts with a central board headed by a professional chief executive, the superintendent. The board governs schools within a district (Danzberger, 1994; Meier & O'Toole, 2001). The American public school boards are organised at the district level, not at the school level, managing a set of schools which in turn are managed by school principals. The districts are quasi-corporations, authorised or established by a State to organise and administer public schools and related programs (Gamage, 1996). In most cases the school district comprises an area within which a single board, consisting of elected community representative or an elected officer, oversees several schools (Ravitch, 2010). The common aspect about the school boards in these two countries, despite using different governance models, is that a single board would be in-charge of several schools and are directly responsible for employment of teachers.

School boards at two levels

The model of decentralisation in South Africa has two separate organs – the school governing body and the school management team. The school management team normally consists of the head teacher, the deputy head teacher and head of department or senior teachers. On the other hand the school governing body is made up of the head teacher as *ex officio* and selected members from stakeholders – teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and pupils in the eighth Grade. The South African School Act (SASA) commits the education department to provide capacity building for the development of governing body members to ensure they perform their functions effectively (Sayed & Carrim, 1998; Xaba, 2011). SASA was intended to “provide a national framework of school organization and funding and ownership, and norms on school governance and funding which, it is hoped, would likely command the widest public support” (Sayed & Carrim, 1998). According to Karlsson (2002), the school management team, staff, and the governing body stand “in a position of trust” (p .331). According to Lewis and Naidoo (2004) school governance practices in South Africa are concerned with strict compliance procedure of governance stipulated in SASA.

However, studies show that participation of members of the school governing boards was limited to certain issues determined by the head teacher and/or the parent

serving as the chairperson. Parent members in the school governing boards asserted frustration in expressing their voices in governance, as reported by Lewis and Naidoo (2004), “the school governing board doesn’t involve all the parents ... the teachers dictate the terms” (p. 105). Karlsson (2002) posits that “although the South African school governing board’s participation in school affairs is far-reaching, it fell short of curriculum matters, and full participation in terms of the allocated functions, was contingent on the school governing board’s capacity to govern”.(p. 331).

In all the three levels of school-based management adopted by the different nations, the aim is to improve quality of education, accountability and citizen participation. As applied in Kenya, school-based management is implemented at the school level by the school boards with parents as the majority. The intention was to emphasise the role of community and parental involvement in school affairs through decision-making, resource mobilisation, and accountability. An effective board could therefore be judged based on pupils’ performance in national examination, parental involvement in school affairs, and the school climate. While the intended operations of the board are implied by the Education Act that established school boards, the actual operation is not known. How these boards operate and literature on their effectiveness is lacking especially for boards in urban low socioeconomic settings.

Membership of School Boards

Regardless of the different forms of school board-governance adopted by different countries, the boards are mostly composed of a combination of professionals and parents (Wohlstetter & Sebring, 2000). Parental participation in school councils and school boards is common in both developed and developing countries. Involvement of parents in school governance has been criticised by some who do not see the value of inexperienced lay people meddling in a complex profession such as education (Sell, 2005). Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman (2013) found that teachers in some schools had reservations about parents’ capabilities in playing their partnership role in full.

Those supporting the involvement of lay persons or parents in the school boards counter that education is too important to leave solely to educators and administrators (Sell, 2005; Smoley, 1999). They argue that school boards provide a balance between the needs of students and families with the zeal of specialists and also provide a link

between schools and communities. This link leads to ownership of the school by the community and makes them willing to participate actively in the school affairs. Chan and Chui (1997) stated that parental participation in school governance is important because it improves school efficiency and effectiveness, enhances public accountability, and can ensure a school climate that is conducive to student's learning. In support of parents participation in school governance Gokyer (2010) stated that the "educational process is critically important in terms of the development of a positive school culture". (p. 1227)

The governing bodies in the United Kingdom play a vital role in management of public primary schools. They are expected to provide strategic leadership and make sure that every child gets quality education (Department of Education [DoE], 2014). For a long time parents and local community members in England and Wales have been involved in the management of individual schools (Hill, Smith, & Spinks, 1990). In 1984 the government further strengthened community involvement through widening the membership of school boards. The 1988 Education Reform Act made it possible for the governing body to opt out of the control of the local education authority (LEA) (Government of UK, 2002; Powell & Edwards, 2005). Withdrawing from LEA implies that the school is somehow privatised and parents are fully responsible in all educational aspects.

In the case of South African governing boards, the parent representatives were the majority and were predominantly male. Despite having the majority, parents were reticent: participation in practice was structured and institutionalised through the actions of the head teachers, who defined who might participate, how they were to participate, and what decisions were open to participation (Karlsson, 2002; Lewis & Naidoo, 2004). Karlsson (2002) attributes parents' low level of participation to:

... a weak understanding of their roles, a capacity deficit in the kind of skills required to perform all the governance functions, and contextual communication and transport difficulties. (p. 332)

Securing board members was found to be difficult in both developed (Bush & Gamage, 2001) and developing nations (Connolly & James, 2011). One reason attributed to this difficulty is lack of incentives, monetary or otherwise, for the board members. These incentives could be internal—such as praise or respect from fellow parents and teachers or feelings of self-esteem that come from school achievements—

or external, such as provision of snacks or lunch, travel reimbursements, sitting allowances, or being taken out for a tour or excursion, among others. Lack of incentive has meant the boards fail to attract highest-quality people of the community (Smoley, 1999). Kossan (2005) argued that paying incentives can bring more competitive and qualified candidates into the selection pool.

Hess (2004) acknowledges the fears of corruption or ulterior motives connected with paying incentives, but assert that incentives are more likely to attract strong leaders who have high-paying responsibilities and work long hours. However, this populist approach could result in raising costs of education to sustain the incentives, and more politicised boards whose members would be keen on the incentives and therefore potentially less productive (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger et al., 1987; Land, 2002). According to Murphy, Baker, and Jensen (1988) either providing incentives or not providing them determines how people behave in an organisation. In the context of school, according to *stakeholders' theory*, a board member should be selected based on the value (i.e. expertise, influence etc.) they bring to school (Freeman, 2011). However, this theory encourages trade-offs between the goals of the board and the goals of its stakeholders, or encourages the schools to provide incentives to the board members. In England and Wales, school governance is rooted firmly in the principle of voluntary service; board members are highly discouraged from accepting any form of incentive for their service but are entitled to compensation (such as travel or child care) that they have incurred as a result of serving as a governor (DoE, 2014).

The process used to select members varies depending on the aspirations of a particular country. For example, in South Africa, members of governing board were elected through a democratic process. The South African governing boards were used instrumentally to democratise school culture based on the democratic core values of tolerance, rational discussion, representation of all stakeholder groups, active and responsible participation, and collective decision-making (Karlsson, 2002; Mncube, 2009). However, one common critique of the representativeness of the boards is that the selection process of the members is normally marred by low voter turnout, hence compromising the board's real democratic value (Hill, 2003; Sell, 2005; Smoley, 1999).

The selection process for school councillors in Australia's Victorian schools involves parents, and emphasises their suitability in terms of their knowledge or skills (State of Victoria, 2009). In public primary schools in Australia's state of Victoria, every year parents can nominate themselves or a friend to join the school board by filling in a prescribed form to fill in vacant positions.

A position becomes vacant at the expiry of a period of two years or if someone leaves for personal reasons. A list of nominees is sent to parents to vote for their preferred nominee(s) to represent them in the board. (King, personal communication, 17/9/2011)

As a result, in Australia's Victorian school councils, most of the parent councillors were found to be relatively highly educated; but the working class was found to be under-represented in school councils (Chan & Chui, 1997). While the selection process in the Australia's Victorian boards was focused more on knowledge and skills, the processes in Finland was more about representativeness.

In Finland, the gender distribution of school boards was fairly balanced, and there seem to be people from various kinds of educational backgrounds, professions and political parties (Risku & Kanervio, 2012). However, Hill (2003) argues the success of a board is determined by its clarity and focus about its mission and roles and not so much on the mode of selection of board members. This is a view supported by Bandur (2011) who stated that with appropriate induction and training, lay councillors or board members will acquire sufficient knowledge to function effectively.

In extremely poor settings, however, it can be difficult to find school board members who can positively contribute to school improvement. It is possible that school boards are made up of a small group of 'elites', or, alternatively, 'idlers' representing the 'busy' parents whose perception of supporting the school is through payment of levies and requested funds. Furthermore, French et al. (2008) caution that a group formed from a small section of society, such as the 'elite', might not be able to represent the values of the less affluent. Although democratic process is the most preferred strategy for selecting board members, in most countries, like Kenya, it is not known whether it is suitable for school boards operating in high poverty settings.

Decision-Making and School Boards

The most important ingredient of school-based management is decentralisation of decision-making to the local level. The school boards are in the business of making decisions based both on government policy and on local aspirations. Gamage and Pang (2003) define decision-making as:

the process through which individuals, groups, and organisations choose courses of action to be acted upon including not only the decisions, but also the implementation of the decision to take a particular course of action. (p. 139)

According to Gamage and Pang (2003), decision-making is the antecedent of policy-making, which in turn establishes values and guidelines for operational decisions. A “decision is a conscious choice made between two or more competing alternatives” (Johnson & Kruse, 2009, p. 13). Johnson and Kruse argued that in a given context, effective organisations, such as schools, can be defined and distinguished by their decision making skills.

Many writers have raised important aspects of the decision-making process of the school boards. Bandur (2011) argues that the decision-making process should be open and clear to all concerned, consistent with reality, accurate and adequate. Odden and Odden (1996) state that members should be given adequate information concerning the decisions they will be making. He further states that the board should consider alternative action considering different points of view before reaching a decision. Smoley (1999) emphasises the need to make rational decisions through accessing and using relevant information then holding deliberate discussions which are systematic, objective and open. Genuine partnership between parents and professionals in decision-making often enables them appreciate each other’s point of view, creating a positive climate, and resulting in the attainment of school goals (Gamage, 1998). Gamage (1996) reiterated that

Even the opportunity for participation in decision-making provides the stakeholders with a feeling of empowerment and enables them to claim ownership of the policies which in turn increases their commitment to implement the policies more effectively. (p. 67)

In school-based management the assumption by most policy makers and policy advisors is often that delegation of decision-making down to the school level will result in better decisions, the more effective use of resources, and ultimately improve student

performance (Odden & Odden, 1996). However, Smoley (1999) argues that in the U.S.A., school-board decisions were made through partisan judgment, were often not well-considered and were based on the interest of a few influential members or the head teacher. Similarly, a comparative analysis of the decision-making processes adopted by more effective and less effective school councils in the Australian state of Victoria revealed significant differences between the two categories. The conclusion arrived at from the analysis was that involving more members of the community in decision-making does not necessarily improve the outcome (Gamage et al., 1996).

Irrespective of the school-based management model used, the decision-making process is about solving a problem, making choices or making up one's mind (D'Souza, 1994). D'Souza stated that "quality of decisions results from the use of intelligence, knowledge, and analysis of the problem" (p. 345). He emphasised the importance of involving people in the decision-making process because then they will be more likely to commit themselves to those decisions. However, making decisions in a group such as the school board is not easy, requiring considerable time and patience to allow others time to comprehend and make up their minds.

For effective decision-making at council meetings, there needs to be a carefully prepared agenda and papers that are sent at least five working days before the meeting; frank and open discussion; accurate, timely records of decisions, discussion and dissent; and access to independent and external professional advice. (State of Victoria, 2009, p. 11)

In Victoria, school council decisions are made through a democratic process and councillors are encouraged to vote based solely on the best interest of the students. The school council is supposed to meet at least eight times per year and at least once per term (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD], 2014). According to Xaba (2011) most board members of the South African school governing boards lacked the capacity to govern and make decisions. Therefore in most boards certain decisions are unilaterally made by the head teacher and/or the parent serving as the chairperson (Lewis & Naidoo, 2004; Kamper, 2008; Karlsson, 2002; Mncube, 2009). Parent members in the school governing boards expressed frustration in expressing their voices in governance as reported by Lewis and Naidoo (2004), "the school governing board doesn't involve all the parents ... the teachers dictate the terms" (p. 105).

The public primary school boards in slums, in Kenya and in other places, are involved making critical decisions in the interest of pupils, teachers, parents and the state. The government expects them to make decision which will not impede access and quality. This study deconstructs the decision-making process of public primary school boards in Kibera. One area of interest is how these boards balance between interests of the local community and the state. What is missing in literature, though, is the decision-making process of public primary school boards, composed mostly of lay people from extreme poverty with relatively low levels of education.

School Climate

Research on school climate and the elements that comprise it has been the focus of many studies, and it continues to be studied and redefined as a result of its significant influences on educational outcomes (National School Climate Center [NSCC]; Freiberg, 1998; Marshall, 2004; Okaya, Horne, Laming, & Smith, 2013; Pink, 1982; Reynolds, 1985). However, the elements that encompass a school's climate are extensive and complex, consisting of environmental factors: physical infrastructure, for example the physical buildings, classrooms and instructional materials; students' performance (Johnson & Johnson, 1993); the interactions between students and teachers (Kuperminc, Leadbeatera, & Blatta, 2001); students' and teachers' perception about their school climate (Johnson, Johnson, & Zimmerman, 1996); perception on school safety and size (Freiberg, 1998); and feelings of trust and respect for students and teachers (Manning & Saddlemire, 1996). These are some of the diverse factors that both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. The significance of the climate is major: among the many factors that contribute to academic achievement of students from informal settlements or slums, a supportive 'school climate' was considered the most important (Brookover et al., 1978; Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

School climate is multi-dimensional and influences many individuals, including students, parents, school personnel, and the community. Additionally, school climate can significantly impact educational environments, as Freiberg (1998) notes: "school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment or a significant barrier to learning" (p. 22). Haynes et al. (1997) define school climate as "the quality and consistency of interpersonal interaction within the school community

that influence child's cognitive, social, and psychological development" (p. 322). Johnson et al. (1996) state that school climate is a broad term that refers to students' perceptions of the environment of a school. Those perceptions distinguish one school from another, and that influences the behaviour of the students. In short, school climate refers to the personality of a school. This study adapts the definition of school climate by Johnson et al., and defines school climate as the "perception of all people involved in the school on the *people, place, processes, policies, and programs* or the *5Ps* in the school".

The plight of children learning in the informal urban low-socioeconomic settlements in most developing countries continues to evoke considerable concern among many educators, policymakers, and average citizens. Their performance in national examinations has continued to rate low despite the many school improvement efforts (Noguera, 2013). According to Haynes et al. (1997), the most effective strategies are those that address the socio-educational and psycho-emotional needs of children. They stated that "many explanations of low academic performance by students from extremely poor settings focused on the social and academic disadvantages that accrue from the *culture of poverty*" (p.322). Yet, according to Haynes et al., the performance of pupils in high-risk urban environment can be shaped significantly by a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate.

Pink (1982) argued that school climate is a factor open to manipulation by teachers and administrators, and that students' performance and behaviour can be an result of school organisation. Studies also confirm that school climate affects student behaviour, which in turn affects academic performance (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998; Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008). Schools which were found to have a positive or welcoming climate reported fewer behavioural and emotional problems for students (Kuperminc , Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatta, 1997). McEvoy and Welker (2000) found that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students, irrespective of the socioeconomic settings, can increase achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behaviour.

A positive school climate was found to provide a sense of security to boys and supplied high-risk students with a supportive learning environment, yielding healthy

development as well as preventing antisocial behaviour (Haynes, 1996; Kuperminc et al., 1997). Positive student behaviour was as a result of strong, available and focused leadership; clear and fair school rules, enforced consistently; student happiness at their school; a supportive community; and a strong academic thrust for students to excel. Regarding the roles of teachers and administrators, Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) found that a positive school climate is associated with high self-concept for school personnel.

There are several suggestions on how to measure school climate but the challenge has been in terms of both what to measure and how to measure it. Acknowledging the complexity of what defines and composes school climate, Zullig, Koopman, Patton and Ubbes (2010) argued that there appear to be common domains measured over time. A review of the literature (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009a; Freiberg, 1998) reveals five important school climate areas: order, safety, and discipline (Blum, McNeely, & Nonnemaker, 2002; Furlong et al., 2005; Griffith, 2000; Wilson, 2004); academic outcomes (Griffith, 2000; Worrell, 2000); social relationships (Furlong et al., 2005; Griffith, 2000; Wilson, 2004); school facilities (Wilson, 2004); and school connectedness (Blum et al., 2002; Catalano, Fleming, Haggerty, Hawkins, & Oesterle, 2004; Whitlock, 2006).

Measuring school climate is important for improving students' performance, school safety, creating health interactions, teacher retention, improving graduation rates and student well-being (Durham, Bettencourt, & Connolly, 2014). According to Lunenburg (2011), "assessing the school environment can provide opportunities to discover and address issues that can impede learning and healthy student development" (p. 1). Due to the multi-faceted nature of the school climate, different psychometrics measures have been used. The following are some of the instruments popularly used for measuring the school climate:

- the School Climate Survey (SCS) (Comer School Development Program, 2009; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997). This instrument was designed to assess perception of pupils, parents and teachers on aspects such as pupils 'performance, quality of relationships, discipline, parental involvement and resource utilization;

- the Charles F. Kettering (CFK) School Climate Profile (Johnson, Johnson, Kranch, & Zimmerman, 1999; Marshall, 2004) widely used to measure school climate and education planning. It comprises eight subscales: “respect; trust; high morale; opportunity for input; continuous academic and social growth; cohesiveness; school renewal; and caring” (p. 338);

Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) (Kelley, Schnitt, & Loher, 1987; Keefe & Kelley, 1990; Lunenburg, 2011) used to elicit responses from students, teachers and parents on the following aspects: teacher-student relationship; security and maintenance; administration; student academic orientation; student behavioural values; guidance; student-peer relationships; parent and community—school relationships; instructional management and student activities;

- the Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002) measures the levels of openness that exists between teachers, students and principal within a school; and
- Invitational School Survey-Revised (ISS-R) (Smith, 2011) measure how the school climate is inviting to all those involved and focuses on five key areas: people, place, processes, policies and programs of the school.

Noting that school climate is clearly of primary importance in effective schools (Johnson et al., 1996), in this study we use it to assess the efficacy of the public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings. My assumption is that an effective board will be keen to ensure that the school climate (including the physical infrastructure and interactions within schools) provides an environment conducive for teaching and learning. Invitational Education Theory and Practice (IETP), which encompasses school climate, is further discussed in Chapter 3 and provided the theoretical base for this study. The practice proposed the use of the Inviting School Survey-Revised (ISS-R) (Smith, 2013), which was used in this study to assess the school climate (Purkey & Novak, 2008; Smith, 2013; Smith & Liehr, 2008). The items in the instrument were found to be suitable to measure the school climates of public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings. One aspect of school climate is the interactions that occur within a school.

Interactions

Interactions in school can be social or instructional. A social interaction is an exchange between two or more individuals; it is a dynamic sequence of social actions between people who modify their actions and reactions as a result of actions by their interaction partner(s) (Boundless, 2014). According to Garton (1995), social interaction implies some degree of reciprocity, and it is marked by bi-directionality involving, at a minimum, two persons exchanging information. Social interaction, according to Garton, assumes the active involvement of both persons in the interchange, bringing to it different experiences and knowledge. Children learn through their interactions with teachers, their peers and other people within and outside school. Depending on the school culture and other prevailing social conventions, children have varying degrees of social contact with the people in school, each of whom will have some impact on them.

Social interactions have been found to have a sizeable effect on educational investment and outcomes in schools, for example in decision-making (Lalive & Cattaneo, 2009). The amount of interaction in a school is an important element of school effectiveness (Rovai & Barnum, 2003). Wagner (1994) defined interaction as an interplay and exchange in which people as individuals or groups influence each other. Moore (1989) describes three types of interaction—learner–content, learner–teacher and learner–learner—which were labelled by Wagner as the instructional interactions. An instructional interaction is an event that takes place between a pupil and the pupil's environment aimed at helping the pupils to respond in a way intended to change his or her behaviour toward an educational goal. According to Wagner (1994),

An instructional interaction is effective when the environmental response changes the pupil's behaviour toward that goal. Instructional interactions have two purposes: to change pupils and to move them toward an action state of goal attainment. (p. 8)

Interaction and learning has been found in several classroom researches to be positively correlated (Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Powers & Rossman, 1985).

According to Lalive and Cattaneo (2009), the interactions are important because children enjoy spending time with their peers, or parents learn from other parents about the ability of their children. While Haynes et al. (1997) observed that school communities that collaborate and have positive interactions between educators, parents

and students, there are gains in students' academic achievement and development. However, research has been scarce on other forms of interactions within school involving board members, parents and non-teaching staff. This study's focus goes beyond the instructional interactions to investigate how the school board members interact with pupils, parents and teachers. The assumption is that a positive relationship between the school board members and the other people in the school will improve school climate, parental involvement and students' scores.

In a study of school councils or boards where parents are the majority (similar to the Kenyan primary school boards), Kristen and Leithwood (2000) found that the effect on school and classroom practices is mediated by both external (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) and internal (Tekin, 2011) conditions to the school. Influence on the board also depends on the characteristics and behaviours of head teachers and teachers, as well as on characteristics of councils themselves and their processes for decision making. They (Kristen & Leithwood, 2000) found that:

More influential [boards] were characterised by their collaborative team approach with the school staff and their involvement in initiatives related to school improvement objectives. These [boards] were usually found in schools with a history of relatively extensive parental involvement in many forms. More influential [boards] had facilitative head teachers who supported and endorsed the councils; provided information, knowledge, and skills to council members; worked closely with the council chair; and assisted the council to build connections with the school staff. (p. 37)

Another important aspect of the school board is the ability of members to function as a group. Smoley (1999) states that a school board is considered effective when it functions as a group, which means the board must be operating within certain rules or norms, strategic leadership, articulating cohesiveness, acting on values and showing respect. 'Norms', here, refers to the agreement or understanding by the board members about aspects of the way they will operate. However, studies in the United States confirm that boards have difficulty working as a body or a team (Land, 2002). Further to this, individuality was found to hamper team work and render it susceptible to undue influence by special interest groups (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger, 1994; Land, 2002).

The interactions between the public primary school board members and pupils, teachers and parents were crucial to the provision of quality education. According to the Basic Education Act (Republic of Kenya, 2013a), the Kenyan public primary school boards are expected to ensure the peaceful co-existence all people within the

school. They are supposed to encourage a culture of dialogue, participatory democracy, and a spirit of cohesion, inclusion, tolerance and eliminate any element which could threaten the peaceful co-existence of all people in the school. Achieving the above goal depends on how the board members interact with pupils, teachers, parents, and other people involved in the school. This study sought to investigate interactions within the public primary schools. One such interaction was between the head teacher and other board members.

The Head Teacher and the School Board

In Kenyan primary schools, the school leader is usually the head teacher. In many countries, the role of school leader has taken on added significance in the educational reform and accountability movements over the last several years (Crow, 2006), and Kenya is no exception. The increased level of societal knowledge, technological advancement, changing student demographics in schools, along with increased demand for accountability and public scrutiny, have put new and increasingly complex demands on the school head teacher, and at the same time, have given the head teacher a great deal of power.

The head teacher in Kenyan schools is responsible for supervising the implementation of both the curriculum and government policies, being secretary to the school board, and responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. They are the agents for the supervision of the National Examinations and have to report to the government and any sponsors on all aspects of their school operations and examinations. Teachers are employed by the government and posted in the school, with the Head teacher's responsibility being to oversee the teachers in the operation of their duties.

As the head teacher's power increases, the main concern is their relationship with other stakeholders' (i.e. the pupils, parents and the community) (Williamson, 2010). Research suggests that irrespective of the school-based management model used, the relationship between the head teacher and the rest of the governing body is central to the overall wellbeing of the school and has a powerful, if indirect, influence on students' achievement (Connolly & James, 2011; Leithwood et al., 1999). According to Hess and Kelly (2005):

The school principals [head teachers] are the front-line managers, the small business executives, the battlefield commanders charged with leading their team to new levels of effectiveness. In this new era of accountability, where school leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results and use data to drive decisions, the skill and knowledge of head teachers matter more than ever. (p. 1)

While Crow (2006) affirmed that,

the role of the head teacher is important for developing and maintaining school culture, promoting a vision of academic success for all students, and creating professional learning communities; this has clearly been supported by research and theory. (p. 310)

Studies show that negative relationships between the board and the head teacher can seriously hinder and inhibit the effective working of the board and create a negative school climate (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 2013; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Poor relationships may result in overload of information for the board (or too little), too much board involvement in administrative matters, the board being overwork and making hasty decisions (Carol et al., 1986; Land, 2002). A study carried out by Shearn, Broadbent, Laughlin, and Willig-Atherton (1995) found that when there was agreement about the roles of the head teacher and the board, which can take many different forms, a stable situation exists, but when there was no agreement about role boundaries instability and conflict may arise.

Head teachers have a remarkable capacity to either derail the school boards in order to retain decision-making control, or to ensure council effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 1999). They can foster the board's effectiveness through participatory decision-making structures; foster collaborative work among members; define goals and roles for parents; act as information provider, motivator, and friend of the board; encourage the board members to maintain focus on students and their learning and to focus their effort on monitoring progress (Leithwood et al., 1999; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992).

The relationship between the school board and the head teacher depends on the model of school-based management practised. In the USA, which uses the *principal-agency model* or the *compliance model*, the school head teacher is employed by the board and his/her role is that of compliance. *Agency theory* posits that the separation of the incumbency of roles of board chair or the superintendent and chief executive office

who is the head teacher will protect the shareholder interest (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). In America debate has been rife over who really has power or authority in the running of a school. Is it the head teacher, or the school board/committee that is in control of a school? (Sell, 2005). In England and Wales, the school boards are encouraged to work in close partnership, “but retain sufficient distance to allow the [school head teacher] to run the school and the governing body [board] to hold them to account effectively for doing so” (DoE, 2014, p. 28).

School-based management strategy in England and Wales and Australia has tended to espouse *stakeholder theory*, implying that the governing body or school councils exist to advocate for interests of the stakeholders (Fletcher, 2009). Stakeholders are defined by Freeman (2011) as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives” (p.46). According to Honey (2008), stakeholder theory asserts that “people will protect what they receive value from” (p. 14). Specifically, Freeman suggested that organisations such as schools should identify their direct and indirect stakeholders, and looks for congruency or fit between the organisation and its stakeholders. However, he does not deal with the particular question relating to schools: who is really in charge, the head teacher or the board?

In England and Wales, the school board selects and appoints the head teacher (DoE, 2014). The board is expected to focus strongly on holding them to account while avoiding being drawn into direct involvement in operational matters. The head teacher is responsible for the school’s academic performance and the internal organisation, management and control of the school, while the board’s role is to provide expert advice and to hold the head teacher to account for exercising their professional judgements (DfEE, 2014). The head teacher is expected to implement the board’s decision and report the progress made in the process of implementation (Gamage et al., 1996).

In contrast, Finnish school-based management is based on the *administrative control model*, which gives the head teacher a lot of power (Alava, Halttunen, & Risku, 2012; Hargreaves, Halász, & Pont, 2007; Moos & Paulsen, 2014). In this model the role of the board is to advise the head teacher. The head teacher is able to influence decisions at the school through formal and informal means (Crowson & Morris, 1985). As stated by Aho, Pitkänen, and Sahlberg (2006) that:

Principals [head teachers] are not only the educational leaders of their schools, but managers who are responsible for financing, personnel, and the results of their institutions. Previously, a school head teacher was an experienced, senior teacher who was promoted for good service to education. Today's school head teacher must be a qualified leader who understands education development and has solid management skills to lead a school. (p. 119)

While Leithwood and Duke (1998) state that:

Administrative controlled school-based management (SBM) is aimed at increasing accountability to the central district or board office for the efficient expenditure of resources, on the assumption that such efficiencies will eventually pay off for students. These efficiencies are to be realised by giving local school administrators greater authority and influence over such key decision areas as budget, personnel, and curriculum. Advocates of this form of SBM, reason that such authority, in combination with the incentive to make the best use of resources, ought to get more of the resources of the school into the direct service of students. To assist in accomplishing that objective, the principal may consult informally with teachers, parents, students, or community representatives. (p. 39)

The *stewardship model* used in Kenya requires that the school board and the school head teacher work collaboratively. Stewardship theory, which fits not only business models but also education, argues stakeholder interests are maximised by shared incumbency of these roles (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). Under this theory, the head teacher is intrinsically motivated and wants to do a good job, that is, to be a good steward of the school. Thus, stewardship theory holds that performance variations arise from whether the school board and other structural situations facilitate effective action by the executive, or in this case, the school head teacher. The main challenge to executives, according to Donaldson (1985), is whether the organisational structure provides the much needed support to formulate and implement plans for high corporate performance.

According to the stewardship model, the school boards will facilitate this goal by providing clear, consistent role expectations and authorising and empowering senior management (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). Donaldson and Davis argue that:

Structure will assist them (chief executive officer –CEO) to attain superior performance by their corporations to the extent that the CEO exercises complete authority over the corporation and that their role is unambiguous and unchallenged... similarly, the expectations about corporate leadership will be clearer and more consistent both for subordinate managers and for other members of the corporate board. This organisation will enjoy the classic benefits of unity of direction and a strong command and control. Thus, stewardship

theory does not focus on motivation of the CEO but rather facilitative, empowering structures, and holds that fusion of the incumbency of the roles of chair and CEO will enhance effectiveness and produce, as a result, superior returns to shareholders than separation of the role of chair and CEO. (p. 52)

According to Donaldson and Davis (1991), the CEO should be given authority to run the organisation with guidance from the board which they chair. They argued that when the CEO was given more authority, such as being the board chair, their performance would improve. In the case of this study the CEO is the head teacher.

However, the main purpose of decentralisation was to reduce the power of an individual in centralised systems, and to encourage a consultative approach to leadership and the active participation of the local community. The Kenyan Basic Education Act 2013 envisaged a school head teacher who is accountable to the school board. Although the government reserved the right to appoint and dismiss head teachers, the school board is required to monitor the provision of quality education and compliance with government advice (Republic of Kenya, 2013a).

The relationship between the head teacher and the school board, despite being centred in facilitative leadership, has been a rare research topic in educational leadership studies worldwide. In Kenya, research has focused mostly on the role of professionals including teachers and head teachers, and the secondary school boards (Onderi & Makori, 2013), but no known study has focused on the public primary school boards, especially those serving in extremely poor settings. This study sought to understand the effectiveness of the *stewardship model* used in Kenyan public primary schools.

Teacher-parent Partnerships

Before a child enters school she or he has learnt a lot of things from her/his parents or guardians, whose role has a long-term impact on their lives and cannot and should not be ignored (Gelfer, 1991). Regardless of their socioeconomic background or level of education, the contribution of parents in the development of their children will have an impact on their children's attitude and socialisation (Henderson, 1988; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The parent's contribution to the development of the child does not end after they join school, but now the teacher must come in as a partner. Kanji (1984) stresses that "the teacher's task is to facilitate access to the curriculum for both parents

and the child ... only then will there be optimum learning taking place in the child” (p. 125). Therefore, one important aspect in providing quality education is the partnership between parents and teachers.

According to Gamage (2012) it is important that partnership be built between teachers, parents and local community because such partnerships would improve the morale of the students and teachers, and leads to ownership of the policies. Consequently, such ownership leads to a higher degree of commitment in implementing policies formulated with the involvement of the parties. The relationship between home and school becomes a partnership when parents and teachers work collaboratively towards a common goal. Such collaborations contribute greatly to healthier teaching and learning, which is critical for improving students’ outcome (Bandur, 2011; Gamage, 1996; Werf, Creemers, & Guldemon, 2001).

Recent reports also show that partnerships in England, Wales and New Zealand schools have resulted in increased student achievements (Allen, 2007; Robertson & Miller, 2006; Woolley, 2009). Robertson and Miller (2006) asserted that adopting a partnership approach has improved teaching and learning by involving parents and community members in helping students during the teaching-learning process. According to Gelfer (1991), the parent-teacher partnership “is important in guiding and facilitating the child’s growth, development and learning ... and can provide information useful for parents in helping their children at home and in school” (p. 164).

However, two contrasting views emerged regarding the involvement of parents in the child’s education. There are those who feel that parental involvement should be restricted to the provision of basic needs, while others argue that the education of a child is too important to be left just to the experts (Henderson, 1988; Kanji, 1984). Another common cause of conflict is when a parent’s interests do not coincide with the values of the school. For example, “a parent may be over-anxious, over-ambitious, or the teacher may be unsympathetic and insecure” (Kanji, 1984, p. 126). For the sake of the children’s learning, it is essential that parents and teachers should establish partnerships. An effective parent–teacher partnership is a two-way communication process, from home to school and from school to home (Gelfer, 1991). There is consensus between most teachers and parents that their partnership is hinged on their communication, although each party is not sure who is responsible for initiating

communication (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). The school board is well placed to break this impasse by facilitating the process of bringing together teachers and parents so as to create a positive school–home partnership.

Schools and teachers can strengthen parent–teacher partnerships by deliberately designing parent involvement programs (Comer & Haynes, 1991). They argue that “parental involvement programs that are instituted in traditional bureaucratic and inflexible school environments are less likely to yield positive results than those that are part of a more collaborative organisational structure” (p. 271). Crawford and Zygouris-Coe (2006) support Comer and Haynes’s view, stressing that parents’ involvement needs to become an integral part of the curriculum and not just limited to volunteering and attending school-sponsored events. Kanji (1984) suggests five ways through which schools can strengthen teacher-parent partnerships:

1. teachers listening to parents and modifying their practice where necessary;
2. the school providing information to the parents about the school curriculum, administration, facilities etc.
3. the board calling regular class meetings for both formal and informal dialogue
4. the board empowering parents by, for example, organising seminars and workshop where parents can learn new skills and interact and
5. the board carrying out an induction workshop for new parents to discuss school ethos, expectations of the school and to answer questions.

According to Henderson (1988), “school programs designed with a strong component of parental involvement produce students who perform better than those who have taken part in otherwise identical programs with less parental involvement” (p. 149). In addition, the academic performance and graduation rates of children from low socioeconomic settings were found to be much better than their more affluent peers, as long as their parents were strongly involved in their schooling. Parental involvement was also found to have a longer-lasting influence on a child’s academic and to improve their self-concept and behaviour (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012). Having parents involved frequently is beneficial to schools because they are more likely to support school programs and policies when they understand what is being done and why.

In teacher–parent partnerships, it is the parents who should be more determined to strengthen it than the teachers. According to Wils, Carrol, and Barrow (2005):

Whatever the contextual factors, whether government policy, external support, or demand from the economy, it is individual parents and children who decide whether the benefits of the schooling system are worth the investment and opportunity costs. (p. 8)

The parents should be at the forefront, seeking to know what the school does with their children and should be the first to contact the teachers. According to Fan and Chen (2001), the commonly used indicator variables of parental involvement are:

1. *general parental involvement* including parent-child communication, interest in home/school work, assistance with homework, discusses school progress;
2. time spent doing homework and home supervision;
3. educational aspiration and expectation; and
4. school contact and participation by parents. (p. 7)

The research tends to treat three broad approaches to parent involvement, namely those that attempt to “improve the parent-child relationship in the context of the family, integrate parents into school programs and build a strong relationship between school, family, and the larger community” (Henderson, 1988, p. 150). Improving parent-child relationship helps create a positive learning environment for the child at home, which has a powerful impact on student achievement. Henderson posited that the integration of parents into school programs was found to have significantly “improved language skills, test performance, and school behaviour” (p. 151), as well as important effects on the general educational process.

Despite the overwhelming evidence in research that parental involvement has strong influence on their children’s academic achievement (Allen, 2007; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Henderson, 1988; Sheldon & Epstein, 2010), the participation of parents from low socioeconomic background has been very minimal (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). There are many factors that constrain parental involvement in low socioeconomic settings. They include “narrow vision of parental involvement; school personnel’s negative proclivity; lack of teacher training; pressing employment issues; insecurity; poverty; and low expectations of teachers” (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005, p. 1). In addition, the lack of cooperation among teachers and parents has also been found to play a role (Marschall, 2006).

One barrier to connecting home to school or vice versa is the chasm between parents and teachers with regard to their perception of the nature of parental involvement. Teachers need to be aware about the parents' goals and aspirations and the things teachers do to help parents. Teachers also need to be informed about what parents consider as the best way to be involved at school and at home in order to strengthen the home-school connection. Epstein and Sanders (2006) argued that teachers need such information in order to be more effective in their interactions with children about schoolwork. On the other hand, parents often do not know about school programs and other opportunities in which they can be involved at their children's school. At times, parents do not know about the school's development plan, or change of approach or curriculum. In some cases parents are not aware of what teachers require of their children each year in school.

As school boards are mostly composed of parents, they are well placed to bridge the gap between teachers and parents. The board is better positioned to communicate to both parents and teachers about their aspirations and expectations, and how they can all meet the common goal of providing quality education for the children. According to Epstein and Sanders (2006), ideally the school board can provide advice and support with:

1. Parenting – helping all families understand child and adolescent development and establishing home environments that support children as students;
2. Learning at home – providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and curriculum-related activities and decisions;
3. Communicating – designing and conducting effective forms of communication about school programs and children's progress. (p. 289)

The school can also help by encouraging parents to volunteer at and support school functions and activities.

In reality, parents from extremely poor settings appear to participate in school activities most commonly through paying fees and sponsoring school activities, or through communities paying teacher salaries. One reason that many governments introduced school-based management was to increase participation by the local community in the affairs of the school (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000; French et al., 2008; Mintrom, 2009). High representation on school boards by parents from extremely poor settings has been found to translate into increases in schools' capacity to address

special educational needs unique to that setting (Marschall, 2006). What is not clear, however, is whether high representation of local parents on school boards has any influence on parental involvement in public primary schools in extremely poor settings, such as Kibera.

According to Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005), most teachers hold the belief that “parents who are poor do not care about the education of their children, are passive and unresponsive to attempts to get them involved, and are ignorant and naïve about the intellectual and social needs of their children”(p. 1). Yet there are no studies to test this hypothesis; therefore this study seeks to discover what parental involvement in an urban low socioeconomic setting is like, and to understand how the school boards in Kibera, where the parents are poor, can enhance parental involvement in school affairs.

Parental Involvement

The main reason for the inclusion of parent board members in Kenya was to increase their involvement in decision-making (Republic of Kenya, 2013). As a rule the head teacher and the board are expected to confer with parents to provide them with an opportunity to comment on the activities of the school. In addition, the board is required to encourage parents to participate in their children’s learning, and to support the work done by teachers. There are various ways that parents can support their children’s education by providing a home environment conducive to learning: for example, by allowing them time and space to do their schoolwork (Okaya, 2009).

The indicators of parental involvement in children’s education vary considerably across studies (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996) such as the six levels (or types) of school-related opportunities for parental involvement identified by (Booth & Dunn, 2013; Sheldon & Epstein, 2010):

1. assisting parents acquire skills for child-rearing;
2. communication between school and parent;
3. involving parents in school volunteer opportunities;
4. involving parents in assisting their children with homework;
5. involving parents in school decision-making;
6. involving parents in school-community collaborations.

This study considered the following aspects of parental support:

1. parent-to-school communication (calling, visiting school, talking to teachers);
2. school-to-parent communication (sending letters, invitation to school, providing information);
3. the parents' support of their school (volunteering, fund-raising);
4. parents' support of their child's education (invited to discuss their performance and assisting in homework).

These aspects were selected as being the most common forms of parental involvement reported in most studies in Kenya (Cheruto & Benjamin, 2010; Gakure, Mukuria, & Kithae, 2013; Kamunde, 2010; Ngware et al., 2011). The involvement of parents in the decision-making process is an area on which this study focused. Literature is missing on how public primary boards in urban low socioeconomic settings involve parents in the decision-making process.

Paradoxes, Tensions and Dilemmas

Cornforth (2004) argued that management or governance theories, including theories relating to school-based management (see Appendix 3), are mostly one dimensional, illuminating only one particular aspect of the board's role. Due to the multifaceted nature of school governance, Cornforth proposed a multiple theoretical perspectives approach in order to highlight paradoxes, ambiguities and tensions faced by the school boards. According to Cornforth (2004), "a multi-paradigm paradox perspective, which is informed by the various theoretical perspectives, offers a promising approach to providing this new conceptual framework" (p. 13). One of the assumptions underlying this study is that public primary school boards are faced with myriad unknown paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas that need unearthing and understanding.

Tensions, conflicts and dilemmas within school governance are common, often caused by unclear and changing roles, responsibilities and functions of various players within school governance (Onderi & Makori, 2013). In this regard Huber (2011) argues that "due to changing roles and functions of the various actors involved in school governance, tension between and within groups of actors become evident"(p 479). Conflicts and tensions were reported between the school board chair and head teachers in South Africa, UK, and USA, among others (Heystek, 2011).

In many cases, school boards experience conflicts and tensions due to a lack of clarity about their roles, how they should make decisions or exercise their authority. They are unsure how to balance between state laws or requirements and community expectations and respond to the interconnections between conflict and trust (Huber, 2011). Unless the different actors have a sound understanding of their roles and draw very clear boundaries, conflicts and disputes are likely to emerge, threatening the sustainability of the board through disappointment and loss of trust. Payne (2001) reiterated the importance of clear demarcation of boundaries in all systems, including school boards, because they define the uniqueness of an organisation and provide the territory within which groups or individuals operate. According to Mitchell (1997), these borders can be defined by “physically segregated environments, internal rituals and expectations established over time, the roles people take, and formal documents and policies” (p. 270).

There are widespread examples of tensions and conflicts occurring as a result of overlapping of tasks and responsibilities, and blurring or changing boundaries. According to Payne (2001), effective schools are those that have been active in resolving their border conflicts. Payne reported that the school boards of independent primary schools in Western Australia found “difficulties around boundaries and roles as the most destabilising factor they had to deal with” (p. 6). In these cases, the difficulties were linked to distinguishing between the roles of the board and head teacher, “where to draw these lines and how to have lines drawn” (p. 17). Changing the boundaries between roles also caused conflict; however, it is important for the ongoing health of the school that boundaries should not be so rigid that they cannot be changed. Neither should they be drawn so shallowly that they are changed on a whim.

In Switzerland, school-based management models have created two sorts of head teacher — one in charge an individual school, known as the ‘site head teacher’, and one who is in charge of a cluster of schools, or ‘head teacher’ (Huber, 2011). The roles appear unclear, and there are reports of friction between the two head teachers. Huber adds that “these tensions relate to the desire to maintain the status quo and traditional task division” (p. 478), and are also associated to a large extent with who has more authority to make decisions. There have also been reports of tension and conflicts between chairs of school boards and their head teachers within some individual schools. According to Naidoo (2005), in South Africa, conflicts and dilemmas are

caused by wide variations of policies in schools rather than by differing interpretation of roles that appear to be discrete.

Balancing the needs of professional teachers with those of the local community represented by board members is a dilemma facing most school boards. School boards can address this by defining roles and boundaries within an atmosphere of trust or in a relationship of mutual trust and support (Shearn et al., 1995). If the school boards operate within a culture of trust by having clear, written statements of responsibilities, roles, powers and duties then conflict could be minimised (Onderi & Makori, 2013). In an attempt to help school boards resolve the dilemma caused by overlapping or blurred boundaries, the South Africa legislation stipulates that the school governing body is to maintain a relationship of trust with the school, but there is little guidance about how this might be achieved. Equally important is the fact that trust is also expected from the head teacher and teachers (Heystek, 2004).

Another dilemma facing school boards is balancing the needs and expectation of the local community, which could be in contravention of government policy. In most developing countries the majority of school board members are parents or community members. If their interests do not coincide with an existing government policy, the head teacher, who is an agent of the government, is likely to be on a collision course with the board. For example, in Kenya, the government has banned any form of after-school coaching sessions, disregarding the wishes of most parents. In such a situation the school boards are faced with the dilemma of respecting the parents' wishes or enforcing the government policy as they cannot do both.

Kenyan legislation requires that the school board ensures the development of the children's knowledge, which may be interpreted to mean supervision of teachers' work, including attending lessons to see what teachers do in classroom (Republic of Kenya, 2013). According to Heystek (2004), parents seeking to monitor teaching and learning are intruding in an area they should not:

An example of the intrusion in the professional area of the head teacher was where parents felt they had the right to pay a class visit as a form of professional assessment because the school governing board was paying the salary of the educator concerned. In this specific case the parents felt that they were supporting the head teacher and were not aware that they were operating in forbidden territory. (p. 308).

The normal practice in Kenya is for teachers to manage their classes without external observation such as by parents. They become very uneasy and tense when parents or other stakeholders are to attend their class to observe how they teach and how the pupils learn. Most of them would consider it as intrusion or intimidation or witch hunt. Therefore, if the board members or parents insist on attending classes that causes tension. While some teachers would construe the monitoring as positively, some teachers are strongly against it. In Kenya, the board members are mandated to visit school and attend lessons but they have to consult the head teacher (Republic of Kenya, 2013). According to Lewis, Kim, and Bey (2011), “parental participation in school, including participation by minority parents, increases when teachers demonstrate more receptive and supportive attitudes toward parental participation at school and actually reach out to parents to bring them into the school” (p. 221). How the public primary school boards composed mostly of lay parents performs their monitoring role is of great interest in the current study.

A school board may become entangled in a situation where it has to do a lot of balancing acts: for example, the board is expected to operate democratically but at the same time implement government policies that are unpopular with teachers, such as the abolition of private tuition. A Kenyan public primary school board is expected to work closely with the head teacher but at the same time hold him or her accountable. These are some of the paradoxes needing attention with which the school boards find themselves. Unfortunately, despite these conflicts, tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes facing school boards, there is a lack of research focusing on these aspects.

These conflicts, tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes exist both at school-level and at the central level. For example, how does the Kenyan government expect the school board to ensure that public primary education is ‘absolutely free’ and of high quality without adequate teachers and allocating insufficient funds? Thus, this study explored the operations of public primary school boards in Kibera slum in order to gain insights into the types of conflicts, tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes they face and how they go about dealing with them. A clear understanding of the operations of these school boards will provide crucial information useful for improving public primary school boards within extremely poor settings.

School Board Effectiveness

By decentralising decision-making and authority to the school level, the central government's intention was to entrust the management of schools to the local community as a means of ensuring high-quality education. This may be true, according to Heystek (2011), with a well-educated local community that has the necessary knowledgeable and well-trained educators and head teachers as well as a parental community. Indriyanto (2003) stated that pupils in low socio-economic settings in Indonesia tended to have a lower quality of education, and by contrast, schools in prosperous areas tend to have a good quality of education. Lack of school board effectiveness was found to be one reason for school achievement stagnating in an American state (French et al., 2008).

Strong and effective school board governance is essential for good schools and central in the provision of quality education at the school level (French et al., 2008; Lewis & Naidoo, 2004; Smith, 2011). Yet school board effectiveness in developing countries has not been researched in great detail, despite the fact that school boards are a fundamental aspect of school leadership and administration. However, in developed nations research on 'school board effectiveness' has constantly been used to reform their school-based management in response to changes in their society (Connolly & James, 2011; Resnick & Bryant, 2010). In England and Wales, for example, school boards are required to carry out regular self-evaluation of their effectiveness, using a prescribed questionnaire (DoE, 2014; National Governors' Association [NGA], 2012). The findings are then used to guide reforms which are necessitated by the ongoing paradigm change, technological developments and findings from other studies.

School-based approaches to management in the twenty-first century is not only faced with existing dilemmas as describe above, but with a new challenge of bringing together both global trends and local circumstances to create *glocal* interpretations and solutions.

This study focused on three aspects of the school board's complex dynamics:

1. How school boards set the school climate in regard to the interactions of *people* within the school, and school's physical environment or *place*, *processes*, *policies* and *programs*. Determination of the perception of people on their school climate is very important. For example Kuperminc et al.

(2001) found that the negative effects of self-criticism on both internal and external problems were moderated by the positive perceptions of school climate which also moderated the negative effects of a lack of efficacy regarding internal problems;

2. how school boards encourage parents to be more involved in school affairs.

The large body of research on parental involvement indicates that this is a topic of growing interest by researchers and scholars: how can it improve schools and increase performance of students from low-income background? (Carrol & Barrow, 2005; Emerson et al. 2012; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Henderson, 1988); and

3. what school boards have done to improve academic achievement and how successful their strategies were.

While clearly the design component is not the only one that deserves attention, accurate determination of school-board effectiveness in a particular context is crucial to the legitimacy and desirability of any school-based management strategy. In this study, a school board is considered 'effective' based on what the key stakeholders (pupils, teachers, parents and stakeholder) perceive its contribution is to making the school *inviting*; *stimulating* parental participation and support and enabling the school to *realise* its key objectives such as improving students' performance in national examination. If school-based management is poorly designed and/or implemented it will have few positive effects, but recent research suggests that well-designed and implemented school-based management can improve teaching and produce higher levels of student learning (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003).

School-based management in Kenya has been in existence for decades but it has recently been an area of interest to policymakers, educators and parents as a result of changes to their roles in the implementation of free primary education and the pressure to realise the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, the main concern is to establish how effective these public primary school boards have been in improving the quality of public education. Leithwood et al.(1999) stated that "the effectiveness of councils (that is, boards) is also nurtured by establishing procedures for evaluating their work" (p. 471).

The characteristics of an effective board member are shown to include those with clear understanding of their duties and awareness of their important role of providing leadership to ensure the quality of education (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). They are positive, understanding, and appreciative, respect the role of the head teacher and have established an environment of trust within the board and school. Campbell and Greene (1994) proposed the characteristics of an effective board member to include: an understanding of the importance of open and honest communication with everyone; the ability to carry out their responsibilities with decorum and high level of integrity and professionalism; and the ability to operate with fairness, firmness, stability, and consistency.

Australia's Victorian school boards are supposed to work within the context of the Effective Schools' Model proposed by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). According to the DEECD, an effective school council:

is one that focuses on improving student learning outcomes; leads school community conversations about key issues and challenges in education; is actively involved in the development of the school strategic plan; promotes meaningful parent and community participation and actively seeks the views of its school community; has a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities; includes members who represent diverse views of the school community; has clear and consistent processes for decision-making; maintains high ethical standards; has members who have developed mutual trust and respect for one another; and evaluates and communicates with the school community about its activities. (State of Victoria, 2009, p. 6)

Figure 2.1 shows the effective school board as perceived by the DEECD. This model identifies eight key aspects of school effectiveness and continues by discussing school boards and identifies six key ingredients of board effectiveness: (1) decision making, (2) functioning as a group, (3) school council leadership, (4) connecting to the community, (5) evaluation and (6) capacity development.

Figure 2.1. Effective Schools Model

Figure 2.1. Effective Schools Model. Adapted from “Improving School Governance: Induction” by the *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD]*, 2014, p. 6.

Currently, in Kenya, the public primary school boards play a vital role in the provision of quality education. In low socioeconomic settings, differences in students’ performance in national examinations could be associated, among other factors, to school board ‘effectiveness’. According to Cameron (1978), measuring organisational ‘effectiveness’ is difficult because it has been a label pinned on a wide variety of organisational phenomena from a wide variety of perspectives. He argues that this difficulty in empirically assessing organisational effectiveness has arisen because no one ultimate criterion of effectiveness exists.

However, Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) suggest that there is an issue that has not been addressed: namely, how does an organisation assess its effectiveness and by what criteria? There is also the issue of who does the assessing. Papadimitriou and Taylor further stated that:

Given that the criterion problem of effectiveness remains complex, the study of the construct may benefit from a research reorientation that focuses on a specific organisational setting and the perspectives of the coalitions associated with its function. (p. 26)

Kenya is committed to improving the quality of education and meeting the Millennium Development goals. One strategy to achieving these goals was through giving more powers and authority to run school to the school boards. The missing aspect, though, is a determination of their effectiveness and especially those that operate in the urban low socioeconomic settings such as in Kibera. In this study, the perceptions of participants about their school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance were used as criteria for considering the effectiveness of public primary school boards.

Studies in Kenya

Although the Education Act of 1968 established the public primary school boards, it was after the introduction of free primary education policy in 2003 that their importance was evident (Benta & Enose, 2010; Republic of Kenya, 1968; Tooley et al., 2008). The government urgently needed the school boards to:

1. fast-track the implementation of the free primary education policy which was the main campaign promise by National Alliance Rainbow Party (NARC) political party in power (Republic of Kenya, 2013);
2. ensure accountability and fight the perception that Kenya was a virtual international pariah due to extreme levels of corruption, leading the IMF to freeze its lending to Kenya in 1997 (Afrobarometer, 2006);
3. ensure that all children who had attained the mandatory age for schooling joined school; and
4. to support the school administration to address challenges associated with the introduction of the new policy.

In order to achieve their objectives, the NARC government carried out a hasty induction workshop countrywide for all public primary school board members. According to the UNESCO report (2005), the impact of FPE can be view in two ways. On the one hand, the provision of learning and teaching materials has been seen by many as having improved the education quality due to the fact that pupils were no longer missing lessons because of lacking school fees. But on the other hand, it was reported that quality had gone down due to overcrowding and lack of individualised

attention. What is not clear, however, is the contribution of the school boards and the role they played in the implementation of the FPE policy.

Several challenges were cited as threats to successful implementation of the free primary education, such as large class sizes, teacher shortages and poor implementation strategy (UNESCO, 2005). Proper induction of all stakeholders on the implementation of the policy, revision of policy framework and strengthening of the school boards were identified, among others, as necessary for sustaining the policy. Yet despite the centrality of the public primary school boards in the provision and sustainability of free primary education policy in Kenya, they have not been subject to research.

Most studies on primary education have focused mostly on implementation of FPE (Benta & Enose, 2010; Tooley et al., 2008), while the few that focused on the public primary school boards were mostly geographically situated rather than socioeconomic. For example Kabiaru (2013) assessed the roles of public primary school boards in an urban settings (not specific to socioeconomic settings), focusing mainly on their procurement, physical infrastructure, resource mobilisation and communication. She found that the board's role of procurement of teaching and learning resources was positively impacting on the implementation of inclusive education or free primary education. However, a public primary school board in a well-off setting is most likely to differ with regard to social and economic basis compared to that operating in an informal setting, such as a slum.

An in-depth study of public primary school boards in a particular social and economic context is required because it would be more informative to policymakers. In addition to descriptions of how stakeholders perceive their roles and functions, a detailed examination of their effectiveness, challenges, tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes would provide insights which could be generalisable in similar contexts worldwide. This study stands out as the very first to determine the effectiveness of the public primary school boards in the most disadvantaged settings in Kenya and possibly in the world.

Conclusion

According to the literature, school board governance is a discursive process implemented differently in different countries, embodying a set of beliefs, values and expectations largely specific to a particular demographic group. This study chose to focus on public primary school board governance in Kenya due to its unique demographic characteristics and opacity with regard to operations, as evident by the scarcity of literature and lack of research studies. The choice of a suitable school board governance theory, adopted from corporate governance, exemplifies the aspirations and intentions of the policy makers but inadequate information about the boards' performance is a major hindrance to further improvement and reformation in response to changes in the society.

Over seventy per cent of the world's children attending public schools in developing countries receive inferior quality education due to administrative challenges (UNESCO, 2014). The quest for quality education, massive expenditures on global interventions (e.g., free primary education, school feeding programs etc.), and technological advancement and inter-dependency between developed and developing nations are some of the justifications for improving public primary school governance in informal settlements. An *effective school board* will, among other benefits, guarantee pupils a quality education by holding the professional accountable, improving parental involvement in education, providing school climate which is conducive for teaching and learning and which would ultimately improve students' performance.

The literature also indicates that there is insufficient information on school-based management in developing nations as an antecedent to administrative reforms and provision of quality education for children from extremely poor settings. Most of the available literature on school-based management was written in the context of the developed nations, and offers little practical advice suitable for developing nations. Nevertheless, there are different models and theories of school-based management used by different countries, and all of them are designed to provide quality education to its children. Differences seemed to emerge in the literature from different perspectives of leadership, influenced by economic, social and cultural factors. For example Leithwood and Duke (1998) identified twenty specific school-based management

leadership models commonly used in developed nations. Therefore, the effectiveness of any school-based management model can be determined only in a particular contextual setting, and there is no universality in the characteristics of an effective board without the context being considered. School climate, parental involvement, and students' performance are key aspects in determining school board effectiveness as no school board works in isolation.

Drawing extensively from literature on school-based management in developed nations such as England and Wales, the USA, Finland and Australia, and lessons learnt in its implementation in Indonesia and South Africa, this study sought to determine the operations and effectiveness of public primary school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting in Kenya. Specifically, the study focused on four key aspects of the public primary school boards: current practice, perceived effectiveness, challenges, paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas, and impact on school climate, parental involvement and students' performance. All these will be addressed in subsequent chapters. This thesis will turn next to the theoretical perspectives that guided this study.

Chapter 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The most important of the three theoretical and philosophical frameworks that guided the study was Invitational Education Theory and Practice (IETP) (Cain et al., 2011; Novak, Rocca, & DiBiase, 2006; Purkey & Novak, 2008; Smith, 2011). Discussion of this Invitational Education Theory and Practice is followed by an explication of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Tekin, 2011), which was used to explain parental involvement in school affairs, with special attention to the participation of parents from poor backgrounds. The third section in this chapter presents epistemological, axiological and ontological arguments as to why pragmatism (Albrecht, 2003; Bazeley, 2009; Haack, 2001; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) was the preferred guiding paradigm for this study. The chapter concludes by highlighting how these perspectives and theories were used to shape the design of the data collection process and to interpret the results.

Invitational Education Theory and Practice

Invitational Education Theory and Practice (IETP) focus on the school climate as an important aspect of schooling. School climate goes beyond a school's physical infrastructure or the individual characteristics of the people who work or study there. According to Orpinas and Horne (2006), it "encompasses more subjective features of an environment, such as management styles, rules and regulations, ethical practices, and candidness or reticence in communication" (p. 80). Where a school climate is positive the students and teachers enjoy being there and exhibit high levels of motivation and self-concept (Orpinas & Horne, 2006). Schools like these are described as inviting (Novak, Rocca, & DiBiase, 2006; Purkey & Novak, 2008). According to Orpinas and Horne (2006), positive school climate refers to:

The characteristics of the school — the quality of the interactions among the members of the school community and the influence of the physical and aesthetic qualities of the school building and its surroundings — that enhance learning and nurture an individual's best qualities. (p. 80)

They identified eight critical elements for creating a positive school climate: excellence in teaching; school values; awareness of strengths and problems; policies and

accountability; caring and respect; positive expectations; teacher support and physical environment characteristics. A critical analysis of these elements classifies them into three main aspects: interactions among people, school policies and physical environment. Orpinas & Horne (2006) alluded to the importance of not only creating a positive school climate but considering the process used to create it.

This study used IETP as a framework that provides ways and means of assessing how *inviting* a public primary school is, despite being situated in the most *disinviting* external environment. An inviting school is a product of collaboration and teamwork by students, families, and educators working together to develop a shared vision, who all contribute to the operations of the school and care of the physical environment (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Novak et al., 2006). Purkey and Novak (2008) emphasised the importance of making the school inviting to the extent that everyone associated with the school feel welcome. An inviting school is safe and helps children to embrace education with enthusiasm, increases student ownership and promotes better work habits for adults (Mayer, 2007). When a school is made inviting it experiences fewer acts of aggression, less vandalism and absenteeism by students (Orpinas & Horne, 2006). Purkey and Novak (2008) postulated that schools must provide a warm, caring environment for students to learn and prosper.

The Invitational Educational Theory and Practice is a theoretical paradigm based on tenets of perceptual psychology and self-concepts. IETP provides a model suitable for education and counselling practitioners to empower people to realise their potential in all areas of worthwhile endeavour (Novak et al., 2006; Purkey & Novak, 2008; Smith, 2011). It is a democratically oriented, perceptually anchored, self-concept approach to the educative and counselling process (Haigh, 2011). The theory provides a means of making classrooms inviting through altering the climate at schools (Steyn, 2007). The aim of IETP is to understand how to create and sustain invitational environments (Haigh, 2011). It focuses on five environmental areas that support or hinder an individual's success or failure, namely *people*, *places*, *policies*, *programs*, and *processes*, often abbreviated to the 5Ps (Haigh, 2011; Smith, 2011). The following sub-sections discuss the 5Ps of the invitational theory.

People

School, according to Zullig et al. (2010), is “a setting or place of education that included the people who go there, and that all of these people interact with one another to affect learning” (p. 149). There is a large body of research which suggests that when interactions during learning are positive, irrespective of the demographic environment, students’ performance improves and there is reduction in maladaptive behaviour among students (Haynes, 1996; Kuperminc et al., 1997; McEvoy & Welker, 2000). In Invitational Education Theory, *people* refers to all those involved in the school, such as the teachers, pupils, and other non-teaching staff. The IETP model regards *people* as the most important part of the school’s operation (Purkey & Novak, 2008; Smith, 2011, 2012).

People are considered the most important component of IETP because they create and maintain the invitational climate (Marshall, 2004). People’s behaviours, especially the adults who are primary carers in the school create an inviting school climate by contributing to human existence and development. This is because as postulated by Zullig et al. (2010) that students’ performance is influenced to a large extent by how they feel within themselves about the social environment within the school. The IETP model emphasises positive behaviours and attitudes and behaviours such as unconditional respect for people, caring and courteous behaviour (Burns, 2007; Haigh, 2011).

The public primary school boards in Kenya are expected to ensure that interactions between teachers, parents and pupils are healthy and positive. They are supposed to “promote the spirit of cohesion, integration, peace, tolerance, inclusion, elimination of hate speech, and elimination of tribalism at the institution” (Republic of Kenya, 2013, p. 255). The current study focused on the nature of interactions in the public primary schools in Kibera and the impact of the school boards on those interactions.

Place

Place refers to the physical aspect of the school which is the most obvious place to begin changing when seeking to change the school climate. A school is made more inviting when the school’s physical environment is clean, pleasant and attractive. By creating a pleasant physical environment those who manage the school, such as the

teachers and board members, demonstrate their concern for the people they seek to serve. A school with pleasant physical environment is perceived as healthy by the community (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). A healthy school is created through the elimination of aspects that may inhibit learning through increased risks to the health of pupils and staff. Noise, poor lighting and foul smell are some of the factors that were identified as inhibitors of students' learning and which are common in schools within the slums.

Provision of physical infrastructure and its maintenance is the important role of the public primary school boards in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The schools which participated in this study were renovated and improved with the support from government and international donor agencies. In their current states, these schools have superior physical facilities compared to most of the private primary schools within the slum (see Appendix 2). The key role of the boards in the public primary schools was to keep these facilities in good working conditions. For example, the boards were expected to ensure that the toilets are clean, electricity and water is available and so on.

In this study, the *place* refers to the physical environment, which according to the Geneva Centre for Autism (1998), includes all factors that can affect students in a physical way (e.g., noise, light, air quality). The aspects used for *place*, as described by ISS-R questionnaire, in the current study include availability and arrangement of chairs/desks, air quality, school grounds/compound, rest rooms/toilets, the head teacher's office, bulletin/notice boards, safety measures, water points, and lighting.

Processes

According to Porter (1991), school processes include curriculum being implemented, teaching or instruction, and the conditions which pupils learn. *Processes* themselves do not produce learning but they provide the opportunity for learning to take place. *Process* in the Invitational Education Theory and Practice represents not only the content but also the context. The underlying principle of the IETP model is that school processes should be seen as caring, demonstrating civility, politeness, and courtesy. The *processes* show school's operations and people's behaviour rather than what is being undertaken. Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, and Gray (2004) found that school processes such as: shared school goals; school-wide decision making; fit of plans with school

needs; and empowering principal leadership can improve teachers' efficacy. Bernhardt (2003) defines school processes as

What learning organisations and those who work in them are doing to help students learn: what they teach, how they teach, and how they assess students ... the school processes include programs, curriculum, instruction and assessment strategies, interventions, and all other classroom practices that teachers use to help students learn. (p. 1)

The school processes considered in this study, adapted from the ISS-R questionnaire (Smith, 2013), include the assignment of grades, responding to telephone calls, punctuality, how people feel about their reception by the school, involvement in decision-making, attendance and punctuality of class commencement. The current study used the school process to find out if the school boards were providing children from poor families' opportunities to receive quality education.

Policies

Policies, including those formulated and maintained by schools, are designed to create places which are inviting (Smith, 2012). School policies and how they are enforced are likely to influence pupils' and teachers' behaviours, performance, beliefs and expectations, including those of parents (Flay, 2000). According to Flay, school policies "reflect community norms and expectations" (p. 863). School policies include regulations, rules or code of conduct, directives, procedures used by teachers and the boards to run schools. Purkey and Novak (2008) posited that the IETP model is more concerned with what a school policy communicates. They state a good policy is one that is intentionally designed to promote trust, respect, and optimism.

According to the Invitational Education Theory and Practice model, an inviting school policy should reflect shared expectations which are clear to the whole school community and reveal the perceptual orientations of the policy-makers. One aspect of the current study is to determine the perception of Grade 8 pupils, teachers and parents on how inviting their school policies are. For this purpose, teachers' willingness to help pupils with special needs, pupils' interaction during class activities, freedom of expression, nature of messages and notes sent to parents, school's grading practices and students' performance were used.

Members of public primary school boards are expected to promote the best interests of the institution, manage the school's affairs according to government's rule and regulations, and encourage a culture of dialogue and democracy (Republic of Kenya, 2013b). This study was interested in determining how the school boards interpreted this instruction and balanced the implementation of government policies with community expectations.

Programs

Programs can be helpful or harmful to individuals and groups and therefore need careful consideration. School programs which focus on narrow goals and neglect the wider scope of human concerns contribute considerably to a school being disinviting (Smith, 2012). Tracking and labelling students is an example of such a program. However, there are programs adopted in some schools which are helpful and relevant. For example, nutrition program in schools with a growing number of overweight children. Veugelers and Fitzgerald (2005) found that students from schools with nutrition program “exhibited significantly lower rates of overweight and obesity, had healthier diets, and reported more physical activities than students from schools without nutrition programs” (p. 432).

School programs are meant to improve the learners' and teachers' experiences in school. An inviting program is one that enhances the personal and professional growth and development of all the people in the school. There are certain programs, such as the nutrition program discussed above, which are particularly designed for students at risk but regardless of their objectives such programs need to be made inviting. In this study, school programs identified include:

1. games/sports/athletics
2. health/wellness
3. clubs/societies/co-curricular (wildlife, scouting, etc.)
4. mini-courses (First Aid, peer counselling, etc.)
5. health and wellness program
6. academic
7. educational tours and excursions.

Table 3.1 summarises the 5Ps of Invitational Education Theory and Practice model that have been discussed in this chapter:

Table 3.1

The Five ‘P’s of Invitational Education Theory and Practice

P1. People	Teachers and pupils work together as a family, with courtesy and respect, to build long-term relationships and to manage stress and conflict
P2. Places	Places exude a positive, cared for and caring atmosphere, clean, sustainability conscious, welcoming and including, so that those who use them feel some sense of ownership and of belonging
P3. Policies	Policy and policy-making respects people and their needs, provides an environment of mutual support and a learning community ethos
P4. Programs	All programs emphasise community engagement and service, wellness, well-being and the enrichment of all involved, especially the pupils and their self-development
P5. Processes	All management and operational processes function in inclusive, democratic ways that support the self-developing ethos of the learning community

Note. Adapted from “Invitational education: Theory, research and practice” by Haigh, 2011, *Geography in Higher Education*, 35(2), p. 301.

In this study, I argue that an effective public primary school board would seek to create an inviting school where people want to be, pupils want to learn and teachers to work: one that the community wants to support (Novak et al., 2006). As stated by Orphinas and Horne (2006), people’s psyches can greatly be affected by the place or environment where they spend a lot of their time, such as their workplace or school. School attendance, teaching and learning in public primary schools in slum areas could thus be impacted by how inviting or disinviting the occupants perceives them to be. The invitational education theory and practices aim at encouraging people to work collaboratively to build a school culture which is ethical, and which promotes social justice, openness and a shared vision (Purkey & Novak, 2008). The current study assumes that when a school is *inviting* in all aspects, the quality of the education provided will be high.

Several studies have been carried out using the IETP. Burns (2007) used a mixed method design to compare the invitational qualities of schools in Missouri. The results of that study revealed that schools which performed well academically displayed more invitational qualities than those which were not inviting. Teachers employed in these schools believed that respect and trust were essential qualities for creating an effective organisation; however, their leaders emphasised only “trust”. Steyn (2007) used semi-structured interviews and focus groups to study the effect of introducing the IETP model in a South African primary school. This study found a positive impact on the school’s culture, which was possible by establishing trust through leadership as its central component.

The focus of the current study is to determine the effectiveness of public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings using the Invitational Education Theory and Practice. Although the participants had not been introduced to the IETP principles, they were aware of the importance of creating a positive school environment conducive to learning. In addition, these schools were introduced to the tenets of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) program by UNICEF:

...which makes the child central to the educational process and the main beneficiary of key decisions in education. The purpose of a CFS model is to ‘move schools and education systems progressively towards quality standards, addressing all elements that influence the wellbeing and rights of the child as a pupil and the main beneficiary of teaching, while improving other school functions in the process. (Wright, Mannathoko, & Pasic, 2009, p. 2)

Like the IETP, the Child-Friendly School program aimed to create a welcoming environment for both children and their teachers. The envisaged environment is one that motivates children to learn, where staff members are friendly and welcoming to children and attentive to all their health and safety needs. However, the IETP’s holistic approach to educational environment made it the most suitable theoretical perspective for this study. In addition, the Revised Invitational Schools Survey (ISS-R) questionnaire (Smith, 2013) was considered a simple and useful tool for the evaluation of invitational aspects of public primary schools in Kibera slum.

Public primary school boards are legally responsible for the overall management of schools on behalf of the local community (Republic of Kenya, 2013a). They should support and create a positive environment conducive to teaching and learning. This is the focus of IETP: the creation of a courteous and supportive educational habitat in

which everyone flourishes (Burns, 2007). The Invitational Education Theory and Practice has practical applications for individual schools, “being designed specifically for working in negative environments among those who are disempowered, alienated and disengaged” (Haigh, 2011, p. 305). These applications are particularly pertinent to the urban low socioeconomic settings targeted by this study.

School board effectiveness is a difficult, multifaceted and rarely researched concept in educational leadership. Recognising the complexities of assessing effectiveness of school boards due to its complicated construct and accepting the inherent difficulties in studying it, I decided to use the Inviting School Survey-Revised questionnaire (Smith, 2013) as a practical and simple tool. A public primary school board will be judged effective based on its contribution to making their school inviting in regard to the *5Ps*.

Ecological Systems Theory

Experiences at home, school, peer group, community influence or other cultural contexts affects how one perceives oneself (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). Spencer, Dupree and Hartmann assert that:

The processing of phenomena and experiences not only influences how much one feels valued or valuable (e.g. self-esteem), but also it influences how one gives meaning and significance to different aspects of oneself (e.g. abilities, physical attributes, behaviours, and activities). (p. 817)

Self-perception, which is a key aspect of this study, organises one’s behaviour, thoughts and actions, and is dependent on the socio-cognitive process. Lev Vygotsky emphasises the relationship between human beings and their environment, both physical and social, citing abundant evidence of the influence of social and cultural factors on development and learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Although children living in slums are extremely disadvantaged, their social interactions with their family, peers and teachers still influence their socio-cognitive development: sometimes in the most unexpected ways. For example, a study carried by Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001) in a Calcutta slum, found that slum dwellers had a surprisingly high level of life satisfaction. It was lower than among more affluent Calcutta residents; however, they were more satisfied with their lives than one might have expected given their extreme poverty. Diener and Diener (2001) concluded that

this could be due, in part, to the strong emphasis on social relationships and the satisfaction participants in the study derived from them. Therefore, the *internal* interactions that these children have with the family members, peers and teachers in school will influence their attitudes and acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Vygotsky, a leading a proponent of the contextual approach to child development (Garton, 1995), focuses on the internalisation of procedural knowledge by formulating the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). He argues that there is a critical space between a child's capacity for problem-solving and the level of expertise that they have not yet achieved (Prior & Gerald, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as:

The distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by the independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

When working under the guidance of an adult, or an older, more able peer, a child is able to achieve outcomes that it is incapable of achieving alone. According to Vygotsky (1978), this process of guided or facilitated achievement is a key aspect of learning. He also argued that children will learn the skills and knowledge that are valued in their family and community more easily and quickly than those which are not (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, riding a bicycle is initially beyond the capabilities of the child, but it can be learned through working with more capable peers or an adult and, where it is seen as normal or desirable for children to ride bicycles, they will learn at a very young age. Accordingly, by emphasising interrelatedness and interdependence in learning, his theory emphasises the idea that a child's home life is of crucial importance (Prior & Gerald, 2007); and that parents contribute greatly to the development and academic achievement of a child. If a child has parents and teachers who expect them to learn at school, they will.

Several theoretical frameworks have been developed to investigate factors which affect children's cognitive development. Sociocultural theory (SCT), proposed by Vygotsky, argues that functioning of the human mind is fundamentally a *mediated* process, organised by cultural artefacts, activities, and concepts (Lantolf & Thorne, 2009; Ratner, 2012). According to sociocultural theory, children learn and gain knowledge through their interaction with the people surrounding them, such as family

members (Vygotskiĭ, Rieber, Robinson, & Seymour Bruner, 2004). The theory considers the vital contribution of the family members in the children's learning and development as the child's first teachers.

Ecological systems theory, proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, goes beyond Vygotsky's focus on social influences in the child's immediate environment on their development to include the influence of the surrounding world. His ecological systems theory includes social, political, biological and economic factors acting on the child as well as the family's structure and behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner described the external layers in the ecological system affecting families as micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines the microsystem as:

A pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person [such as pupils] in a given setting [urban low socioeconomic settings] with particular physical and material characteristics. (p. 22)

This is the layer that affects the child most closely (Gestwicki, 2015). In the context of the current study, the *microsystem* includes family, teachers, and class mates. Within this system the children experience a reciprocal face-to-face relationship that impact on their development, including their learning. Institutions such as the family or school within the microsystem also interact with and influence each other. For example, school affects neighbourhood and neighbourhood affects the family members of the child.

When the developing person moves into another setting then two settings, or microsystems, are made to interrelate. For example, an interrelationship is formed between home and school when a child moves from home to school. A new system known as the *mesosystem* is formed:

A *mesosystem* comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighbourhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life. A *mesosystem* is thus a system of microsystems. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25)

Strong and positive linkages among the components of child's mesosystems enhance their social and intellectual development (Prior & Gerald, 2007). For example, the link between home and school affects a child's cognitive development and behaviour. Another ecological system is the *exosystem* which refers to:

One or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25)

An example of an *exosystem* is the case where an event at parent's work place, such as loss of job or salary increase, will influence a child's development. The parent's experience alters their attitude at home, which is the child's microsystem. When a parents loss their jobs, children are more likely to be sent away from school, or lack basic education needs among others which would affect their development.

Another level is called the *macrosystem*, which refers:

... to consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems (*micro-*, *meso-*, and *exo-*) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26)

For example, a public primary school in Kibera slum in Kenya functions much like another within the slum, but they all differ from those of another slum such as the Nizamuddin Basti slum on the outskirts of New Delhi. However, there could be consistencies between public primary schools in the two slums with regard to the pattern of parental involvement, challenges facing teaching and learning and so on. One challenge affecting the development of children in the slum is the physical environment which denies them the opportunity to play happily and safely. Chatterjee (2012) describes the life of typical slum children in the Nizamuddin Basti slum:

Children growing up in slums experience a childhood that often defies the imagination of both the 'innocent childhood' proponents and the 'universal childhood' advocates. The slums typically lack proper sanitation, safe drinking water, or systematic garbage collection; there is usually a severe shortage of space inside the houses where the children live, and no public spaces dedicated to their use. But that does not mean that these children have no childhood, only a different kind of childhood that sees them playing on rough, uneven ground, taking on multiple roles in everyday life, and sharing responsibilities with adults in domestic and public spaces in the community. (para. 1)

Children were to be seen everywhere as one entered the Basti. They played on the rough ground and vacant lots dotted with graves, in the open spaces in the centre where garbage was manually sorted. The parked rickshaws, vending carts, cars and bikes all served as play props in the streets. As soon as they could walk, children could be seen outdoors walking around mostly barefoot, climbing on debris and petting goats that freely roamed around. Girls as young as 5 carried infants and toddlers on their hip and moved around freely in the narrow

pedestrian by lanes of the village, visiting shops for sweets and the houses of friends down the street. (para. 3)

Like in Basti, children growing in Kibera slum in Kenya faced more serious environmental challenges which is compounded by high population growth (see Appendix 2) (Mutisya & Yarime, 2011). It is estimated that almost one million people reside in Kibera slum which occupies about 100 acres of land (Karanja & Makau, 2009). The bottom line is that children from both of these slums face serious environmental challenges. The education of children living in the slum is seriously undermined by the effects of socio-economic hardships; which is one of the reasons for their low attainment against most indicators of academic performance (Noguera, 2003). Noguera observed that the academic performance of African American students was closely associated to the hardships they endure within the larger society.

The *macrosystem* considers people's attitudes and ideologies of their culture, such as laws, morals, values, customs, and worldviews. Although these elements of the culture are not readily parts of children's immediate world, they can be very prominent in their development. For example, in Kenyan society, the attitude that mother is primarily responsible for looking after the home and children has a direct impact on school governance in most public primary schools. Some studies have shown that environmental and cultural factors are key predictors of human behaviours and including their cognitive abilities (Brookover & Erickson, 1971; Morrow & Torres, 1995). This study, therefore, used the Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986) to explain how public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings mitigate internal and external factors to provide quality education.

Based on the Bronfenbrenner's theory, the home and school are the child's *microsystems* while the local community serves as a *mesosystem* providing a link between home and the school; while the public primary school boards are the *exosystems*. Although the actions of these boards might not directly influence teachers' practice or pupils' learning outcomes, they could influence both to a certain extent. The current study sought to document and delineate the external factors (*exosystems*) which negatively impact on the learning of children in the slums and how the school boards are addressing them. On a *macrosystem* level, though not the focus of the study, there

could be consistencies between public primary school boards in Kibera slum and other similar settlements.

Pragmatism

To explore how the public primary school boards are effective in assuring quality education to slum children despite the internal and external factors, this study adopted the *pragmatic* stance. According to Haack (2001) *pragmatism* “is best characterised by the method expressed in the pragmatic maxim, according to which the meaning of a concept is determined by the experiential or practical consequences of its application” (p. 643). According to Albrecht (2003):

Pragmatic method, in such cases, is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequence. (p. 28)

Pragmatism stresses the practical concept or social policy and allows for the explorations of the subjective meanings of experiences. Deweyan pragmatism recognised that knowing is intimately related to practice, and argued that good theories are based in practice and are modified as experiences with a program demonstrate the success or failure of an idea (Albrecht, 2003). Albrecht posits that pragmatists acknowledges the social construction of reality by arguing that *truth* is relative and means “valued by us” and argued that a proposition is *true* if it “forwards our ends”. In pragmatism values and subjective experience influence what we consider to be *true* or *right*.

Epistemological Stance

From a pragmatic point of view “knowledge provides us with possibilities for refining and supporting our day-to-day problems” (Biesta & Burbules, 2004, p. 5). According to Grbich (2013) pragmatism “is a mix of post-positivism and social constructivism, leaning toward postmodernism, and emphasises empirical knowledge, action, and triangulation” (p.9). According to post-positivists, it is problematic and difficult for a researcher to know reality with certainty and almost impossible to arrive to an absolute or universally general reality based on the findings. Grbich (2013) states that post-positivism assert that:

Structures creating the world cannot always be directly observed and when and if they are observable their genesis is not always clear; thus we also need our

creative minds to clarify their existence and then to identify explanatory mechanisms. (p. 6)

Post-positivism challenges the positivist's traditional notion of the *absolute truth* of knowledge. Their philosophy is deterministic, whereby causes are seen to probably determine effects or outcome. Thus, the problems studied by positivists reflect the need to identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes (Creswell, 2014; Grbich, 2013). Social constructivists assume that people seek to understand the world they live and work in (Creswell, 2014). Reality exists in the mind and is viewed as socially and societally embedded. Hjørland and Nicolaisen (2005) defined pragmatism as an epistemological approach which “emphasizes the justification of theories and concepts by examine their consequences and the goals, values and interests they support” (para. 1). The *truth* in pragmatism is judged by the extent to which it able to meet certain goals, or purpose (Sundin & Johannison, 2005). Therefore in pragmatism the questions are more important because they set the goals to be uncovered, or the purpose to be attained. The goal of the research to a large extend depends on the participants' views of the situation being studied.

To pragmatists, the research questions should be approached using *whatever* methodological tool that will provide answers —using the pragmatist credo of *what works* (Cherryholmes, 1992; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Pragmatism was found to provide an appropriate epistemological basis for the use of mixed-method research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), it allows investigators to “attack research problems with an arsenal of methods that have non-overlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strengths” (p.17).

Methodological Stance

Epistemological arguments of the paradigm war between those who subscribe to either quantitative or qualitative approach have questioned the possibility of combining the two paradigms in a single study. According to Bazeley (2009) “from a pragmatic perspective, the primary issue is to determine what data and analyses are needed to meet the goals of research and answer the question at hand” (p. 203). To pragmatists, the research method used or the worldview is not as important as the research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Pragmatist researchers are not restricted to a particular

philosophy or approach when engaging in their studies. They believe that researchers should try all methods to determine what works, what solves problems, and what helps us to survive. For pragmatists, research findings are not *absolute truths*, but a tentative explanation of a phenomenon which might well change when more evidence becomes available (Creswell, 2013; Sundin & Johannison, 2005).

Pragmatism endorses a strong and practical empiricism as the path to determining what works. The view pursued in the present study is that of seeking all avenues to know what works, how school boards have been solving problems facing them, and to identify characteristics that these boards could adopt in future. The findings from this study are preliminary, and the strategies regarded effective are based on the evidence of the school community's evaluation. This study seeks not to prescribe the characteristics of ideal school boards for public primary schools in Kibera slum, but to document the practical characteristics of a board that is effective in a particular school as constructed by the participants.

Pragmatism as an ensuing paradigm supports the use of mixed-method design (Grbich, 2013) to answer research questions that did not sit comfortably in either qualitative or quantitative approaches alone. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), research methods should provide the best chance of answering the research questions. From the pragmatist point of view, effective and fruitful integration of research approaches, based on the purpose of and the nature of the research questions posed provides greater opportunities than using one research approach (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The research questions posed in this study required a mixed method approach. For example, quantitative approaches were found to be the most suitable approach to determine participants' perceptions using closed ended questions. In contrast, emerging tensions, paradoxes and dilemmas were clearly and comprehensively understood through interviews which is a qualitative approach. The choice of the methodology was based on the researcher's freedom to choose 'what works'. In this study, mixing quantitative and qualitative research sequentially was found to be the most suitable approach to answering the research questions.

Axiological Stance

Pragmatists' knowledge interests focus upon how their research may contribute to improving the way in which things are currently done (Hjørland & Nicolaisen, 2005; Mailler, 2006). The knowledge and truth generated from this study are intended to contribute to a better, richer and more complex management of public primary schools in slums. The knowledge of what the respondents think about existing school boards will lead to reflection practices and a possible adoption of effective approaches. Therefore, the researcher concurs with criticism by pragmatists William James and John Dewey that knowledge and truth are to be understood in terms of conformity with, or accurate representation of, the way things really are.

For pragmatists, conducting research and drawing conclusion for studies depends largely on the value system, and they see no reason to be particularly concerned about that influence (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Tashakkori and Teddlie stated that:

Pragmatists decide what they want to research, guided by their personal value system; that is, they study what they think is important to study. They then study the topic in a way that is congruent with their value system, including variables and units of analysis that they feel are the most appropriate for finding an answer to their research question. They also conduct studies in anticipation of results that are congruent with their value system. (pp. 26-27)

In other words, pragmatist researchers are more inclined to be guided by their value system in choosing what to investigate (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Their interests are likely to border around cultural values, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, and progress. Pragmatism rejects the practice of simply repeating what has been done before and advances knowledge by exploring not only *what is* but also *what might be* (Mailler, 2006).

Finding solution to problems by using the '*what works*' credo, pragmatism permits the use of mixed methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 2012). Pragmatism was adopted as the guiding paradigm for this study because it allows for studies based on one's values and interest and does not restrict the researcher to use any specific approach — quantitative or qualitative. My motivation to investigate the school board governance in public primary schools in urban low socio-economic setting was as a result of my personal experience and the desire to break the cycle of

poverty through provision of quality education to children in the slum. A study of school boards in slums in developing countries such as Kenya is necessary for the sake of improving the quality of education provided to slum children worldwide. It is based on the belief that each slum child has a right to education that is not only free and compulsory, but also *quality* basic education (United Nations, 1990), and that school board should do their best to provide that quality education.

The findings of this study are expected to provide positive and useful suggestions for improving the governance of public primary schools in slums worldwide (Armitage, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). According to Biesta and Burbules (2004):

Improvement of education through educational research cannot be thought of as a process in which educational research provides educational practice with recipes so that educational practice can be perfected ... every educational situation is in some respect unique. (p. 5)

They suggest that if educational research is to make a contribution to the improvement of education, it will be through the provision of new intellectual and practical resources for the day-to-day problem solving of educators.

Ontological Stance

Creswell (2013) states that for pragmatists ‘Truth’ is *what works* at the time; it is not based on a dualism between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Pragmatists tend not to focus their attention on questions concerning types of being or reality (Rorty, 2000), as they are not committed to any one system of reality (Creswell, 2014; Mailler, 2006). Ghiraldelli Jr and Carr (2005), posited that:

Such a person [a pragmatist] dreams a lot. The world is not enough for her. She likes her world, but she imagines that it could be different and that it will be different. Such a person feels that she can construct the future even when the future is not clear. Such a person can say ‘the future is true’ but she could not say at the same moment that the utterance mean ‘I have the Truth’ ... (p. 509)

Therefore, say Ghiraldelli Jr & Carr (2005) a pragmatist is seeking to clarify the meaning of *intellectual* concepts. However, Davidson (2006) argues that pragmatists should not focus on *truth*, but instead be more concerned with the living futurem establishing a sense of action and presupposing a whole program of growth.

Though pragmatists like their world, they imagine that it could be different and that it will be different (Ghiraldelli Jr & Carr, 2005). According to Rorty (2000) the possibility of something being *true* without a cultural explanation is ridiculous. Therefore, when we have something that we qualify as a *true statement*, we need to be prepared to give better justification. This study sought to determine the present *truth* of the public primary school boards in Kibera slum as well as the better future “Truth”. The findings of this study was used to present an effective model for public primary school board governance; if used, it could improve parental involvement, create an inviting school climate and improve educational outcomes such as Grade 8 pupils’ score in national examination.

What this means for this research is that *truth* is whatever consensus (ideally) free and open enquiry reaches (Rorty, 2000). I consider statements by participants on their school boards as *true* on the basis of consensus and justification. However, where there are contradictions or differences in perceptions, the researcher will seek to know *why*. Practical realities and meanings of the truth and how it affects the future will be determined. Colapietro (2009) reiterated that:

Pragmatism [is] to be a method of ascertaining the meanings, not of all ideas, but only of what I (Peirce) call *intellectual concepts* ... the total meaning of the predication of an intellectual concept is contained in the affirmation that, under all conceivable circumstances of a given kind ... [t]he subject of the predication would behave in a certain general way. (p. 76)

Pragmatists view current truth, meaning, and knowledge as tentative and as changing over time. Johnson and Onwugbuzie (2004) explain:

Capital ‘*T*’ Truth (i.e., absolute Truth) is what will be the ‘final opinion’ perhaps at the end of history. Lowercase ‘*t*’ truths (i.e., the instrumental and provisional truths that we obtain and live by in the meantime) are given through experience and experimentation. (p. 18)

Therefore, whatever has been found out concerning school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings in this study is provisional *truth*. The current study seeks to know the *truth* about school boards from the perceptions (quantitative) and experiences (qualitative) of participants. I believe that the *truth* about the school board is socially constructed by the participants and myself, and that can change with the emergence of new knowledge through *whatever* method is used.

Causal Linkages

According to Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998), pragmatists believe in the existence of causal relationships, but seem to be overly pessimistic about the possibility of explaining the real world. They agree to the existence of external reality and that theory should be determined by facts, and they emphasise the use of multiple theories to explain results from any data set. Furthermore, pragmatists also argue that people should agree with the scholastic explanations for causality and reality that reflect their beliefs and values because it is not possible for them to understand them thoroughly. They argue that, given the multiple explanations of the results from any research study, pragmatists will seek explanations that are closest to their values. This is not surprising since they are the ones who designed the study and gave the constructs their operational definitions. Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) state that, “*pragmatists* believe that there may be causal relationships but that we will never be able to completely pin them down” (p. 28).

I argue that there are underlying causes on the effectiveness of public primary school board in urban low socioeconomic settings unexplored. Some of these causes have resulted in the existing situation, which is unknown, and which can be determined from the perceptions of Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members. Therefore, the study aimed to determine if there were causal relationship between school board practices and the critical aspects of the public schools—climate, parental involvement, and test scores.

Rationale

Given all the above considerations, the researcher considers pragmatism as the best paradigm for justifying the use of mixed method research design in this study. This is elucidated in the summary by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998):

Pragmatism is appealing (a) because it gives us a paradigm that philosophically embraces the use of mixed model designs, (b) because it eschews the use of metaphysical concepts (Truth, Reality) that have caused endless (and often useless) discussion and debate, and (c) because it presents a very practical and applied research philosophy ... Study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system. (p. 30)

Table 3.2 presents the key features of pragmatism in terms of its stance in relation to epistemology, ontology and methodology

Table 3.2

Key Beliefs of Pragmatism

Aspects	Key Beliefs
Methods	Pragmatists believe that either the quantitative or qualitative method is useful, choosing to use either or both, depending upon the research question as it is currently posed and the phase of the research cycle that is ongoing.
Logic	They accept that they will have a choice of inductive and deductive logic in the course of conducting research on a question that needs to be answered.
Epistemology	Pragmatists believe that researchers may be both objective and subjective over the course of studying a research question: at some points the knower and the known must be interactive, while at others, one may easily stand apart from what one is studying.
Axiology	They believe that values play a large role in conducting research, interpreting results and in drawing conclusions from their studies, and they see no reason to be particularly concerned about that influence. Pragmatists decide what they want to research, guided by their personal value systems.
Ontology	Like positivists/post positivists, pragmatists believe in an existence of external reality (an external world independent of our minds) but deny that 'Truth' can be determined once and for all.
Causal Linkages	Pragmatists believe that there may be causal relationships but that we will never be able to completely pin them down.

Note. Adapted from "Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches" by Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, 46, p. 23. Copyright 1998 by Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Application of Pragmatism

The unheralded importance of activity and enculturation to learning suggests that much common education practice is the victim of an inadequate epistemology. (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989, p. 41)

Specifically, this study used pragmatic social constructivist epistemology, deeply embedded in the tradition of Deweyan pragmatism (Cherryholmes, 1992; Garrison, 1995), which is in turn derived from social constructivism and pragmatic traditions. According to Biesta and Burbules (2004), Deweyan pragmatism is not new in educational research which is used because:

It allows for an understanding of knowledge as a function of and for human actions, and an understanding of human interactions and communication in thoroughly practical terms... for education pragmatists; improvement of education is to be found in the extent to which research enables educators to approach problems they face within a more intelligent way. (pp. 7-8).

Pragmatism is chosen because epistemologically and ontologically, the *truth* generated by this study is neither “absolute as positivists and scientific realists demand, nor as biased, subject to someone’s domination, or hegemonic as relativists proclaim” (Haas & Haas, 2002, p. 574). Pragmatic social constructivism seeks to locate ideas about leadership, politics, and the world within the social conditions from which they emerge, or are constructed. They treat institutions, such as schools, as venues in which analysts and policy makers interact. In summary, pragmatism as a guiding paradigm was used in this study for the following reasons:

1. Combining survey, observations, and interviews was considered to be the best approach to understanding roles, responsibility and efficacy of boards of public primary schools in Kibera slum;
2. the findings and conclusions arrived at in this study are tentative and can change with changes in circumstances: board members might hold a different view of their board later;
3. since education of children from poor backgrounds was considered of paramount importance globally and of high priority for making their lives better, findings from this study can be used by policy makers, schools and parents for that purpose; and

4. although participants' views and experiences form the foundation for discussion, interpretation and conclusion, the observer's/researcher's views and experience will also be used during the those stages, including in making recommendations.

Conclusion

Brought together, Invitational Education Theory and Practice, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, and Pragmatism contributes to a focus on public primary school boards. The integration affords a method for capturing the individual's ability to understand both internal and external factors that affect slum children's learning and their school climate, and assesses the effectiveness of the public primary school boards. Pragmatism allows for the complementarity of quantitative data with qualitative data, such as in-depth interviews to discover how the boards were exercising their authority in these schools despite the myriad social, economic and political challenges to provide quality education. The following chapter is a detailed discussion of the research design and methods.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and methods used to answer the overarching question of this study: how do the public primary school boards in a Kenyan urban low socioeconomic setting affect the school climate, parental involvement and students' academic achievement? The chapter is organised in two sections – design and methods. In the first section, the research design and how the sample was selected for this study is discussed. In the second section, methods and procedures of data collections are described.

Sample

While the research questions might have led to an investigation of many schools in a variety of settings, a deliberate choice was made to focus the questions to schools in a very low socioeconomic informal urban settlement area commonly referred to as a slum. Twenty public primary schools in Kibera slum were identified, with the help of the city director of education, who is the education official in charge of primary education in Nairobi city, serving most children from Kibera slum. Eight public primary schools with more than eighty per cent of Grade 8 pupils residing within the slum were selected to participate in the study. At the first stage of the study all grade 8 pupils and their parents, all teachers and all board members were invited to participate in responding to a questionnaire. Grade 8 pupils were selected as the student cohort both because they were considered mature enough to express their opinion about their school climate because of their age and because of the length of time that they had been attending the school.

The second stage of the study involved interviewing teachers, grade 8 parents and board members. While consent letters were sent out to all teachers and all grade 8 parents at least eight teachers and ten parents who consented were invited for the interview. The teachers were selected, in consultation with the head teachers, to ensure representation in terms of gender, experience and employment status. The invitation of parents for the interview was random but aimed at ensuring gender parity. All the board members except the head teacher (*ex-officio*) were invited for the interview. The

exclusion of the head teachers was necessary to ensure freedom of expression by the board members.

Research Design

A sequential explorative mixed method design, proposed by Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006), was used to answer the overarching research question, which sought to explain how public primary school boards within an urban low socioeconomic setting in Kenya impacted on school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. Specifically, the design was used to answer five questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members about their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?
2. How do school boards of public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya operate?
3. How effective are the school boards perceived to be by parents, teachers and board members in setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving academic achievement?
4. How do the challenges, paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions experienced by school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting affect their practice and academic achievement?
5. How are the perceptions of pupils, teachers, parents and board members related to the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

According to Woolley (2009), “the research design and methods selected for a research project should be guided by the need to develop a coherent methodology that provides the best hope of answering the project’s objectives and questions” (p.8). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) posited that most research in social and behavioural sciences are best approached through multi-methods rather than with a sole reliance on either the quantitative or the qualitative approach. Numerous researchers have recommended the use of *mixed-method* designs for answering the *what*, *why* and *how* of the research questions, because they minimise the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative designs in single and cross-research studies (Creswell, 2014; Grbich,

2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005; Yin, 2006). Woolley (2009) affirms that:

Mixed methods research questions are those that ask either *what* and *how* or *what* and *why*. (p. 8)

Woolley posited that the approach is useful for addressing different aspects of the research problem and providing a fuller picture.

This study adopts the definition of "mixed methods" by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) as those methods that includes at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words). It sought to determine, through quantitative means, if the perception of participants on three key aspects (school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement) of public primary school board practices differed significantly between schools and through qualitative means, to determine reasons for the difference. Neither quantitative nor qualitative methods were sufficient, by themselves, to capture the characteristics and detail of the public primary school boards—hence the need to combine the two.

Three perspectives of mixed methods are discussed by Rossman and Wilson (1985):

The *purist approach*, where two methods are seen as mutually exclusive; the *situationalist approach* that views them as separate but equal, and the *pragmatist approach* that suggests integration is possible. From the *pragmatist* position, either the method was used at the analysis stage to corroborate (provide convergence in findings), elaborate (provide richness and details) or initiate (offer new interpretation) findings from the other method. (p. 627)

In line with the pragmatist view, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were integrated, in order to complement each other and allow for a more robust analysis, taking advantage of the strengths of each (Greene et al., 1989; Ivankova et al., 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The quantitative approach is characteristically indirect and reductive, while the qualitative approach is characteristically direct and holistic. The approach used in this thesis involves integrating or mixing aspects of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms across three major stages of the research process (e.g., design, measurement and analysis) (Creswell, 2013; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib, & Rupert, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Woolley (2009) argues that “substantial integration of

quantitative and qualitative data and findings in mixed methods studies is seldom seen, although maximising the potential of the approach depends on this” (p. 7). Integrated mixed method design in educational studies is uncommon and the scarcity of exemplars has been identified as an impeding factor.

Five purposes for mixed-method researches were identified by Greene et al. (1989): “triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion” (p. 255). Triangulation is used for the purpose of improving the validity of research findings, eliminating biases and allowing for the dismissal of plausible rival explanations (Mathison, 1988). In this study, data sources and methods have been triangulated for purposes of confirmation and to seek a singular proposition about the phenomenon being studied—in this case, whether a public primary school board is effective or not and *why* or *why not*. Denzin (2009) outlined four types of triangulation:

1. data triangulation including time, space, and person;
2. investigator triangulation;
3. theory triangulation; and
4. methodological triangulation (pp. 294–307).

Data and methodological triangulation (1 and 4) were used in this study. Mathison (1988) defined data and methodological triangulation as:

Data triangulation refers simply to using several data sources, while methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods in the examination of a social phenomenon. (p.14)

According to Yin (2006), multiple studies using separate approaches are commonly misconstrued as mixed-method. He argues that genuinely mixed-method research integrates both approaches within a single study across the five levels of research: research questions, unit of analysis, sample for study, instrumentation and data collection, and analytical strategies. Woolley (2009) enhances this by stating that:

The components can be considered integrated to the extent that they are explicitly related to each other within a single study and in such a way as to be mutually illuminating, thereby producing findings that are greater than the sum of the parts. (p. 7)

According to Denzin (2009), three outcomes arise from triangulation: convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction. While Johnson et al. (2007) state that whichever of these outcomes prevail, the observed social phenomena can be explained more clearly

and accurately. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) succinctly defined mixed method research design to:

Represent research that involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon. (p. 265)

Given the strength of this integrated mixed method approach to illuminate and identify convergence, inconsistencies and contradictions; this study used it to portray the reality about public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic setting such as Kibera slum. This requires the collection, analysis and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Perceptions of participants were determined through quantitative means while the understanding of the boards' paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas is enhanced through qualitative means.

Sequential Explorative Mixed Method Design

This study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, which implies “collecting and analysing quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive stages within one study” (Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 3). This design provided a coherent methodology that answered in depth the research question through triangulation, integration and corroboration. Source (pupils, teachers, parents and board members) and methodological (surveys, interviews, and field observation) triangulation increase the validity of the results obtained in this study. The quantitative data indicates the differences between schools, groups of participants and participants, while the qualitative data provided in-depth understanding of the practices of public primary school boards as perceived by the participants.

Three types of questionnaires (inviting-school survey revised, parental involvement and school board) were used to elicit key issues that were explained in depth using group interviews, observation and document analysis (Grbich, 2013). According to Yin (2014), no single source has a complete advantage over all the others — instead, various sources are highly complementary. Yin goes on to state that a good case study will use as many sources as possible.

Qualitative data was collected through several strategies triangulated to understand public primary school boards in Kibera slum. The data originated from separate group interviews with parents, teachers and board members, open-ended questions from

survey questionnaires, field notes, parents and teachers' meetings and review of public document; such as records of meetings. The reality of a phenomenon being studied is strongly enhanced through qualitative research which aims to enhance the understanding of the situation and the meanings and values attributed to it by the people involved (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). Qualitative semi-structured interviews using the interview protocol were used with the selected participants sequentially to deepen the researcher's understanding of issues identified from participants' responses on the survey (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010).

In addition, I sought to identify group norms and meanings in the perspectives of the board members on earlier identified variables and to explore statistical findings further as suggested by Basch (1987). Three types of group interviews—parents, teachers and board members—were conducted to explain the different groups' perceptions, existing paradoxes, dilemmas, and tensions that might have arisen within the school boards. The data collected through the qualitative methods was used to answer the research questions.

There are a number of mixed methods research designs proposed which are suitable for educational research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) classified mixed-methods research into sequential, parallel/simultaneous, equivalent status, dominant/less-dominant and multilevel. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) classified the mixed methods research designs in to three dimensions: (a) level of mixing (partially mixed versus fully mixed); (b) time orientation (concurrent versus sequential), and (c) emphasis of approach (equal status versus dominant status). They suggested eight different types of mixed methods research design derived by crossing the three dimensions:

1. Partially mixed concurrent equal status designs
2. Partially mixed concurrent dominant status designs
3. Partially mixed sequential equal status designs
4. Partially mixed sequential dominant status designs
5. Fully mixed concurrent equal status designs
6. Fully mixed concurrent dominant status designs
7. Fully mixed sequential equal status designs

8. Fully mixed sequential dominant status design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p 268).

Sequential studies involve conducting two separate stages, either conducting a quantitative stage followed by a qualitative stage or vice versa. In Parallel/Simultaneous studies both qualitative and quantitative stages are conducted at the same time. Figure 4.1 below shows a conceptual framework of Leech and Onwuegbuzie's mixed methods research design.

Figure 4.1. Typology of mixed research

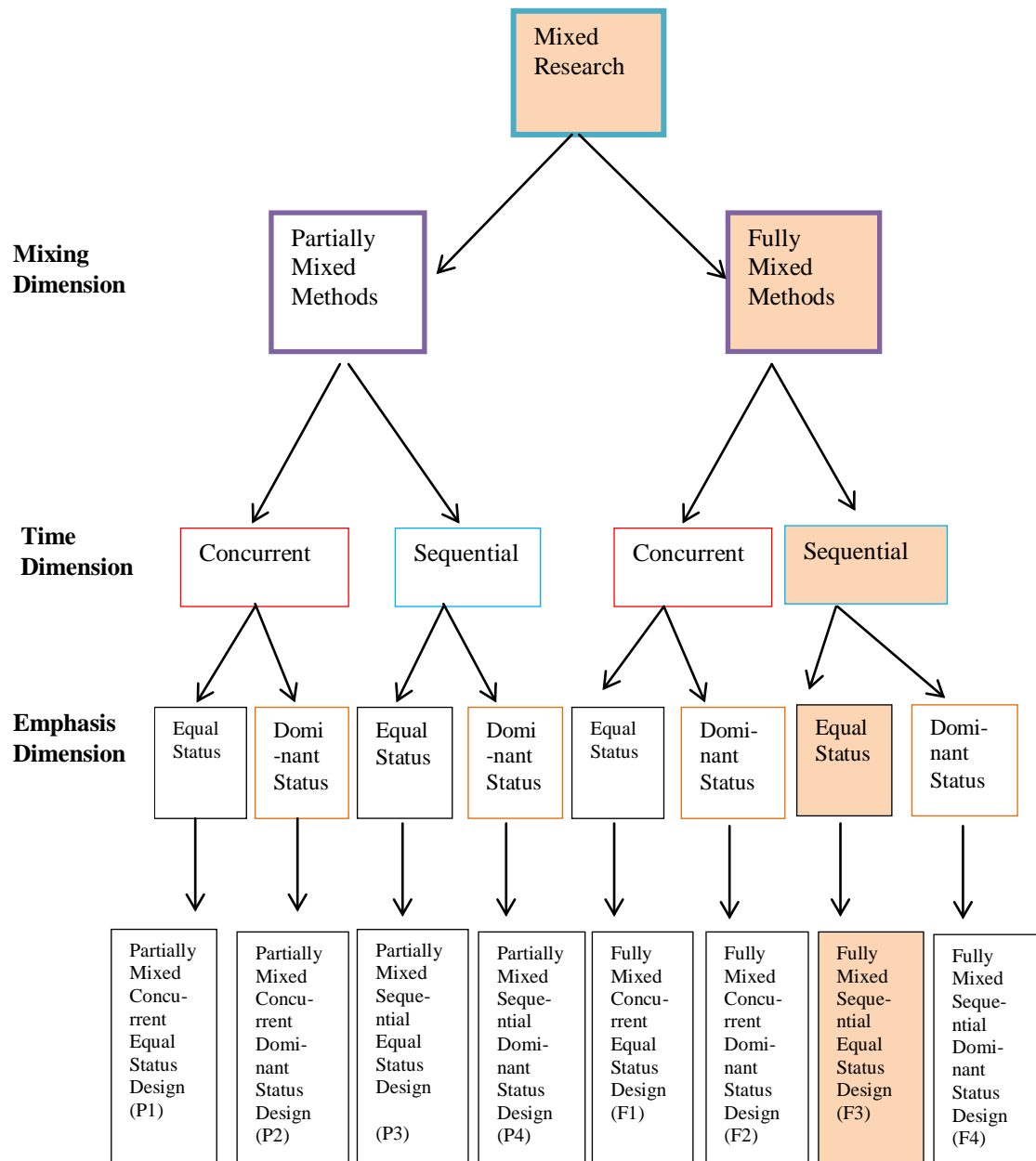


Figure 4.1. Typology of mixed research. Adapted from “A typology of mixed methods research designs” by Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009, *Qual Quant*, 43, p. 269. The shaded parts represent the typology of mixed method used in the current study.

When a study uses both quantitative and the qualitative approaches about equally to understand a phenomenon, it is regarded as an equivalent status design. Dominant/less-dominant studies are those that involve a single dominant paradigm with a small component of the overall study drawn from the other alternative design or paradigm. The most recent design is the one with multilevel use, where the researcher uses different types of methods at different levels of data aggregation. The approach which is most relevant to this study is the *sequential explanatory mixed-methods* design, shown in Figure 4.2, which consists of two distinct stages: quantitative followed by qualitative of almost equal status (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2010).

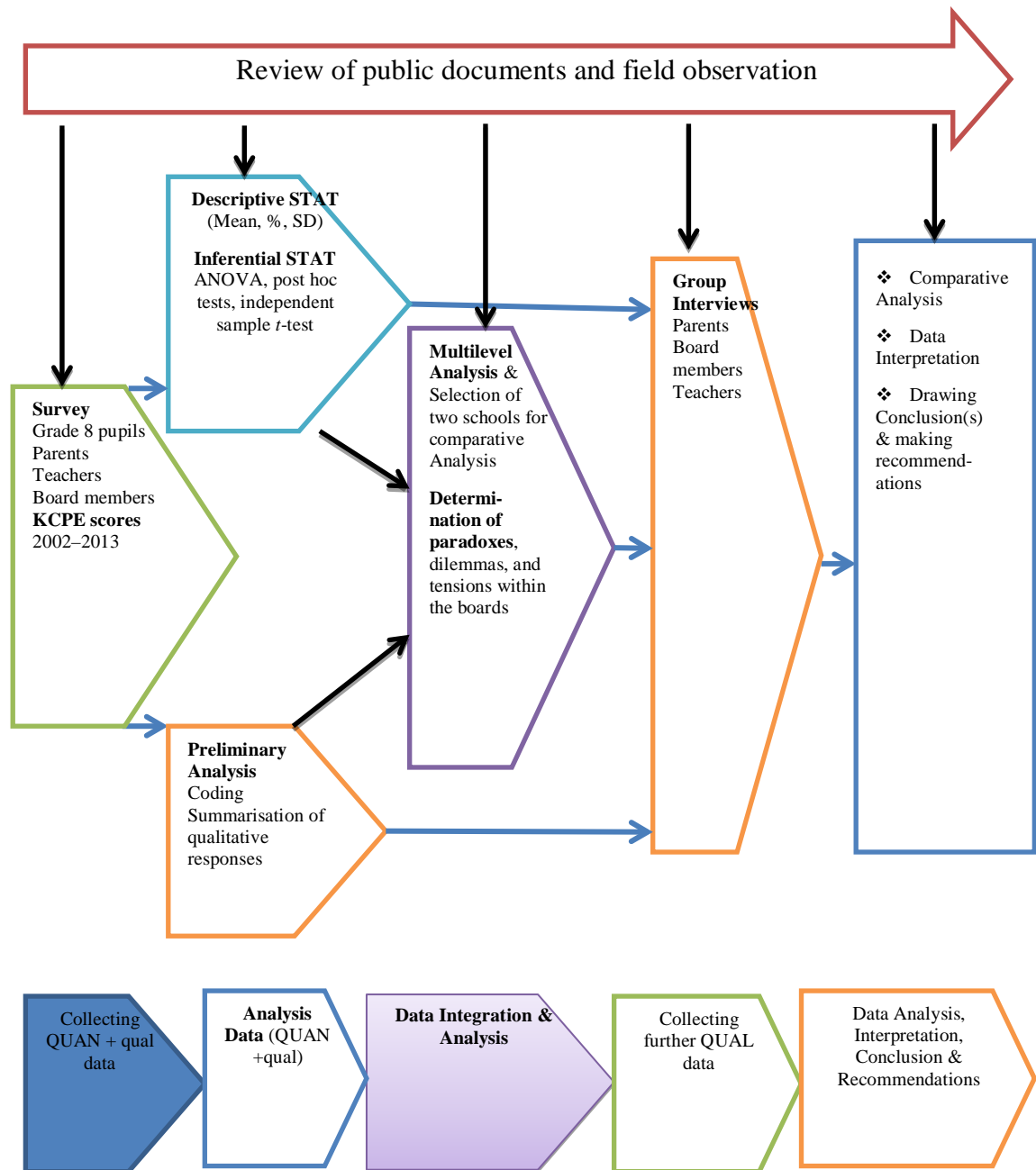
Figure 4.2. A Sequential Explorative Mixed Method Design

Figure 4.2. A sequential explorative mixed method design used in the current study. KCPE =Kenya Certificate of Primary Education; STAT=statistics; ANOVA = analysis of variance; QUAN = dominant quantitative approach; *quan* = less dominant quantitative approach; QUAL = dominant qualitative approach; and *qual* = less dominant qualitative approach.

This study is regarded to be ‘fully mixed sequential equal status design’ since it involved mixing of quantitative and qualitative techniques sequentially and with almost equal emphasis within two stages of the research processes. This design is a modification of the ‘fully mixed sequential equal status design’ proposed by Leech and Onwuegbusie (2009) (see Figure 4.1). It is a sequential design since the first stage

involved collecting and analysing quantitative data through surveys—with little aspect of qualitative data—followed by qualitative data collection and analysis in the sequence. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) stated that:

Fully mixed methods designs represent the highest degree of mixing research methods and research paradigm characteristics. This class of mixed research involves using both qualitative and quantitative research within one or more of the following or across the following components in a single research study: (a) research objective (e.g. the researcher uses research objectives from both quantitative and qualitative research, such as the objective of both exploration and prediction); (b) type of data and operation; (c) type of analysis; and (d) type of inference. (p. 267)

During the whole process of the study, observations were made to inform the process: from the design of the survey instruments, data analysis and integration, interviews and interpretation, to drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

First Stage – Quantitative Stage

The first stage, shown in Figure 4.2, gave priority to collection and analysis of quantitative data with a component of qualitative data (written comments). Quantitative data was collected through close-ended questions of surveys and public records (i.e., Kenya Certificate of Primary Education results) with the qualitative data generated from open-ended questions. The Inviting School Survey – Revised (ISS-R) administered to Grade 8 (see Appendix 4) and teachers (see Appendix 5), was intended to collect mainly quantitative data through closed-ended questions. However, additional space in section C was provided for the Grade 8 pupils to write down any other comment(s); while teachers were provided with space was given to write about the school board and/or any other comments in section C and D respectively. While participants were required to respond to all the closed-ended questions, the open-ended questions were optional. Similarly, the parents' questionnaire (see Appendix 6) was used to collect mainly quantitative data on parental involvement and school climate; it also had two open-ended questions for them to comment on their school boards and/or any other comment.

The data collected, both quantitative and qualitative, was analysed using appropriate electronic tools (Excel, SPSS and NVivo). Descriptive and inferential statistics were generated from the quantitative data while themes/categories were generated from qualitative data. The findings from the analysis at this stage were

integrated to determine existing paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions that existed in the schools. A questionnaire was distributed to the school board members to collect quantitative data. This questionnaire was designed at the end of the first stage to get the responses of board members on issues that were raised by pupils, parents and teachers.

Second Stage – Qualitative Stage

The second stage of this study used a combination of group interviews (QUAL) as the main data collection method and surveys of school boards (quan). The group interviews involved teachers, parents, and board members; while a questionnaire was administered to the board members (see Appendix 7) before them being interviewed. This stage was intended to help explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first stage. The interviews were used to explain the paradoxes, dilemma and tensions identified during the first stage. The second stage built on the first, and the two stages are connected by the intermediate stage in the study when the initial analysis was done and used to inform the second stage.

The importance of integrating the two approaches sequentially is because one depends on the other. The research problems are clarified by collecting quantitative data and their subsequent analysis, while qualitative data analysis enables the refinement and explanation of statistical results generated through quantitative means (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). To summarise, quantitative approach was used in this study to bring to the fore pertinent issues affecting public primary school boards, while the qualitative approach was used to explore participants' views more deeply.

Table 4.1 presents a summary of sequential exploratory mixed-method design used in the current study.

Table 4.1

A summary of the sequential exploratory mixed-method design

Stage	Steps	Procedure	Outcome
Quantitative + qualitative [QUAN + <i>qual</i>]	Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaires [pupils, parents and teachers] to participants (n = 1,747) KCPE scores for eight public primary schools from 2002 to 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numeric data on participants' perceptions and academic achievement Written comments from participants
	Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data screening (univariate, multivariate) Frequencies Reading through written comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive statistics [means, standard deviation etc.], missing data, multicollinearity Challenges, tensions, dilemma & paradoxes identified Graphs showing examination results
	Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select two public primary schools between which the participants' perception in most of the key aspects of the study [school climate, parental involvement, school board practice & KCPE scores] differed significantly between them Developing interview questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two schools considered to be on each end of a continuum selected Three interview protocols (teachers, parents & board members) developed
Qualitative + quantitative [QUAL+ <i>quan</i>]	Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twenty group interviews: six with teachers; eight with parents and six with board members. A total of 149 participated in the interviews (36 teachers, 70 parents & 43 board members) Questionnaire to board members (n =43) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview transcripts Descriptive statistics[means, standard deviation etc.], missing data, multicollinearity Factor loadings
	Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coding and thematic analysis Within-case and across-case Factor analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes and themes Similarities and differences between the two schools <i>Vignettes</i>
	Integration of Quantitative & Qualitative Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of perceived characteristics of an effective public primary school board Explanation of paradoxes, dilemmas, tensions, & dilemmas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Implications Future Research

Note. KCPE= Kenya Certificate of Primary Education [final national assessment administered to Grade 8 pupils]; QUAN = dominant quantitative approach; *quan* = less dominant quantitative approach; QUAL = dominant qualitative approach; and *qual* = less dominant qualitative approach. Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS] version 21 and NVivo computer software were used in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data respectively.

An example of the use of such an approach can be seen in a study conducted by Ivankova et al. (2006).

The study sought to understand students' persistence in the Distance Learning Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership in Higher Education (ELHE) offered by the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. They obtained quantitative results from a survey of 278 of its current and former students and followed up with four purposely selected individuals to explore those results in more depth through a qualitative case study analysis. In the first (quantitative) stage of the study, the quantitative research questions focused on how selected internal and external variables to the ELHE program (program-related, adviser- and faculty-related, institution-related, and student-related factors as well as external factors) served as predictors of students' persistence in the program. In the second, qualitative, stage, four case studies from four distinct participant groups explored in depth the results from the statistical tests. In this stage, the research questions addressed seven internal and external factors found to be contributing differently to the functions discriminating the four groups: program; online learning environments; faculty; student support services; self-motivation; virtual community and academic adviser. (pp. 5-9)

The current study focused on the impact of the public primary school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting in Kenya on school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance. Two interrelated stages were used sequentially to answer the five questions which guided this study. The first stage, using the surveys was designed to answer the first and the fifth questions:

Question 1: What are the perceptions of Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members about their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

Question 5: How are the perceptions of pupils, teachers, parents and board members related to the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

The quantitative data (QUAN) focused on the perception of participants on five aspects: school climate, parental involvement and Grade 8 pupils' performance in national examination. In the first stage, the qualitative data (qual) was aimed at getting information about the school boards and/or any other information relevant to the study.

This second stage was used to answer the three questions:

Question 2: How do school boards of public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya operate?

Question 3: How effective are the school boards perceived to be by parents, teachers and board members in setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving academic achievement?

Question 4: How do the challenges, paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions experienced by school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting affect their practice and academic achievement?

Methods of Data Collection

Four instruments were used to collect quantitative data, while five were used to collect qualitative data as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Methods of data collection

Method	Instrument	Participants	Type of data
Survey	Inviting School Survey – Revised (ISS-R)	Grade 8 pupils and teachers	QUAN + qual
	Parents' Questionnaire	Grade 8 parents	QUAN + qual
	School board members' Questionnaire	Current school board members	QUAN
Interview	Group interview protocol	Teachers, parents of grade 8 and board members	QUAL

Note. ISS-R = Inviting school survey –revised was administered to teachers and Grade 8 pupils; QUAN = dominant quantitative approach; *quan* = less dominant quantitative approach was used to collect data using closed-ended questions administered to board members; QUAL = dominant qualitative approach; and *qual* = less dominant qualitative approach used to collect data from open-ended questions.

At the first stage, quantitative approach was dominant (QUAN) while qualitative approach was less dominant (*qual*). While at the second stage, qualitative approach (QUAL) was the dominant approach and the quantitative approach was the less dominant (*quan*).

The instruments used for data collection are appended at the end of this thesis (see Appendices 4 to 10). Data collection involved piloting the instruments in one school, revising them (see Appendices 11 to 14) and administering them to the other schools. In the following sub-section I will discuss the process under the following sub-headings: pilot study, quantitative and qualitative data collection methods used in this study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out at *Rho* primary school, which is located within the slum and which had more than ninety-five percent (95%) of the Grade 8 pupils residing in the slum. It was conducted in two separate stages —quantitative and qualitative stages. The first stage involved the administration of survey instruments to fifty-eight grade 8 pupils, fifty-eight parents/guardians and eleven teachers. The data was analysed and the reliability index, i.e. Cronbach's alpha (α), for pupils, parents', teachers' and the school board's questionnaires was found to be 0.85, 0.89, 0.84 and 0.78 respectively, which was considered sufficient.

Findings from the pilot study and discussions with my supervisors who are experienced researchers led to minor revisions of the instruments prior to the administration of the survey in the sample schools. At the *second stage* of the pilot study, data was collected through group interviews with eight teachers, fifteen parents and ten school board members. The questionnaire and interview prompts were revised on the basis of the participants' responses and discussion with experienced researchers. Questions that elicited similar responses or were repetitive or ambiguous were removed, while those that were unclear to the interviewee were paraphrased and simplified. The pilot school has been included in the analysis of this study.

Quantitative Methods of Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected using four types of questionnaires: the Inviting School Survey–Revised (ISS-R) (Smith, 2013) for pupils (see Appendix 4) and teachers (see Appendix 5), the parents' questionnaire (see Appendix 6), the school board questionnaire (Appendix 7) and Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) results (see Appendix 15 to 16). In designing the survey instruments, careful consideration was given to "the importance of the first question, grouping and sequencing of

questions, establishing a respondent-friendly vertical flow of items in the survey, and having clear specific directions”(Shannon, Johnson, Searcy, & Lott, 2002, p. 1). The survey instruments employed a similar framework with the first section, which was used to collect census data; the second section required participants to respond to statements on a five-point Likert-scale, while the third section contained open-ended questions seeking the respondent’s general comment(s).

The closed-ended questions of the survey instrument were used to generate quantitative data to get in-depth information for both exploratory and confirmatory purposes. Krathwohl (2009) stated that,

Survey researchers gather data from a carefully selected sample of a population, all who are considered informants. They choose among all the modes of communication for appropriate ways to contact their sample and gather their data. (p. 82)

She argues that surveys are basically used to get reactions to questions from a representative sample of a target population.

Inviting School Survey –Revised Questionnaire

The current study used the ISS-R survey (Smith, 2013) to assess the inviting nature of a school. Delineating aspects of climate is critical for personal and professional growth and development of all people in schools. It is a way of helping those involved in school matters to carefully and systematically reflect on certain important aspects of their climate. The 49-item Likert section was used to seek participants’ perceptions of five priority areas: *people*, *place*, *policies*, *processes* and *programs*. The questionnaire (for pupils, teachers and parents) had sixteen items which determined how the *people* in the school were inviting: through working cooperatively, showing respect, being easy to talk to, being humorous, being polite, treating others responsibly, feeling welcomed, and being proud to belong. It had twelve items that determined their perceptions of the aspect of *place*, and which targeted classroom desks; the freshness of the air in the school, the compound, the restrooms (or toilets); notice boards; the head teacher’s office; availability of space for individual study; safety measures; and lighting.

School *processes* included decision-making process, vandalism of property, assistance to pupils with special problems, awarding of marks, class interactions,

counselling, messages sent home, teacher preparedness, and attendance. Aspects of the school *programs* included participation in games; availability of programs, such as those regarding health and wellness; educational tours and excursions; and free remedial lessons. Participants' views on health practices, interruptions to academic activities, co-curricular activities and provision of life skills courses such as First Aid, and peer counselling, among others, were determined. Six items were used to establish the respondents' perceptions on school *policies*, for instance, those regarding grading practices or freedom of expression.

Parents' Questionnaire

The parent questionnaire (see Appendix 6) was carefully designed to determine the perception of parents on their involvement in school affairs and school generally. The questionnaire had five sections, A to E: section A was used to collect census data which included information about gender, level of education, occupation and family monthly income. Section B consisted of statements on the frequency of the respondent in communicating and contributing to school, while section C consisted of statements about the school climate on the five priority areas (discussed earlier). Section D and E were open-ended questions that sought the participants' comments on their board and for general comments.

Board members' Questionnaire

School board questionnaire (see Appendix 7) had two sections, A and B which were designed and used to determine the perceptions of the board members of their efficacy. Section A had nine items used to collect census data on school, gender, age, occupation, monthly family income and participation in the committee. Section B consisted of statements on ten thematic areas: participation (6 items), interactions (5 items), mobilisation (3 items), decision-making (4 items), community involvement (3 items), performance (4 items), discipline (3 items), commitment (2 items), monitoring (4 items) and supporting children (3 items). Seven items were adapted from the ISS-R questionnaire with permission from the author. No open questions were used since the interview followed immediately upon questionnaire completion.

National Examination Results

National and school mean scores from performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination were used to determine the trend of a school's pupils' performance for the last twelve years (2002-2013) as shown in Appendix 15 and 16. These results were used in this study to compare the pupils' performances between schools, and their variation from the national mean schools.

Revision of Questionnaires

Although the overall instruments (pupil, teachers and parents), as initially established and used in the pilot study, demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of over 0.70, they needed further improvement. The revision (see Appendices 10, 11 and 12) considered the demographic and cultural characteristics of participants and the need to use natural and familiar language. It was intended to write items clearly, precisely, and relatively concisely so as not cause any stress to the participants. The revision was also done in order to avoid *double-barrelled questions* which combine two or more issues in a single question, for example, 'daily attendance by pupils and staff is high'. The revision was also done to remove ambiguity in answering such questions (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6 for questionnaires and Appendices 10, 11 and 12).

Qualitative Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative research was used to help understand, describe and explain the school boards in urban low socio-economic settings (Gibbs, 2007). This was done through the analysis of participants' (teachers, parents and board members) experiences, interactions and communication. According to Bradley, Curry, and Devers (2007) qualitative research has been used in many areas to "understand phenomena within their context, uncovering links among concepts, and behaviours, and generating and refining theory" (p. 1759). In the present study, qualitative research has been used as a *second stage* to provide a fuller description of school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings and their impact on school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. It has been used to give insights into behaviour of individual boards and the experiences (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Grbich, 2013) of board members, parents and teachers about their school.

While quantitative data was used to identify similarities and difference in perceptions, qualitative data has been used to explore little-known school board practices in public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings. It was used to: (a) give a description of school boards, (b) explain difference in experiences between respondents (within and cross-case), (c) explain existing paradoxes, dilemma and tensions and (d) describe an effective school board in urban low socio-economic setting.

Validity

Several strategies proposed by Anfara, Brown and Mangione (2002) were used to ensure *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* of the data collected. These strategies were: (a) prolonged engagement in the field, (b) triangulation, (c) providing detailed description and (d) code-recode. In the present study, the qualitative data was collected over a period of about 20 months during which twenty group interviews (parents – 8, teachers – 6 and board members – 6) were carried out. Numerous visits were made to the schools to either meet the head teachers, teachers, conduct computer trainings and attend parents' meetings. During these visits, field notes were taken about any event or observations that were deemed of interest to the study. From my experience of living and schooling in a public primary school in an urban low socio-economic setting, I am conversant with many of the issues associated with the setting.

To enhance the reliability of the data collected from participants, an interview guide was developed as suggested by Yin (2014). It consisted of a brief overview of the study and a set of questions that was used to provide an in-depth understanding on the issues identified. The instrument was peer-reviewed and pilot tested in a school. Preliminary data analysis was carried out from interviews, records of board meetings in some schools were read, and comments from the open-ended questionnaire were collected during the pilot study, as suggested by Grbich (2013). She states that “it is a process of engagement with the text, not so much to critique it or summarise what is emerging from it, but more to gain a deeper understanding of the values and meanings which lie therein” (p. 21).

Data from the pilot study was analysed, where emerging issues were identified and used to provide direction for further data. The present study started with five prior school climate domains used for the preliminary analysis—*people, place, process, policies, programs*—and emerging ones such as *board practice, decision making* were identified through factor analysis (see Appendices 33 and 34). However, new emerging themes, apart from the prior ones, were created from transcribed interviews and field-notes.

English and Swahili were used during the interviews. Questions would be read in English then translated into Swahili, while the participants were free to contribute in either of the two languages. Swahili is the national language used by all Kenyans and is taught in primary and high schools as a compulsory subject. Although most people speak their mother-tongue within the family or neighbourhood, Swahili is used across cultures as a unifying language spoken across East and Central Africa. The interview was adaptive and flexible to cater for various needs, such as for mothers with young children or any other special needs. For example, the mothers were allowed to attend to their young ones and join the group at any point. However, on resumption they would be debriefed about the deliberations they missed, and given a chance to contribute on those issues.

The researcher gave the participants ample time to express their opinion exhaustively and only interjected when he felt the participants were digressing from the topic of discussion. The qualitative data from the interviews was analysed from participants' accounts of common experience of their school boards, paradoxes, tension and dilemmas. No idea or insight from an individual was used to interpret the data except the ones that were representative of group's position. According to Ayres, Kavanaugh, and Knafl (2003):

The qualitative researcher must develop an interpretation of the data that reflects each individual's experience and applies equally well across all of the accounts that constitute the data set. (p. 871)

To confirm that the idea or insight was representative of the group's position, a paraphrased statement of what I understood was presented to the group to confirm its accuracy.

In the following sections the qualitative methods are discussed further.

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group interview has been a very popular method for collecting qualitative data in many fields such as medicine (McLafferty, 2004; Yin, 2014) and education (Lederman, 1990). It has been used to generate data about the ‘*why*’ behind the behaviour, the ability to ask the kinds of questions that surveys did not ask and regarded as a tool for understanding people’s attitudes and opinions about different social issues. In focus group interviews the participants are regarded as experts in the area of interest and are able to provide major insights into their attitudes, beliefs and opinions (Carey, 1994). It assumes that the participants will be open and candid, “because they understand and feel comfortable with one another, and also because they draw social strength from each other. The group provides support for its members, to express anxiety-provoking or socially unpopular ideas” (Lederman, 1990, p. 118). Lederman outlines five fundamental assumptions:

(1) that people themselves are a valuable source of information, including information about themselves; (2) that people can report on and about themselves, and that they are articulate enough to put into words their thoughts, feelings and behaviours; (3) that people need help in ‘mining’ that information, a role served by the interviewer, or researcher, who ‘focuses’ the interview; (4) that the dynamics of the group can be used to surface genuine information rather than creating a ‘group think’ phenomenon; and (5) that the interview of the group is superior to the interview of an individual. (p. 118)

The advantage of focus group interviews is that they provide a safe atmosphere, a context in which the synergy can generate more than the sum of individual inputs. Interactions take place among interviewees themselves (Kitzinger, 1995) as well as between group members and the interviewer. These multiple interactions lead to synergy inherent in small groups (McLafferty, 2004) resulting to an incremental increase in output which make it easier for otherwise shy people to talk about their personal thoughts, feelings and experiences. Lederman (1990) supports this by stating that:

The advantage of using focus group interviews is that it allows researchers to: (1) gather more data in a relatively shorter time than could be collected from individual interview and (2) to observe groups in interactions with one another, thereby generating the interactive data which cannot be gathered in individual interview. (p. 118)

This study used focus group discussion with parents, teachers and board members as a technique for in-depth understanding of the public primary school boards.

Purposive sample technique was used to select the participants who were in a position to explain the phenomenon under study clearly (Lederman, 1990). Focus group discussion with parents and teachers provided vital information about their interaction with the school boards and explained the *how* aspect of this study. The group interviews the board members provided the opportunity to observe the group dynamics within the school board and to understand the *why* aspect of this study.

Group interviews were conducted for teachers, parents and board members using interview guides that were developed carefully with ‘friendly’ and ‘nonthreatening’ questions asked to the participants. Facts about several areas or aspect of the study were sought from interviewees, as well as their opinion on the same. The main purpose of these interviews was to corroborate facts about the parental involvement, school board governance, academic achievement and school climate through group discussion and interactions. I was also interested in the way that members of these groups interacted, especially the school board members. These interviews were recorded digitally with the consent of all parties.

The decision to use smaller groups (five to eight participants) was informed by experience of conducting group interviews by McLafferty who found that “smaller groups were more manageable” (p.187). This was evident during the pilot study session where all nineteen of the parents willing to participate in the interview were invited. That interview took too long. It was difficult to moderate and some participants rarely contributed. The type of participants (teachers, parents and board members) chosen for the interviews were considered knowledgeable on matters pertaining to their school’s governance.

One aspect of this study was to compare the type of governance in each school, which was done through observing the interactions of group members. The researcher was able to comment on their group dynamics, such as cohesiveness and knowledge level, among others. Unfortunately, participants were unable, due to limited time and resources, to check if the transcripts were a true representation of their views, which is an important component of validating qualitative data (Anfara et al., 2002). However, they will receive a brief report about their school’s climate and board’s governance. To collect effective and reliable data through interviews, interview guides were designed

(Tellis, 1997) to focus on the main tasks and goals. The following sub-section presents descriptions of the interview guide used in this study.

Teachers' Interview Guide

The teachers' interview guide (see Appendix 8) had six areas which focused on: (i) members' experiences—achievement, motivation & frustration; (ii) what their board should do to improve academic achievement and parental involvement; (iii) a conundrum—that poor parents removed their children from low-cost public primary schools to private schools within the slum; (iv) political impact on academic achievement; (v) continuous professional development; (vi) existing tension—implementation of government policy such as the banning of extra lessons or *tuition*; and (vi) challenges associated to schooling in the slum.

Parents' Interview Guide

To understand the perception of parents on their school boards, the parents' interview guide (see Appendix 9) with six items was used. Specifically, the instrument was used to seek views of the participants on: (i) what made them think their school board was great; (ii) their involvement; (iii) the conundrum of some children from poor backgrounds being withdrawn from free public education and sent to fee-paying private education in the slum; (iv) what their board must do to improve academic achievement and school climate; (v) their opinion on extra lessons/classes or '*private tuition*' and (vi) the political impact on academic achievement.

School board Interview Guide

The school board interview guide (see Appendix 10) had eleven items designed and used to solicit views of board members on areas of school governance under the following themes: (i) members' experiences—achievement, motivation & frustration; (ii) their school board's strategy to improve academic achievement and parental involvement; (iii) existing paradoxes—low participation of male parents in school affairs, high enrolment of girls and high cost of public education compared to private education in the slum; (iv) existing tensions—implementation of government policy such as the banning of extra lessons or tuition and involvement in decision making;

and (v) emerging issues such as political influence in school affairs and over-age pupils.

Revision of Interview Guides

After the pilot study in one school, the guides were revised (see Appendix 14) to make them simpler and clearer. There were three interview guides developed for group interviews with teachers, parents and school board members. For example, the question, 'In what ways are parents and the community participating in school affairs?' was problematic. This question was found to be broad, which made it ambiguous; therefore, it was changed to, 'The involvement of parents in school affairs in public primary school has been minimal especially for the male parents. What are some of the reasons for this situation? What has your board done to get more parents involved in school affairs?' This formulation elicited more specific responses.

Field Observations

Field notes were taken mostly during visit to schools and during the group interviews. According to Gibbs (2007), field notes are contemporaneous notes taken while in the field so purposes of recording key words, phrases and actions uttered and undertaken by the participants. Notes were taken during the interviewing process about statements or events that were considered relevant to the study. I used field observation as an 'unstructured' method of collecting qualitative data. Mulhall (2003) clarified that the word 'unstructured' should not be misconstrued to mean 'unsystematic' or 'sloppy' but instead:

Observers using unstructured methods usually enter 'the field' with no predetermined notions as to the discrete behaviours that they might observe... Often the primary reason for using observational methods is to check whether what people say they do is the same as what they actually do ... Unstructured observation provides insight into interactions between dyads and groups; illustrates the whole picture; captures context/process; informs about the influence of the physical environment. (Mulhall, 2003, p. 307)

Focus group interviews are recommended as a suitable strategy for ascertaining the views of dyads and groups. However, it is difficult to confirm if their words match their action. In addition, Mulhall (2003) argues that:

... through observation it is possible to ascertain whether what people say they do and what they do in reality tally... it is important to note two things. First,

both ‘accounts’ (what people perceive that they do and what they actually do) are valid in their own right and just represent different perspectives on the data. (p. 308)

The decision to take field notes was arrived at by the researcher as a method of triangulating the information gathered from other methods. The field notes were taken during school visits, attending parents’ meeting to have a deeper and fuller understanding of the school climate and the interaction within it by the ‘*people*’ in the school. One challenge of taking field notes is its subjectivity, as it depends on the researcher’s professional and personal worldview (Mulhall, 2003). Vital information is likely to be missed if the researcher does not view them as important or interesting. Mulhall further stated that:

It is worth making the observation that the nature of participant observation and the difficulties in writing conspire to ensure that field notes are messy, loose texts that make no claim to be final or fixed versions. Moreover, many would concede that field notes are only comprehensible to their author. (p. 311)

I chose to use my eyes and ears during visits to schools. Observation of school conditions and processes was included as a means to help determine *what* was being done, *how*, and *by whom*. Field observation was done during the same period in which the questionnaires and interviews were conducted. The observation focused on (i) how parents were got involved in school affairs—what they did or said and why they said it; and (ii) the school climate—how the school was kept and the type of interactions within the school. The observations were recorded as pictures and field notes.

Procedure for Data Collection

The data collection procedure took into account participants’ willingness to participate in the study; how their participation would be compensated; credibility of the data collected; ethical issues; and was sensitive to the prevailing circumstances, which in some instances threatened the process. Multiple contacts and incentives, (such as giving mathematical/geometrical sets to pupils and compensation for their time) were used to generate higher response rates. Parents who had difficulty reading English were assisted by their children, who had been prepared earlier. The first five male parents and first five female parents who ticked a check box in the consent form indicating willingness to participate in an interview were invited through telephone calls. All members of current school board and at most eight teachers were invited to participate

in separate group interviews. In selecting the teacher participants, care was taken to ensure gender representation, type of employer, commitment to their work, and age. Credence was given to the head teacher's judgment on how diligent teachers were in carrying out their roles in their school, and this ensured a range of teachers was included.

Ethical issues

This study was approved and cleared by both Australian Catholic University Higher Research and Ethics Committee (HREC) and Kenya's National Council for Science and Technology (see Appendices 17 & 18). Approval was also sought from local administration (see Appendix 19) and individual schools (see Appendix 20 & 21) and care was taken to minimise any inconvenience to the participants during data collection. To encourage large participation in the survey, as proposed by Shannon et al. (2002), the participants were pre-notified using an information letters (see Appendix 22 to 24), talking to the pupils, and personalised consent form (see Appendix 25).

Surveys were distributed to the participants through a teacher who either volunteered or was nominated by the head teacher. This teacher was responsible for collecting questionnaires (either complete or incomplete) returned by parents, pupils and teachers. Information letters, consent forms and questionnaires were sent to parents through their Grade 8 pupils who had been briefed on how to assist their parents or guardians in responding to the questionnaires. Parents who could read and write in English were encouraged to respond to the questionnaire individually.

The pupils who responded to questionnaires were given mathematical sets as a form of compensation. Those who participated in group discussions were compensated for their time and reimbursed for transport costs. Teachers were invited to attend computer training to empower them in the use of technology in their classroom, without any form of payment, as compensation to the school. The computer training was conducted for four days during the teachers' free time and facilitated by me; prior to taking leave to complete my PhD I was employed by the Ministry of Education as a master trainer in using technology in teaching and learning. The group interviews were carried out in convenient venues, such as school (for teachers) and at a retreat centre (for parents and board members). The interviewees were informed about the duration of the interview and were aware that the discussions were recorded digitally (Appendix

24). To conceal the identity of the participants and schools, pseudonyms were used in writing this thesis, while other details that might identify the schools were changed. The findings of this study will be disseminated through briefs, reports, publications and seminars.

Challenges Experienced During Data Collection

The data collection process was interrupted several times, affecting the set timelines. These interruptions were caused by several national events: mainly the teachers' strike, national examinations, and preparation and conduct of the national elections. Long bureaucratic processes caused delays in acquiring public documents, such as examination records, which also impacted negatively on the process. Some of the sampled schools were also involved in other studies and required more time to set a suitable date which further delayed the process. The following is a detailed description of how these issues impacted on the data collection process.

Delay in Acquiring Relevant Information

It took months to secure relevant permission and crucial data, such as the list of all schools in Kibera, and KPCE mean scores for the previous twelve years. The information was sought from the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), which is the statutory body responsible for national assessment in primary and high schools, and certain middle-level tertiary institutions. Information sought would be provided upon official request and payment of amount requested, which would take between three to six weeks. Fees for obtaining most of these documents were expensive, ranging between Kenyan Shillings 2000 to 15000 (the equivalent of AUD 25–190) for each document.

Teachers' Strike

Frequent teachers' strikes, during the period of data collection, seriously interfered with the process. These strikes paralysed learning for weeks and even months as teachers moved to the streets to demonstrate against the government, demanding better terms of service. There were three major strikes during this period that slowed down the data collection process (Oduor & Olick, 2013; Wanyama, 2012). Even when a strike was called off and teachers resumed classes, they would rush to redeem the lost

time, and during those times engaging teachers or parents for a study would be stressful. Most parents were not happy with the teachers' strike which seriously affected their jobs or business as they had to remain at home to take care of their children. Talking to them about school and matters of education reminded them of the negative effects of the strike.

Kenya Certificate Primary Examinations

Term 3 (August to December) of the school calendar is a very busy period for all schools in Kenya, due to rigorous preparation for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination, which is administered to all pupils at the end of their eighth grade. The results of this examination are high stakes for parents, teachers and for the pupils. Each year there are reports of some pupils committing suicide due to failing to attain their desired scores (Tirop & Moraa, 2011). These scores are used mainly for placements in prestigious government high schools or national schools, which is the desire of most candidates. This makes KCPE highly competitive due to the few places available in these 78 national schools, which can only admit 17,175 out of 200,000 who qualified (Gachie, 2013). In most public primary schools, the preparation of these examinations starts in Grade 6 and involves intensive tutorials aimed at early completion of syllabus. During this period, schools are reluctant to release teachers for any other activity, such as attending a group interview.

Schools Over-Researched

Some head teachers were not supportive of the study, claiming that the school had been over-researched without any tangible benefits. Others were adamant that unless the research made a tangible contribution they would not allow teachers or pupils to participate. In one school, a senior teacher was reluctant to give out the teachers' questionnaire, demanding 400 Kenya shillings (equivalent to six Australian dollars) for every teacher. Whereas the amount seemed reasonable, paying a participant to respond to a questionnaire is tantamount to commercialising research, which was considered unacceptable. Consequently the school was removed from the sample and replaced with the pilot school. In another instance, the researcher was forced to postpone administering questionnaires to Grade 8 pupils because they were involved in another study.

Political Interference

The country's general elections also caused disruptions, just as the teachers' strikes. Public schools were closed for several days or even weeks to allow the schools to be used as polling stations. Participation in the study was impacted negatively by ethnic prejudice that was prominent during the general elections in Kenya: participants from ethnic groups that were different from and rival to the researcher had reservations about participation. This was not the case in times that were not as close to the election. Heightened political activities in the slums also made moving from one school to another dangerous, as there was a real risk that the researcher would be mistaken for a political activist.

Conclusion

This chapter has described how the sequential exploratory mixed-method design was used and how quantitative and qualitative approaches were integrated. Both source and method triangulation strategies were used to get insights into school board governance in urban low socioeconomic settings. Triangulation was defined by Denzin (2009) as the "combination of methodologies in the study of some phenomenon" (p.291). The study used quantitative and qualitative instrumentation in tandem and sequentially to answer five sub-questions. The instrumentations were to be valid, credible and reliable in order to produce robust data suitable for confirmation and generation of knowledge about the characteristics of school board governance in urban low socioeconomic setting. Because of this use of qualitative and quantitative instrumentation, the data was sufficient to show how the school board governance affected academic achievement, school climate and parental involvement.

In the next chapter, Chapter Five, I report on how multilevel approach of data analysis was used and discuss the statistical tests used and how information from qualitative data was mined.

Chapter 5

DATA ANALYSES

This chapter provides a description and rationale for the choice of multilevel model (MML) of analysis and the ways in which it was used. This chapter also addresses the weaknesses, application, merits and demerits of this approach. It discusses the diagnostic actions taken to ensure the integrity and appropriateness of the data. Missing data patterns and the steps taken to impute missing data will be discussed. Statistical procedures used in analysing quantitative data are presented, i.e. descriptive, independent sample *t*-tests, ANOVA, etcetera. A discussion of methods used to analyse qualitative data such as coding, preliminary analysis, within-case and across-case analysis is discussed. A conceptual framework for both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis is presented.

Multi-Level Modelling Technique

Multi-level modelling technique was used in this study for its suitability for large scale and complex studies such as this one (Carle, 2009; Gorard, 2003; Steenbergen & Jones, 2002). Schools are complex organisations with unique policies, practices and values with countless interactions among students, teachers, board members, parents and administration (Haynes et al., 1997; Lalive & Cattaneo, 2009; Moore, 1989). Observation of students' academic achievement, parental involvement, and school climate may be affected by group-level similarities or differences (Lott & Antony, 2012). According to Lott and Antony, to effectively assess institutional performance, such as that of the school board, requires “analytical tools that will facilitate comparative analysis across the heterogeneous groups and permit the evaluation of group-effects on individual-level performance” (p. 6).

Although there are numerous mixed-methods studies across education research (Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008), my review of literature found an absence of any previous large-scale mixed-methods project on public primary school board effectiveness that had attempted to combine quantitative and qualitative measures to establish associations between school board governance and academic achievement, parental involvement and school climate and their perceived and measured

effectiveness. I concur with those who argued that ‘effectiveness’ studies driven largely by quantitative data collection and analyses are “inadequate for explaining *how* and *why* internal and external conditions may influence outcomes and for explaining the relative extent of their effects” (Day et al., 2008, p. 331). Therefore, this study adopted a *pragmatic paradigm* that essentially rejects paradigmatic fundamentalism, and is interested in both quantifiable impacts and the complex processes related to them. Mixed methods design provides a route towards integrating these two interests (Muijs, 2012). A multi-level technique was used because it supports the use of the two approaches in a single study.

Definition of Multilevel Modelling Technique

Multilevel modelling also referred to as hierarchical linear modelling or mixed model, provides a powerful analytical framework through which to study institutions and their impact on students (Gelman & Hill, 2009; Lott & Antony, 2012). It is a subset of the general linear model, in which independent variables in the equation are usually modelled as directly affecting the dependent variables (Muijs, 2012). Due to the natural hierarchical structure of the data obtained from participants, multilevel modelling offers many advantages to analysts and policy makers involved in institutional research. Luyten and Sammons (2010) argued that advantages of multilevel analysis include its flexibility and capability to deal with unbalanced data and data with incomplete records and outcome measures.

Clustered or nested data structures commonly encountered in institutional research is handled effectively through hierarchical linear modelling: for example, a class nested within a school or setting (i.e., slums). This example describes lower-level individuals (i.e., pupils) nested or clustered within one or more high-level contexts or groups (that is, within a school or slum). Lott and Antony (2012) state that in such a case, the variability in lower-level outcome (pupil’s performance) might be due in part to differences among higher-level groups or context (class size, governance, and so on). The multilevel analysis is primarily used to examine and understand the nature of variability present in a data set (Gelman & Hill, 2009). It examines how group-level or individual-level characteristics are related to lowest-level outcomes. According to Steenbergen and Jones (2002):

The goal of multilevel analysis is to account for variance in a dependent variable that is measured at the lowest level of analysis by considering information from all levels of analysis. (p. 219)

In addition, multilevel modelling gives researchers the ability to make inferences about organisations where nesting factors will bias results and the assumption of independence is not tenable (King, Hernandez, & Lott, 2012).

Several studies have applied multilevel techniques to their data to understand how variables are correlated. For example, studies have investigated the impact of the campus on the academic achievement of students (Goodman et al., 2006), the impact of on-campus student social networks on their academic performance (Chang, Denson, Sáenz, & Misa, 2006), and the impact of parental involvement on the enrolment patterns of students post high school (Perna & Titus, 2005). Studies have also focused on the relationship between college quality and students' outcomes in the form of employment and earning opportunities (Li & Zhang, 2010).

Multilevel modelling allows a researcher to investigate the correlational relationships between group-level and individual-level variables, where the group-level variables are products of the nesting structure of the data (King et al., 2012). Similarly, Straus and Volkwein (2004) used “student-level variables of overall impression, satisfaction, and sense of belonging, to understand and compare the varying levels of institutional commitment between two-and four-year colleges” (p. 203). In this study, correlation between the school board practice and variables of interest, such the school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance, will be determined. A strong positive association or correlations provides a strong basis for the determination of the school board's effectiveness based on the aforementioned variables.

Weakness in Multilevel Modelling

There are several weaknesses of using multilevel modelling in educational effectiveness research. The following are some of these weaknesses:

1. Parceling out the variance between the different levels, typically schools, classroom and pupils that are accompanied by division of variables as belonging to these different levels. The problem with this approach is that it normally understates the extent to which variables at the different levels interact and inform one another. This often leads to increased Type 1 error

where a researcher might claim that a significant difference exists when it does not. (Carle, 2009; Muijs, 2012);

2. It oversimplifies the process of education effectiveness, for example, assuming that independent variables influence dependent variables directly. Factors related to school board governance do not impact directly on pupil outcomes, but rather, create the conditions under which teaching and learning take place. There are also times when the effects are reciprocal: for example, school board governance influences school administration and culture, but school administration culture and processes themselves influence school board governance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Muijs, 2012);
3. The reliance on interview data may be problematic, owing to attributional bias. This refers to the natural human tendency to attribute success to internal factors, and failures to environmental ones. However, this is not merely an issue of qualitative interview methods, but applies equally to other survey methods used in quantitative studies (Muijs, 2012); and
4. Interviewer expectancy effect, whereby interviewees will tend to want to give an ‘acceptable’ response to the interviewer, for reasons of self-presentation or conviviality (Singer & Kohnke-Aguirre, 1979).

The current study used a series of dummy variables (i.e., summation of rating of people etc.) to absorb the contextual and subgroup differences (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002), thus reduce some of these issues. Awareness of problem associated with directly linking cause to effect was carefully considered in the conclusion. Participants were informed clearly that there were no right or wrong response in interview, but that all their opinions and information would be valued.

Application of Multilevel Modelling in this Study

Organisational phenomena are inherently multi-level and organisational studies are increasingly adopting a multi-level approach (Cannella & Holcomb, 2005; Cohen & Doveh, 2005). The current study used multilevel modelling to analyse data at school-level (group-level) and participant-level (individual-level). Figure 5.1 represents nested or cross-sectional data for the setting used in this study —Kibera slum.

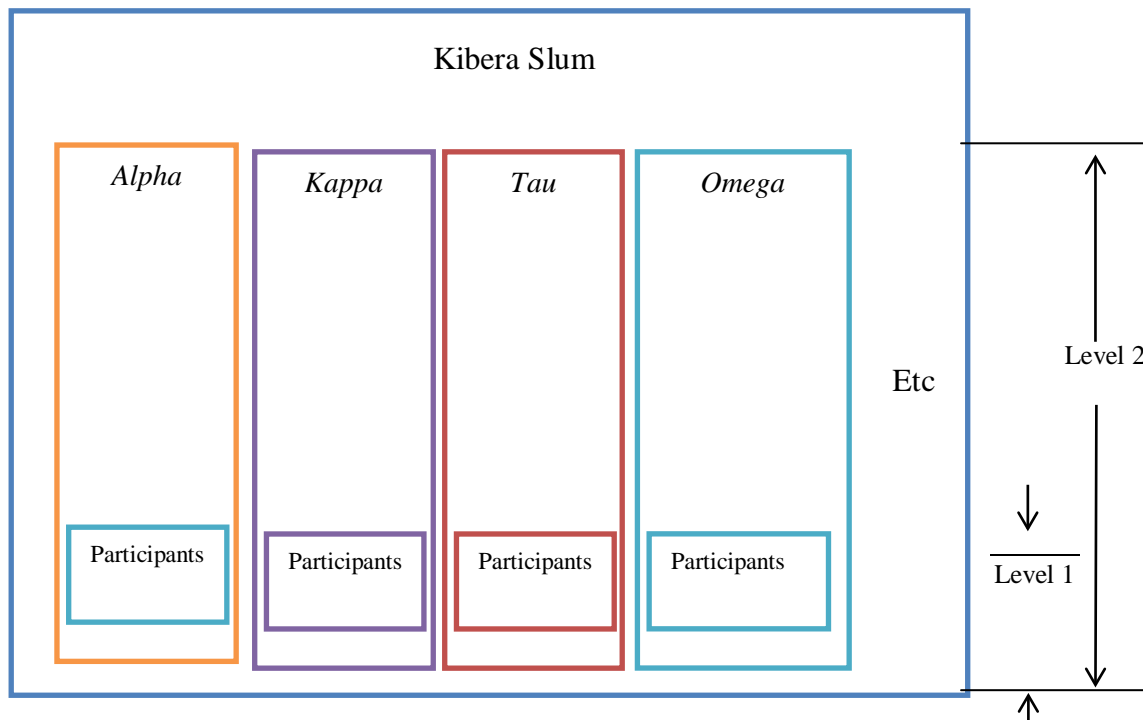
Figure 5.1. Participants Nested within Schools

Figure 5.1. Participants nested within schools. Participants include Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members. Levels 1 represent the analysis at the school levels focusing on differences or similarities between participants within the same school. Level 2 represent the analysis of participants between different schools. Adapted from “Multilevel modelling techniques and applications in institutional research” by Lott and Antony, 2012, p. 6. San Francisco, CA: Wiley Periodicals.

In Figure 5.1, data of interest—such as Grade 8 pupils’ academic achievement, parental involvement, and school climate—reside at level one, the lowest level of the hierarchy. These level-one characteristics vary across individuals within the same school as well as between schools. Participants are nested within different schools, and these schools may vary in terms of their school board governance—in policies, practices and values. These level two characteristics vary between schools and not between pupils, teachers and parents of the same school. Finally, data representing the slum setting, such as community involvement, monthly family income or level of education, is common to all schools but may vary between participants within the same school. In each level, quantitative data analysis was used to determine within and between participants or school variations, followed by qualitative data analysis techniques to explain those variations. Data was analysed quantitatively through determination of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post hoc tests, factor analysis, and regression analysis.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data was entered into a computer program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS] version 21) and cleaned (as described in the sub-section below) before running several statistical tests. Prior to analysis, items of the questionnaire were examined for accuracy of data entry, outliers, missing values and fit between distributions and the assumptions of multivariate analysis. The analysis involved both descriptive statistics (mean, and standard deviation) or parameter estimates and inferential statistics (ANOVA with post hoc tests, t-tests etc.). The perceptions of respondents regarding school climate, parental involvement and school board governance were condensed, according to themes or priority areas, and represented by an overall mean. Statistical tests were then run to check if those perceptions differed significantly between schools and between respondents.

In any study of two variables, the one that is influencing, pushing, or exerting some power over the other variable is called the independent variable (Faherty, 2008). The dependent variable, then, is the variable being pushed or being influenced in some way. The dependent variable is the variable that the researcher measures. In the current study, academic achievement, parental involvement and school climate are the dependent variables, while the school governance is the independent variables.

Cleaning Data and Diagnostics

The first step conducted to ensure the integrity of the data was to check the accuracy of the data coding and entry into the statistical computer program (SPSS version 21). To ensure that data was accurately entered, the data sheets for each questionnaire (pupils, teachers, parents and board members) were extracted and checked against the data entered into the SPSS program file. Several discrepancies were identified, due to incorrect entries or skipping a cell, which were corrected for each matched case. The data was subsequently corrected for each of the cases, and all of the data was found to lie within the necessary parameters. There were no outliers.

Missing Values

Missing data is a common problem in statistical analysis, due to malfunctioning equipment, human factors including sickness, failure of participants to respond to an item and fatigue and administrative errors (Acock, 2005; Howell, 2013). Expectation maximisation (EM) method was used to replace missing values, since the missing data qualified to be considered missing at random. Acock (2005) defines EM as “maximum likelihood approach that can be used to create a new data set in which all missing values are imputed with maximum likelihood values” (p. 1018). This is considered an effective technique often used in data analysis to manage missing data, and is applicable whenever the data is missing completely at random, or missing at random, but it is unsuitable when the data is not found to be missing at random (Moss, 2009).

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is a ubiquitous phenomenon in regression which affects parameter estimation and threatens valid interpretations (Dormann et al., 2013; Marsh, et al., 2004). According to Dormann et al. (2013, p.27), “collinearity refers to the non-independence of predictor variables” and is a common feature of any descriptive data set. It is a problem because it inflates the variance and if not addressed researchers are like to make inappropriate interpretations. Due to the elaborate data set used in the present study, collinearity (multicollinearity) could pose a severe problem and would threaten its statistical and inferential interpretation. Examination of multicollinearity among the independent variables using general linear modelling indicated no problems evident, with explanatory variables sufficiently independent of one another. The variance inflation factors (VIF) between school climate variables (*people, place, process, policies* and *programs*) were all below the recommended threshold of three, which indicated they were independent of each other (Appendix 27).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to describe participants in terms of variables or combinations of variables (school, gender, level of education, occupation, income, etc.). It was performed by using statistical methods such as frequency, means and standard deviations to simplify, clarify and summarise census variables in survey instruments for pupils, teachers, parents and board members.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistical techniques were used to determine if there were any significant differences in the perception of participants between and within schools. If reliable differences were found, descriptive statistics were then used to provide estimations of population's central tendency (mean and standard deviation [SD]). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post hoc tests was used to make statistical inferences about differences in populations on the basis of measurements made on samples of subjects (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

Significance Level

In this study, like many social science projects, which do not typically involve such need for near-perfect precision in measurement (Faherty, 2008), the tolerance level of inaccuracy is not higher than five per cent level of uncertainty regarding whether the results of this study are truly generalisable. That is to say, the significance level to reject the null hypotheses was set at $p < .05$, in line with the common practice in social science research.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to identify grouping in the case of parental involvement questionnaire and school board member's questionnaire. It is a statistical technique applied to a single set of variables used to derive a coherent sub-set of variables that are relatively independent of one another (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Post Hoc Test

A series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post hoc Tests were further used to focus on the subscales that exhibited significant difference when tested, using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). MANOVA is a generalisation of ANOVA to a situation in which there are several dependent variables. To understand the variations in the data set, each sub-scale of the school climate, aspect of school board efficacy and kind of parental involvement was subjected to a one-way ANOVA and post hoc tests. The ANOVA test with post hoc tests for statistical analysis (Faherty, 2008) was used to test whether the perceptions of participants (within and

between schools) on parental involvement, school board governance and school climate differed significantly. The preferred post hoc test was Fisher's least square difference (LSD) for identifying where the differences lies. The tests were carried out at both levels one and two of the multilevel modelling.

Regression Analysis

The purpose of this research is to assess relationships between school board governance and academic achievement, parental involvement and school climate. Kleinbaum, Kupper, Nizam, and Muller (2014) stated that:

Multivariable techniques are concerned with the statistical analysis of such relationships, particularly when at least three variables are involved (p. 1).

Regression analysis, a type of multivariate technique, was used in this study due to its wide applicability in educational leadership research. It consists of techniques for modelling the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Yan & Su, 2009). The purpose of regression analysis, according to Yan and Su, is three-fold:

1. to establish a causal relationship between the dependent and independent variables;
2. to predict the dependent variable based on a set of independent variables;
3. to screen the independent variables to identify which ones are more important than others, and to explain the dependent variables so that the causal relationship can be determined more efficiently and accurately. (p. 4)

Since this study seeks to determine if school board practices (independent variables) lead to improved school climate, parental involvement and student performance (dependent variables), multiple linear regression was considered the most suitable statistical method for investigating such relationships (Bonellie, 2012). In addition, linear regression was used because if the regression model adequately reflects the true relationship between the independent and dependent variables (academic achievement, etc.), then the model can be used to predict the dependent variables, identify important independent variables (school board practices), and establish causal relationship between dependent and independent variables. In the context of this study, my objective was to determine the impact (if any) that aspects of school board practices have upon academic achievement, school climate and parental involvement.

If a significant relationship between these variables is determined, then the model could be used to predict them in similar settings.

Four assumptions of multiple linear regressions were tested: linearity, reliability of measurement, homoscedasticity, and normality (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Non-linearity between independent and dependent variables, and unreliable measurement, cause relationships to be *under or over estimates* of the true relationship, increasing the risk of Type II errors for independent variable (IV) and Type I errors. Non-normality of variable could distort relationships and significance tests. In this study, examination of scatter plots showed that the variables were normally distributed. The survey data had no outlier values since participants were required to select their responses from a predetermined five-point Likert scale. The reliability index of the survey instruments was determined by the Cronbach's alpha (α) which was found to be above 0.8 which indicated that the instruments were reliable.

Homoscedasticity is also known as homogeneity of variances or uniformity of variances. It refers to the assumption that the dependent variable exhibits similar amounts of variance across the range of values for an independent variable. When the variance of errors differs at different values of the independent variables, heteroscedasticity is indicated. According to Berry and Feldman (1985) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2014) slight heteroscedasticity has little effect on significance tests. However, when heteroscedasticity is marked, it can lead to serious distortion of findings and seriously weaken the analysis, thus increasing the possibility of a Type I error. Examination of scatter plots on the standardised residual against standardised predicted values did not indicate the existence of heteroscedasticity in this study (see Appendices 28 to 30).

Five components were extracted from the responses of school board members' questionnaire through a factor analysis performed using principal component analysis and rotated using Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation (see Appendix 28). These components accounted for forty-three per cent of the total explained variance as follows: board's self-concept (eleven per cent), board's resource mobilisation and monitoring (eleven per cent), board's relationship and interactions (seven per cent), board's support for teachers and pupils (seven per cent), and board's decision-making

process (seven per cent). Cronbach's coefficient alpha, based on standardised item for the five sub-scales, ranged between 0.54 and 0.80, as shown in the Appendix 29.

Correlational Analysis

Pearson's (r) correlational analysis was used to describe the type of interrelation within the data. It was used to describe whether a quantitative association exists between variables, how strong that association is, and, finally, in what direction it flows (Faherty, 2008; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). The correlation analysis was carried out only at level one of the multilevel modelling. The correlational analysis was used to shed light on the relationship between variables of interest: school board governance, school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement (Brandimarte, 2011). Aspects of school climate (*place, people, programs, policies and processes*), parental involvement (frequency of their participation and school climate aspects) and school governance (i.e. participation, interactions, mobilisation, decision-making, community involvement, performance, discipline, commitment, monitoring and supporting children) – were aggregated by combining and averaging all the individual answers from question under those sub-groups.

While there are many interactions that could have been explored, the researcher performed a correlation analysis because he was interested in finding shared variance explained. It is important to note that r indicates association, which may be coincidence or causal. However, the shared variance between x (school governance) and y (i.e., KCPE mean scores) is inferred using the coefficient of causality, ' R^2 ' (equal to $r \times r$) (Kay, 2009). This means that one could assert that if $r = 0.8$, then 64% of the variance in y can be attributable to variance in x . The p -value (level of significance) indicates that the likelihood that the determined correlation (whatever its value) is not due to chance, i.e., is statistically significant.

The data collected for this study was non-random, and therefore the correlations were computed solely for descriptive purposes. It is important to note that although I have reported degrees of freedom (df) in each case, the degree of freedom for correlations is calculated as 2 less than the total number of participants (Faherty, 2008), for example in case of teachers, $df = 120$ (since $N = 122$). The correlations were reported as very strong ($r \geq 0.70$), strong ($0.40 \leq r \leq 0.69$), moderate ($0.30 \leq r \leq 0.39$),

weak ($0.20 \leq r \leq 0.29$) or negligible ($r < 0.20$): if the correlation was positive or negative, and whether or not it was significant.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involved transformation of the voluminous text, from interview scripts, field notes, open-ended questions and review of document, into a clear, understandable, insightful and trustworthy document about the school board (Gibbs, 2007). The analysis of qualitative data involved coding, taxonomy, preliminary analysis, within-case and across-case analysis, and constant comparative analytical strategies (Ratcliff, 2008). A full analysis of qualitative data generated by open-ended questions in the surveys and twenty interview transcripts (teachers-6, parents -8 and board members -6) was done using nVivo; however, due to the voluminous amount it was neither fully relevant nor possible to append it. The analysis reported include pre-determined codes, paradoxes, tensions and dilemma that arose at the two stages of the study and included all data specifically related to the questions of the study plus some issues that were not expected but which arose from the data analysis.

Coding

Codes were identified and tagged to a dimension with the help of computer software NVivo 10 where they are known as nodes. Coding involves identifying and recording one or more passages of text to represent a category or dimension (Gibbs, 2007; Grbich, 2013). The codes aided in examining relationships between dimensions and case-by-case comparisons. It is important to note that the term ‘coding’ was also used in this study under the context of quantitative data, which was taken to mean assignment of numbers to answers to survey questions. However, in both cases coding was used as a process for further analysis.

A group of ‘codes’ formed a dimension and a group of dimensions formed a domain: for example, all statements about how teachers related to parents were grouped as teacher-parent relationships and all types of these relationships were grouped under relationships. Under the dimension ‘relationships’, teacher-parent and teacher-pupil relationships are considered sub-dimensions. ‘Relationship’ as a dimension, together with other related dimensions such as ‘supporting children,’ constitutes a domain referred to as *people*, which is an aspect of school climate.

Taxonomy

Taxonomy is a formal system for classifying multifaceted, complex phenomena (Patton, 2015) according to a set of common conceptual domains and dimensions (Bradley et al., 2007). This qualitative analytical approach was preferred for the present study, because school-based management has multifaceted and complex strategies, used both in the developed and developing world, aimed at improving quality of education through decentralisation of decision making to either local or school level. Three domains (school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement) were used to understand how the school boards in Kibera slum operate. Within each domain there are several dimensions. For example, school climate has five dimensions—*people, place, processes, policies* and *programs*. Within each dimension, the emerging sub-dimensions were identified.

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analysis involved checking, tracking and creating an awareness of the data to see what was emerging, and to gain a deeper understanding of the values and meanings which lie therein (Gibbs, 2007; Grbich, 2013). Preliminary analysis was a continuous process running concurrently with data collection, which was used to highlight emerging issues and provide direction for seeking further data.

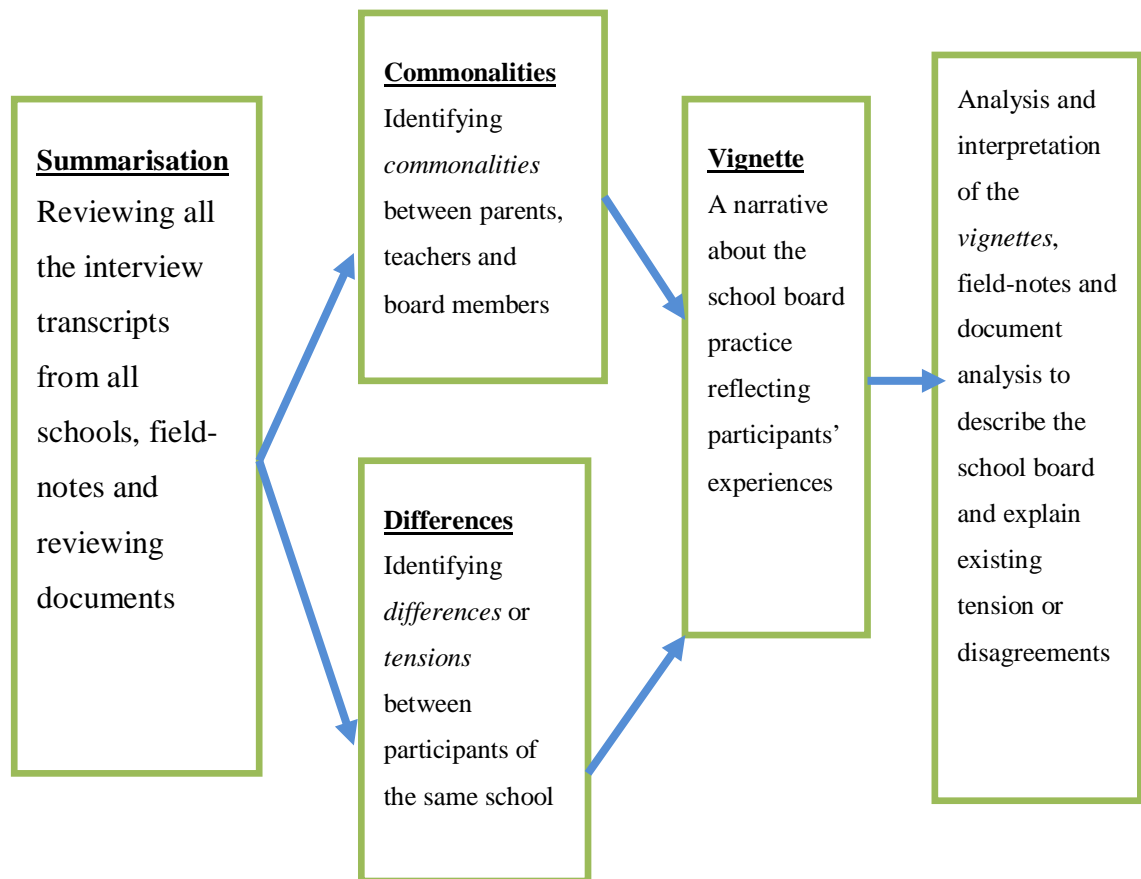
Within-Case Analysis

Within-case analysis was the first qualitative data analysis technique used in each school under study. After completion of qualitative data collection, my first analytical activity was *summarisation*, immersing myself in the data, reviewing all the interview transcripts from all schools, field-notes and reviewing documents. The purpose of this activity was to identify emerging domains and dimensions to be included in the coding process. The analysis provided multiple accounts, from parents, teachers and board members, on issues that were identified during the analysis of quantitative data that needed more in-depth prying (Ayres et al., 2003; Soy, 1997). In within-case analysis, data transcripts from the group interviews were examined to identify similarities and differences in perceptions between teachers, parents and board members (Soy, 1997) using the taxonomy and constant comparison. The within-case analysis was done

through four main stages iteratively and sequentially – *summarisation, identifying commonalities and differences, vignette* and *theory in action*.

Figure 5.2 is a conceptual framework of the within-case analysis used in the present study.

Figure 5.2. Within-case analysis conceptual framework



Across-Case Analysis

The next step in analysing qualitative data was the across-case analysis (Ayres et al., 2003). The purpose of this analytic strategy was to compare the experience of participants from two schools and identify commonalities and differences between the schools. The two schools which were considered to be lying on both end of a effectiveness continuum were identified through quantitative means. Using constant comparative analysis, commonalities and differences between participants were identified. Analysing these differences in participants' experiences in the two schools was considered as an explanation of the reasons of differing perceptions and learning outcomes between the two schools. Significant statements that were different were used to explain statistical differences reported earlier.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the method for data analysis, using the multilevel technique and how quantitative data was cleaned. Parametric tests that are F-test and *t*-test used in this study were described and qualitative data methods analysed, such as the with-in and across-case strategies. Although the sample used for this study was one that is considered non-random, the large amount of data generated and source triangulation makes the data suitable for comparison, making valid claims and generalisations. The next chapter reports on the study findings.

Chapter 6

SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter presents quantitative results (both descriptive and inferential) of this study derived from the survey of Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and school board members. The chapter is organised in ten sections: diagnostics, participants, settings, performance trends, school climate, parental involvement, school board practice, regression analysis, correlational analysis, and conclusion.

The first section presents results on diagnostic statistics used to address missing values, reliability index, and multicollinearity. The participants' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, experience, monthly income and level of education are described in the second section. The settings of the selected schools such as their physical location and infrastructures are presented in the third section.

The school's national examination mean scores from the year 2002 to 2013 (a twelve-year period) are presented in the fourth section. Participants' mean perceptions on school climate, parental involvement and school board practices are presented in the fifth, sixth and seventh sections respectively. These sections (fifth to seventh) were used to answer the first question:

Question 1: What are the perceptions of Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members about their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

The eighth and ninth sections on regression analysis and correlational analysis respectively, link the school board practices to performance, school climate and parental involvement separately. The findings in this section were used to answer the fifth question:

Question 5: How are the perceptions of pupils, teachers, parents and board members related to the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

The tenth section concludes by drawing from the results in the previous nine sections.

Diagnostics Statistics

Several diagnostics statistics were carried out in this study: missing values, reliability index, multicollinearity, normality and homoscedasticity. Little's Missing Completely as Random (MCAR) Tests showed that the missing data values were missing completely at random (i.e., no identifiable pattern exists in the missing data) (see Appendix 26). I assumed that the missing data was 'missing completely at random' (MCAR) because the missing data was scattered across questionnaires and there were no questions with large amounts of data missing. The reliability index, Cronbach's alpha (α), for pupils, parents', teachers' and school board members' questionnaires was found to be 0.85, 0.89, 0.84 and 0.78 respectively, which was considered sufficient. Examination of residuals in scatterplots showed that the residuals, in regression analysis, were randomly scattered around 0 (the horizontal line), providing a relatively even distribution (see Appendices 41, 42 & 43).

Participants

There were 1,790 survey participants (see Appendix 33) from eight public primary schools in Kibera slum, involving 822 Grade 8 pupils (349 boys and 473 girls), 803 parents (454 females and 349 males), 122 teachers (80 females and 42 males), and 43 board members (30 males and 13 females). The pupils' mean age was 14 years, which is within the government's recommended age for Grade 8 level. The mean age for teachers and school board members was 37 years and 42 years respectively. Most of the Grade 8 pupils (83 per cent) lived with their biological parents, but about a third of them indicated that someone (i.e., guardian, sponsor etc.) other than their biological parents was responsible for paying for their schooling.

About half of the parents had completed primary level education, twenty-nine per cent had completed secondary school, and fifteen per cent had completed post-secondary education (tertiary level), while six per cent indicated that they had no education (Appendix 34). The majority of the parents (76 per cent) were engaged in casual jobs (labourers, hawking, small-scale businesses, low cadre civil servants etc.) which earned them an average monthly family income of at most 20,000 shillings (250 AUD). Due to their meagre income, some families depended on support from non-governmental organisations and sponsors for necessities, such as food rations, clothes, or even payment for the education of children. The parents who constituted the school

boards were mostly male, with relatively higher monthly family income and level of education.

The majority of teaching staff in the eight public primary schools were female (more than 60 per cent), mostly middle-aged, experienced, qualified, and about three-quarters of them employed by the government. Most of the teachers (88 per cent) had initial teacher training (graduates of a primary teachers' training college [PTTC] acquiring certificate in teaching – P1 certificate) with at least 5 years' teaching experience. About 44 per cent of them were pursuing higher qualifications, studying either for diplomas (21 per cent) or first degrees (20 per cent) or second degrees (three per cent), mostly in education, but a few in other areas not related to teaching. However, the schools experienced a serious shortage of teachers, and one method used by most school boards to lower the pupil-teacher ratio was to hire low-paid local contract teachers in addition to government-salaried ones (Dupas, Duflo, & Kremer, 2014).

Settings

Except for one school (name withheld in the interest of anonymity), the public schools were built by the government for the children in the slum and have exactly the same design, infrastructure and capacity (see Appendix 2). Every day, most children in public primary schools in Kibera spend upon average between ten to thirty minutes to reach their schools. Most of them have to walk through narrow alleys, cross railway lines, streams and open sewers, use crowded pedestrian routes, while unplanned structures make it difficult for them to access school. Some attend schools a long distance from their homes, ignoring a school nearby in search of better education. Because parents are at liberty to select a suitable school for their children, some, for various reasons (investigated in the current study) prefer certain schools.

Table 6.1 shows the schools' demographics at the beginning of the study in 2012.

Table 6.1

School Demographics

Name of School	School enrolment as per 2012	% of Grade 8 pupils who took 30 minutes or less to get to school	% of Grade 8 pupils residing in Kibera	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
1 <i>Alpha</i>	1000 — 1999	67	95.7	51:1
2 <i>Kappa</i>	2000 — 2999	78	96.4	65:1
3 <i>Mu</i>	1000—1999	77	90.6	35:1
4 <i>Tau</i>	Below 1000	64	88.8	35:1
5 <i>Omega</i>	3000 and above	88	93.8	76:1
6 <i>Sigma</i>	1000 — 1999	81	88.0	43:1
7 <i>Upsilon</i>	Below 1000	71	87.2	27:1
8 <i>Rho</i>	Below 1000	86	98.5	29:1

Omega had the highest pupil-teacher ratio as a result of the high enrolment of pupils. *Mu*, *Tau*, *Upsilon* and *Rho* had very low pupil-teacher ratios compared to average class size in Kenya, despite most schools reporting a phenomenal rise in enrolment since the inception of free primary education in Kenya (Kigotho, 2011; UNESCO, 2014).

Performance Trends

School's academic performance was rated based on the average score for all Grade 8 pupils who sat for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination for a period lasting twelve years (2002–13). KCPE is a national summative examination which is used for placement purposes and is taken by all Grade 8 pupils in Kenya. The candidates sit for five subjects: English, Kiswahili, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics. The assessment is administered by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), which is a statutory body mandated to conduct national assessment for primary education, secondary education and middle-level tertiary education. Figure 6.1 shows KCPE means scores for the eight schools for a twelve-year period from 2002–13.

Figure 6.1. KCPE scores for the period 2002 to 2013

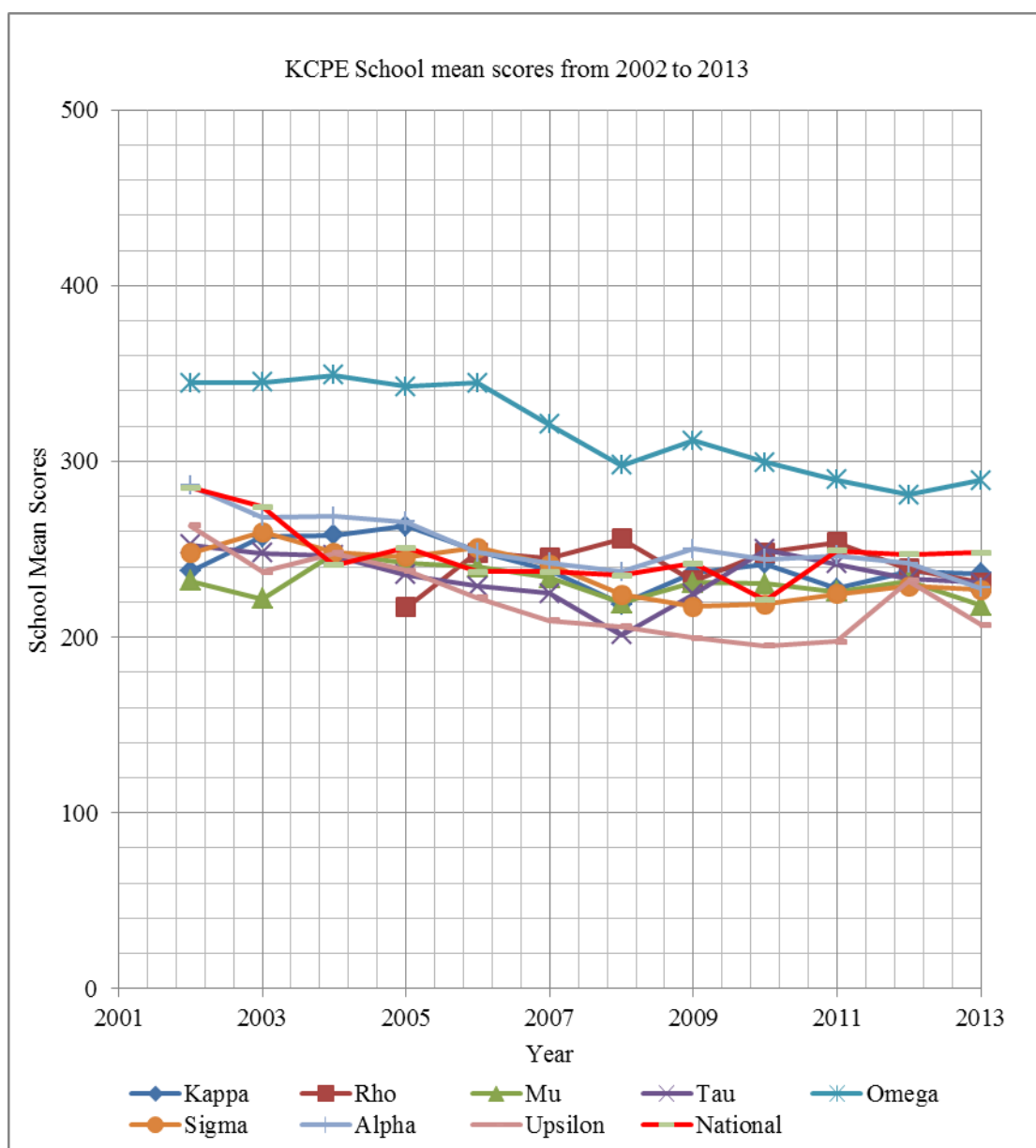


Figure 6.1. KCPE = Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. The KCPE scores are out of 500 marks. School's mean score is the average score of all the pupils' score. KCPE scores were provided by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), 02/05/2013.

Results in Figure 6.1 show that:

1. *Omega* had consistently performed much better than all the other schools for the last twelve years;
2. there had been a gradual drop in performance over the period;
3. change of head teacher in *Upsilon* in 2011 resulted in a sharp rise in examination scores in 2012;

4. there was a sharp drop in academic performance of most schools after the national elections (2002 & 2007);
5. *Omega*, despite having the highest pupil-teacher ratio (see Table 6.1), posted better examination results in the last twelve years. Paradoxically, *Upsilon* and *Tau*, which have the lowest pupil-teacher ratio, had posted results below the national means for the same duration.

School Climate

This section presents findings on the perception of pupils, parents and teachers on how inviting their schools were, based on the *place, people, processes, policies* and *programs* or the ‘5Ps’. This study adopted the rating of school climate suggested by Smith (2013) which rated the 5Ps as *most inviting* if the scores are equal to or more than 85 per cent; *somewhat inviting* between 60–84 per cent; *disinviting* between 50–59 per cent and *most disinviting* when the score is less than 50 per cent. The overall rating of the school climate presents an aggregate of individual data rating in each aspect of the school climate for schools and participants as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

Overall perception on school climate

Subscale	Grade 8 pupils		Parents		Teachers	
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD
People	78.9	10.6	80.1	6.2	81.0	11.0
Place	71.3	14.3	76.2	7.5	64.6	15.6
Processes	76.7	12.4	82.7	6.2	81.5	11.9
Policies	79.1	12.4	78.9	7.3	82.5	10.8
Programs	75.0	13.3	71.8	10.4	76.4	12.2

Note. SD = Standard deviation.

As shown in Table 6.2, pupils, teachers and parents from all the eight schools considered their school climate to be somehow inviting. Parents and teachers rated

people and *processes* in their schools highly: teachers rated the *place* lowest but rated *policies* highly; while rating of the *programs* was almost similar between the participants. Although teachers perceived most aspects of the school climate positively, their pupils' perception was relatively less positive except on the aspect of *place*. The pupils were most likely to find their school physical environment, or *place*, more welcoming compared to their home physical environment.

Generally, as shown in Table 6.3, the participants of *Omega* were relatively happier in most aspects of their school climate, while those of *Tau* and *Upsilon* were least happy. The results further show that parents of *Omega* and *Rho* rated their school processes as *most inviting*. Teachers were happier with their school processes and policies but were relatively unhappy with their school environment: particularly teachers of *Rho*, who rated their environment *most disinviting*, while the rating at *Kappa* and *Sigma* as *disinviting*. The participants rate the aspect *place* lowly despite the fact that most of the schools have modern infrastructure, water and electricity connections, spacious staffrooms and well-ventilated classrooms (see Appendix 2).

The teachers of *Rho* could possibly have rated their physical environment as least inviting because most of their classes had walls made from iron sheets, without proper ventilation and crowded, dusty compound and grounds. *Rho* also had pit-latrines without doors (some were over-flowing); its school ground was dusty with an open sewer flowing through it and located near a railway line. Teachers of *Omega* rated three aspects—people, processes and policies—as *most inviting*, while teachers of *Tau* and *Upsilon* rated all the aspects of the school climate least inviting, despite having a spacious compound and a lower pupil-teacher ratio. Although *Upsilon* received most pupils from the slum due to its location, it was not affected by bus-terminal, market or hawking noise.

Table 6.3 shows the participants' perception on school climate disaggregated by school.

Table 6.3

Participants' perception on school climate disaggregated by school

Partic- ipants	Schools	Participants' mean % of their perception on school climate									
		People		Place		Processes		Policies		Programs	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
		%		%		%		%		%	
Pupils	<i>Alpha</i>	80.1	10.8	74.4	13.8	75.3	13.9	78.4	13.7	75.7	13.7
	<i>Kappa</i>	79.1	9.6	64.8	13.0	76.6	10.5	80.9	11.9	74.9	11.5
	<i>Mu</i>	78.5	9.6	76.4	10.7	76.8	12.4	76.9	12.2	77.8	12.1
	<i>Omega</i>	79.0	11.4	73.6	13.7	78.3	10.9	80.9	11.3	74.7	11.6
	<i>Rho</i>	79.2	9.6	70.3	14.1	80.9	11.6	80.7	12.3	78.5	13.3
	<i>Sigma</i>	78.4	10.8	65.5	14.9	76.9	12.0	78.5	12.5	71.5	15.0
	<i>Tau</i>	75.4	10.8	65.7	16.4	71.7	14.9	76.5	10.3	69.5	16.3
	<i>Upsilon</i>	78.8	11.7	67.9	15.2	74.0	13.0	78.5	14.8	75.9	13.3
Teachers	<i>Alpha</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<i>Kappa</i>	80.6	6.0	54.4	12.7	80.1	7.5	79.0	6.7	69.8	11.3
	<i>Mu</i>	80.9	7.4	70.3	12.5	79.0	6.5	81.1	9.9	81.1	6.9
	<i>Omega</i>	89.7	8.5	74.4	12.1	90.4	11.3	91.2	8.0	83.7	9.6
	<i>Rho</i>	75.9	7.3	45.8	14.8	79.2	10.6	83.9	6.5	72.8	13.4
	<i>Sigma</i>	79.2	10.3	57.0	13.6	80.4	9.5	78.9	8.3	77.1	10.8
	<i>Tau</i>	75.2	10.8	69.2	12.5	76.7	10.7	77.5	11.3	72.6	11.0
	<i>Upsilon</i>	73.2	11.5	64.4	13.2	72.7	11.6	75.0	11.5	69.4	13.3
Parents	<i>Alpha</i>	81.5	11.5	79.8	12.8	83.9	11.7	79.7	13.3	74.2	14.5
	<i>Kappa</i>	81.9	9.4	73.3	14.2	83.7	10.1	80.1	13.6	72.8	14.5
	<i>Mu</i>	80.2	11.0	80.0	12.7	82.5	11.4	76.5	13.6	70.0	14.5
	<i>Omega</i>	82.8	11.1	77.6	13.2	85.1	10.9	83.6	11.5	76.4	23.7
	<i>Rho</i>	84.2	8.9	70.5	18.7	85.6	9.3	84.6	10.6	71.4	13.4
	<i>Sigma</i>	80.1	11.5	76.2	13.8	83.7	11.6	79.9	13.8	71.7	15.5
	<i>Tau</i>	78.0	11.3	73.9	13.2	83.0	12.5	77.1	13.7	68.4	15.1
	<i>Upsilon</i>	79.6	12.7	71.1	19.1	84.5	10.9	74.0	15.4	70.3	16.8

Note. Mean score of 85% and more [shaded] represents *most inviting*; while values below 55% represents *disinviting* aspect of the school climate. SD = standard deviation.

Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (see Appendix 35) revealed that the perception of participants on the 5Ps between schools differed

significantly (*people* [$F= 6.27, df=7, p<.05$]; *place* [$F= 13.13, df=7, p< .05$]; *process* [$F= 6.56, df=7, p< .05$]; *policy* [$F= 5.88, df=7, p< .05$] & *programs* [$F= 3.69, df=7, p< .05$]) (see Appendix 35). It further showed significant difference on perception on ‘place’ ($F= 16.43, df=1, p< .05$) and ‘process’ ($F= 5.09, df=1, p< .05$) between the participants/respondents but no significant difference between participants’ gender. Post hoc tests showed that the perception of parents and teachers of *Omega* in most aspects of their school climate was highly positive compared to that of teachers in the other schools (see Appendix 36). *Omega* parents’ had relatively more positive perceptions, according to post hoc tests, in the aspect of *policies* and differed significantly compared to the parents from all other schools (except *Rho*): *Alpha* (mean difference =3.93, $p<.05$); *Kappa* (mean difference =3.47, $p<.05$); *Mu* (mean difference =7.08, $p<.05$); *Rho* (mean difference =-0.99, $p>.05$); *Sigma* (mean difference =3.68, $p<.05$); *Tau* (mean difference =6.44, $p<.05$) and *Upsilon* (mean difference =3.47 $p<.05$).

In addition, the tests showed that the perceptions of *Omega*’s pupils, teachers and parents were more positive on their school climate and significantly different from those of *Tau*. *Omega*’s parents’ perceptions were relatively better than most schools in regard to *people*, *place*, *processes* and *policies* but poorer in regard to *programs* when compared to the perception of pupils from other schools. The results above suggest that participants of *Omega* were relatively more positive about their school climate compared with the other schools. Specifically, there was significant difference in participants’ perception between *Omega* and *Tau* in most aspects of school climate—pupils’ perceptions differed significantly in all the 5ps; teachers’ perception in four out of 5P, and parents’ perceptions differed significantly in three out of five (see Appendix 36).

Parental Involvement

This section reports on the frequency of parental involvement in school affairs based on ten items of the parents’ survey. Parental involvement in school affairs was rated as *very frequent* if the scores were equal to or greater than 85 per cent (≥ 85 per cent); *frequent* between 60–84 per cent; *somehow frequent* between 30–59 per cent; and *once in a while* when the score is less than 30 per cent.

Most parents claimed to be involved frequently in supporting learning: for instance, by discussing their children's progress with their teachers, and helping them do their schoolwork and homework. Parents in most schools, except in *Omega*, rarely supported their schools either as volunteers or fundraisers. Most of the time, it was the schools that were trying to contact parents to get them involved, except at *Omega*, *Rho* and *Upsilon*, where more parents indicated that they were the ones who instigated contact with their schools. It appears in most cases that, if not stimulated by the school, very few parents would be involved. Most of their involvement was as a response to school invitations for meetings, or to discuss the academic progress or discipline of their children.

Table 6.4 shows the frequency of parents in the eight schools on four aspects mentioned earlier.

Table 6.4

Mean rating of parental involvement disaggregated by school

Schools	Parental Involvement		Parents to School Communication		School to Parents Communication		Supporting School		Supporting Learning	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	%		%		%		%		%	
<i>Alpha</i>	57.0	15.1	60.8	14.2	56.8	20.7	70.6	16.7		
<i>Kappa</i>	57.0	12.0	59.4	13.8	55.5	20.6	65.6	16.6		
<i>Mu</i>	56.5	17.4	62.4	16.8	54.8	22.2	67.7	17.3		
<i>Omega</i>	64.1	16.3	59.6	15.7	60.7	20.1	72.1	15.7		
<i>Rho</i>	65.4	15.2	61.1	15.8	55.9	19.8	70.7	18.1		
<i>Sigma</i>	58.1	18.6	60.5	16.1	57.7	22.8	70.1	16.9		
<i>Tau</i>	59.1	17.0	58.9	14.4	58.2	21.0	68.1	15.9		
<i>Upsilon</i>	60.2	17.3	63.7	15.3	57.6	23.8	74.1	14.6		
Overall	59.7	16.4	60.6	15.3	57.4	21.1	69.9	16.6		

Note. Shading represents *somewhat* frequent

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests showed no significant difference between schools in the frequency of *school-to-parent communication* ($F= 0.77, p>.05$) and *support to school* ($F= 1.09, p>.05$). However, there was a significant difference in the frequency of *parent-to-school communication* ($F= 4.96, p<.05$) and in *supporting learning* ($F= 2.07, p<.05$) between the schools. Post hoc test results show that the frequency of *parent-to-school communication* and *supporting learning* is much higher in *Omega* than in other schools (Appendix 37). Most parents of *Omega* indicated that they frequently contact their school, either by calling or visiting the school or talking to the teacher, and frequently volunteered and raised funds. In general, most parents of *Omega* appeared to be more committed to school affairs than most parents from other public primary schools studied in the Kibera slum.

Public School Board Practices

Most studies on school governance in public primary schools in Kenya were descriptive in nature (Cheruto & Benjamin, 2010; Mwamuye, Mulambe, Mrope, & Cherutich, 2012; Onderi & Makori, 2013; Opande, 2014) and none has been comparative or explanatory. The current study goes further to explore the school board practices of eight schools. In the previous sections, results revealed significant difference in performance, perceptions of participants on their school climate, and in parental involvement in school affairs. The findings in this section seek to determine what parents think about their school boards, and what the board members think about their practice. The results were used to answer the third question:

Question 3: How effective are the school boards perceived to be by parents, teachers and board members in setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving academic achievement?

Seven items of the parent's questionnaire were used to determine their perception of their school board's practice (Appendix 6). The board and its practice were considered *very effective* if the score was equal to or greater than 85 per cent (≥ 85 per cent); *effective* between 60–84 per cent; *somewhat effective* if the score was between 50–59 per cent and *less effective* when the score was less than 50 per cent.

Parents' Perception

The perception of parents of school board practice was determined with regard to how frequently the board paid attention to their suggestions, tried to involve them in school affairs, invited them to attend meetings, and helped them participate, as shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5

Frequency of parental involvement

School Board Practice	paying attention to suggestion by parents		trying to involve parents in school affairs		being invited to meetings so as to learn about school		helped parents participate in school affairs	
Schools	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	%		%		%		%	
<i>Alpha</i>	78.5	19.8	81.7	20.0	86.5	17.3	76.9	23.7
<i>Kappa</i>	76.4	21.5	81.5	21.9	90.4	18.6	76.5	23.7
<i>Mu</i>	77.9	22.4	83.4	17.6	89.4	14.8	78.1	22.0
<i>Omega</i>	77.6	20.3	82.2	21.1	86.3	17.1	78.8	20.7
<i>Rho</i>	84.5	17.6	82.1	23.3	92.8	11.0	79.7	20.7
<i>Sigma</i>	76.7	21.9	83.6	17.7	88.4	18.0	78.5	21.3
<i>Tau</i>	73.6	26.3	83.0	19.0	86.9	18.6	76.1	22.9
<i>Upsilon</i>	72.9	26.0	77.6	25.5	93.5	10.7	74.1	26.8
Overall	77.6	21.5	82.2	20.3	88.3	16.7	77.7	22.3

Note. SD = standard deviation. Participants' mean perception of 85% and above (shaded) represents very effective board in involving parents in some aspects of the school affairs.

The school boards, as perceived by parents, were very effective in inviting parents for meetings and trying to involve them in school affairs. Parents rated the boards as 'effective' regarding the aspects of listening to their suggestions and helping them participate in school affairs.

Table 6.6 is a summary of the overall perception of parents about the contribution of their school boards.

Table 6.6

Parents' perception on the school board's contribution disaggregated by school

School Board Practice	helped the school's performance		school board is very active		helped in the development of the school	
Schools	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	%		%		%	
<i>Alpha</i>	81.9	20.4	82.2	18.5	81.6	21.7
<i>Kappa</i>	83.8	21.4	84.3	17.1	83.8	19.8
<i>Mu</i>	84.4	19.3	84.8	17.4	84.7	18.9
<i>Omega</i>	86.4	17.9	82.8	21.2	84.6	18.2
<i>Rho</i>	86.2	17.7	86.9	13.8	89.3	11.4
<i>Sigma</i>	82.7	21.0	79.5	18.3	82.8	19.1
<i>Tau</i>	88.1	17.1	80.6	19.1	80.9	24.5
<i>Upsilon</i>	71.8	28.8	70.3	27.4	77.1	23.2
Overall	84.0	20.0	82.4	19.3	83.5	19.8

Note. SD = standard deviation. Parents' mean perception of 85% and above (shaded) indicate that the parents perceived their boards as being very effective.

Most parents think that their board members were active and had positively contributed to their school's academic performance and the school's development. They felt that their boards had tried very hard to involve them in school affairs, and were very effective in inviting them to meetings so that they could learn about the school. However, there were significant differences in their perceptions between schools on whether the board was active ($F = 3.11$, $df = 7$, $p < .05$); if they were invited to learn about what was going on in their school ($F = 2.06$, $df = 7$, $p < .05$) and if it contributed positively to their school's academic performance ($F = 3.10$, $df = 7$, $p < .05$).

Post hoc test results show that the *Omega* parents were more positive about their school boards compared to other schools (see Appendix 38). For example, the *Omega* parents claimed more strongly than their peers in *Upsilon* (a school which registered

low performance despite a low pupil-teacher ratio) that their school board was active (mean difference =12.52, $p<.05$); helped improve students' achievement (mean difference =14.59, $p<.05$) and development (mean difference =7.55, $p<.05$).

Perception of Board Members

The board members' perception was discussed under five aspects: board's self-concept, board's resource mobilisation and monitoring, board's relationship and interactions, board's support for teachers and pupils, and board's decision-making process. Generally, most school board members of the six schools were positive about their practice as shown in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7

Board members' perception about their practice disaggregated by school

Schools	Self-concept		Mobilisation and monitoring		Relationships and interaction		Teaching and learning		Decision making	
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD
<i>Alpha</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Kappa</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Mu</i>	86.6	12.6	80.1	8.9	79.8	10.2	84.3	10.6	81.4	7.5
<i>Omega</i>	87.1	8.0	89.4	5.3	75.8	14.6	92.2	7.1	76.7	14.6
<i>Rho</i>	86.6	5.5	81.6	9.3	78.1	10.9	85.0	10.8	76.5	18.8
<i>Sigma</i>	84.1	14.0	79.0	12.3	77.7	11.6	79.6	14.6	83.5	13.6
<i>Tau</i>	87.1	7.0	80.0	18.8	61.2	20.1	86.0	8.2	71.0	16.7
<i>Upsilon</i>	88.2	12.6	83.1	11.6	79.6	20.1	82.5	16.6	80.0	23.1
Overall	86.4	9.6	82.5	10.9	76.0	14.2	85.3	11.4	78.3	15.3

Note. SD = standard deviation. Board members' mean perception of 85% and above (shaded) indicates that the board members perceived their practice as most effective. The board members of *Alpha* and *Kappa* did not participate in the study.

The perception of board members about what they do (categorised as 'self-concept', 'mobilisation and monitoring' and their support to 'teaching and learning') was very

positive. Most of them felt that they had effectively performed their roles as board members, but the aspect of ‘relationship and interactions’ was rated lowest, especially in *Tau*. In *Omega*, in contrast, the board members were extremely positive about their support for teaching and learning. However, there was no significant difference in the perception of the board members of the six schools about all aspects: self-concept ($F = 0.13, p > .05$), mobilisation and monitoring ($F = 1.05, p > .05$), relationships and interactions ($F = 1.36, p > .05$), teaching and learning ($F = 1.15, p > .05$), and decision making ($F = 0.50, p > .05$).

Regression Analysis

Multiple regressions were used to test for possible school board effects (independent variables) on school climate, parental involvement and student’s performance (dependent variables). The following sub-sections report the regression analysis.

School Board Effects on KCPE Scores

Effective school boards are associated with improved students’ scores, not directly but through their practices (French et al., 2008). However, it is not clear which practices closely predict students’ performance. In this sub-section, I seek to determine if the identified board practices in public primary schools in Kibera slum predicted the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination scores for the period of twelve years. Geometric mean was used to compute a representative value for the KCPE scores for the twelve-year period. Costa (2014) explains, “A geometric mean, unlike an arithmetic mean, tends to dampen the effect of very high or low values, which might bias the mean if a straight average (arithmetic mean) was calculated” (p. 1).

The multiple regressions using stepwise method produced R-square of 0.97, which indicates that 97 per cent of the variation in KCPE scores for the last twelve years can be explained by school boards’ support to teaching and learning, self-concept, mobilisation and monitoring. Table 6.8 shows results of multiple regressions using stepwise method used to predict a model.

Table 6.8

Summary^d of the model used to determine the effect of school board on KCPE scores

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.820 ^a	.672	.617	18.408		
2	.936 ^b	.876	.826	12.418		
3	.998 ^c	.996	.993	2.447		

<i>Pearson's Coefficients^a</i>			Unstandardised Coefficients	Standardised Coefficients			
Model			B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)			410.41	49.58		8.278	.001
Mean perception of board members' support to teaching and learning			4.802	.463	.619	10.37	.000
Mean perception of board members' Self-concept			-11.995	.707	-.667	-16.96	.000
Mean perception of board members' mobilisation and monitoring			5.693	.510	.685	11.17	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean perception of board members' support for teaching and learning

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean perception of board members' support for teaching and learning, Mean perception of board members Self-concept

c. Predictors: (Constant), Mean perception of board members' support for teaching and learning, Mean perception of board members Self-concept, Mean perception of board members' mobilisation and monitoring

d. Dependent Variable: KCPE geometric mean

The predicted model for the school board effect on KCPE scores shown in Table 6.8 can be summarised as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Predicted (KCPE scores)} &= 410.4 \\
 &+ 4.80 * (\text{Teaching \& Learning}) \\
 &+ (-12.0) * (\text{Self-concept}) \\
 &+ 6.0 * (\text{Mobilisation and Monitoring})
 \end{aligned}$$

According to this model, KCPE scores were positively related to the board members' support for teaching and learning ($p < .05$), mobilisation and monitoring ($p < .05$) but negatively related to their self-concept ($p < .05$). In other words, the KCPE scores will improve significantly if the board members support teaching and learning, mobilise resources for the school and monitor school activities. Paradoxically, when the board

members think highly about their practice, scores are most likely to decline. This paradox is discussed further in Chapter 10.

School Board Effects on Parental Involvement

Table 6.9 shows results of multiple regressions using stepwise method used to determine if the five practices of the school board predict a parental involvement.

Table 6.9

Summary^b of the model used to determine the effect of school board on parental involvement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.767 ^a	.588	-.441	2.06629	.588	.572	5	2	.734
<i>Pearson's Coefficients^b</i>					Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients			
Model					Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
1 (Constant)					133.345	103.098	1.293	.325	
Mean perception of board members' Self-concept					-.573	.829	-.551	-.692	.561
Mean perception on board members' mobilisation and monitoring					.738	.596	1.535	1.238	.341
Mean perceptions of board members' relationships					.213	.319	.748	.666	.574
Mean perception of board members' support for teaching and learning					-.601	.608	-1.340	-.989	.427
Mean perception on board members' decision making					-.608	.653	-1.365	-.931	.450

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean perception of board members' decision making, Mean perception of board members' mobilisation and monitoring, Mean perception of board members' Self-concept, Mean perceptions of board members' relationships, Mean perception of board members' support for teaching and learning

b. Dependent Variable: Parent Involvement

Regression analysis produced R-square of 0.59, shown in Table 6.9, which indicates that fifty-nine per cent of the variation in parental involvement can be explained by the five practices of the school boards. There was a very weak and insignificant relationship between the school board practices and parental involvement. Paradoxically self-concept and decision-making appear to discourage parental involvement, but they get encouraged to participate when board members actively mobilise resources for school, monitor school activities, relate well with teachers, and

support teaching and learning. This led to the predicted model for the school board effect on parental involvement can be summarised as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Predicted (Parental Involvement)} &= 133.3 \\ &+ (-0.57) * (\text{Self-concept}) \\ &+ 0.74 * (\text{Mobilisation and Monitoring}) \\ &+ 0.21 * (\text{Relationship}) \\ &+ (-0.60) * (\text{Teaching and Learning}) \\ &+ (-0.61) * (\text{Decision making}) \end{aligned}$$

Most studies on parental involvement focused mainly on how schools are trying to involve parents (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012) and rarely on how the school boards are getting parents involved. In Kenya, literature on how school boards stimulate parental involvement is missing: especially effective practices that could be used to make poor parents get involved. Some studies show that schools struggle with ways of effectively involving low-income parents, while parental involvement models in extremely poor settings are rare (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

School Board Effects on School Climate

According to Hoy et al. (1998), positive school climate impact positively on students' achievement and that the effect persists for a long time. Preliminary findings showed that the quality of education of public primary schools in urban low socio-economic settings can be improved through the people, policies, program, and processes (Okaya, et al, 2013). It takes a focused and committed school board to create a holistic positive school climate in public schools in slum areas, relying on combining resources from government and parents.

Table 6.10 shows results of multiple regressions using stepwise method used to determine if the five practices of the school board predict a school climate.

Table 6.10

Summary^b of the model used to determine the effect of school board on school climate

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.996 ^a	.992	.973	.442	.992	52.074	5	2	.019
<i>Pearson's Coefficients^a</i>				Unstandardised Coefficients	Standardised Coefficients				
Model				B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.	
1 (Constant)				36.59	22.05		1.659	.239	
Mean perception of board members Self-concept				-.800	.177	-.489	-4.516	.046	
Mean perception of board members' mobilisation and monitoring				-.429	.128	-.567	-3.360	.078	
Mean perceptions of board members' relationships				.114	.068	.254	1.666	.238	
Mean perception of board members' support to teaching and learning				1.272	.130	1.804	9.779	.010	
Mean perception of board members' decision making				.351	.140	.502	2.516	.128	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean perception of board members' decision making, Mean perception of board members' mobilisation and monitoring, Mean perception of board members Self-concept, Mean perceptions of board members' relationships, Mean perception of board members' support to teaching and learning

b. Dependent Variable: School climate

Results in Table 6.10 show R-square to be 0.99, which indicates that ninety-nine per cent of the variation in school climate can be explained by the five practices of the school boards. Therefore, the predicted model for the school board's effect on school climate can be summarised as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Predicted (School climate)} &= 36.6 \\
 &+ (-0.80) * (\text{Self-concept}) \\
 &+ (-0.43) * (\text{Mobilisation and Monitoring}) \\
 &+ 0.11 * (\text{Relationship}) \\
 &+ 1.27 * (\text{Teaching and Learning}) \\
 &+ 0.35 * (\text{Decision Making})
 \end{aligned}$$

Results of the multiple regression showed that the school board practices predict how parents are involved in a school and school climate. KCPE scores are predictable by

the board's support for teaching and learning, their self-concept, mobilisation and monitoring, but not by their relationship with the teachers nor how they make decisions. Self-concept was found to negatively influence KCPE scores, school climate and parental involvement. In other words, when board members think they are committed, then pupils' performance drops, school becomes less inviting and parents are less involved.

The board's support for teaching and learning was found to positively influence pupils' performance (KCPE scores) and school climate, but discouraged parental involvement. However, the way in which the board members related to the people in the school (such as teachers) was found to influence parental involvement and school climate positively. Paradoxically, however, the board's interaction with people in school did not have any impact on pupils' performance. In other words, pupils will perform well, whether or not the board members related well to them or their teachers or their parents. Mobilisation and monitoring practices of the board members were found to have a positive influence on pupils' performance and parental involvement but a negative influence on school climate. Ironically, the decision-making process by the board was found not to predict pupils' performance and influenced parental involvement negatively, but had a positive influence on school climate.

The school board's self-concept, mobilisation and monitoring were found to be negatively related to the school climate. In other words, when the board members support teaching and learning, make positive decisions, and interact well with other stakeholders (parents and teachers), there is a high likelihood of the school climate being positive. It is, however, interesting that their efforts to mobilise resources, monitor school activities while having a positive self-concept, appears to cause the school climate to be *less* positive. The following paradoxes emerged which require further exploration and these are discussed in Chapter 10.

1. Why are the school boards' decisions and relationship to the people in the school not influencing academic achievement?
2. Why are the school boards' self-concepts or their beliefs about their practice negatively influencing academic achievement, parental involvement and school climate?

3. Why are the school boards' mobilisation and monitoring negatively influencing school climate instead of improving it?
4. What is it in the school boards' decision-making that causes parents to be less interested in school affairs?

Correlational Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, r , was used to measure the associations between school board practice, parental involvement, school climate and pupils' scores shown in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11

Pearson's Correlations between KCPE scores and participants' perception

		KCPE scores	Participants' perception of:		
			parental involvement	school Climate	school board practice
KCPE scores	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	8			
Participants' perception of parental involvement	Pearson Correlation	.423	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.297			
	N	8	8		
Participants' perception of school Climate	Pearson Correlation	.860**	.169	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.689		
	N	8	8	8	
Participants' perception of school board practice	Pearson Correlation	.480	.421	.532	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228	.299	.175	
	N	8	8	8	8

Note. KCPE = Kenya Certificate of Primary Education; N = the number of schools which participated in the study. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The correlations were reported as very strong ($r \geq 0.70$), strong ($0.40 \leq r \leq 0.69$), moderate ($0.30 \leq r \leq 0.39$), weak ($0.20 \leq r \leq 0.29$) or negligible ($r < 0.20$); if it was positive or negative, and if it was significant or not.

The Pearson's (r) correlational analysis was used to describe the type of interrelation within the data. It was used to describe whether a quantitative association exists between variables, how strong that association is, and, finally, in what direction it flows (Faherty, 2008; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). The findings in this section were used to answer the fifth question:

Question 5: How are the perceptions of pupils, teachers, parents and board members related to the academic achievement, school climate and parental involvement?

Results shows (see Table 6.11) that strong positive correlations exist between KCPE scores and participants' perception of the three areas: school climate, parental involvement and school board practice. Therefore, pupils' scores are likely to improve in the schools where parents, teachers, board members and pupils view the school climate as positive, parents as more involved and school board members as active. Participant perception of school climate was strongly and positively correlated to pupils' score ($p < .05$). There was strong and positive but insignificant correlation between participants' perception of school board practices and their perception of school climate and parental involvement. In other words, in the school where the participants felt their board was active, their perception of school climate and parental involvement was also positive.

The overarching aim of this study was to determine if public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings impacted on the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. The board is considered to be one aspect, among other factors, that contributed to the development of a school's climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance. These results (see Table 6.11) suggest that, the practice of the board was strongly associated with school climate, parental involvement and pupils' scores. While correlations do not necessarily imply cause and effect since the school boards' actions are intended to impact on these effects it is reasonable to assume from the correlations that the operations of the public primary school boards in Kibera slum have an impact on school climate, parental involvement and pupils'

scores. These associations were explored further by interviewing teachers, parents and board members and discussed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to determine the participants' perception of school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement, and the effectiveness of their boards regarding these aspects. Although the physical environment was considered disinviting in most schools, focus on the people (especially teachers), processes, policies and programs of the schools, increased the chances for improved student achievement. Parents rarely participated in school affairs unless stimulated by either the teachers or board members. Support for teaching and learning, mobilisation of resources for the school and monitoring of school programs were found to be key predictors of academic achievement, parental involvement and school climate.

National elections appeared to have a negative impact on academic achievement in national examinations. The relationship between the school board members and other people in the school was found to positively influence school climate and parental involvement. Strong positive correlations exist between school board practices and the other dependent variables—academic achievement, parental involvement and school climate. However, there were significant variations between some schools such as *Omega* and *Tau*, further discussed in chapter 9, on participants' perception of the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement.

Quantitative results of this study have revealed that despite the extremely difficult conditions, such as being in an extremely poor setting, it is possible for a school board to positively influence academic achievement, make a school inviting, and enhance parental involvement. Chapter 7 will present qualitative findings on school climate and parental involvement.

Chapter 7

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The focus of this chapter is on exploring the deeper reasons that underpin the responses given in the surveys: by discussing results from the open-ended items on the surveys, responses from the group interviews and field notes. These are synthesised with the quantitative results from surveys reported in Chapter 6, to answer the first question:

Question 1: What are the perceptions of Grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members regarding their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

This chapter begins by introducing the participants and then presents perceptions on school climate using participants' responses on the five aspects of the climate, and parental involvement. Academic achievement was covered in Chapter 6. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and their implications.

Participants

The qualitative results reported in this chapter were generated from pupils' written comments and the researcher's field notes. These comments were collected during the first phase of the study through a survey of 822 Grade 8 pupils (349 boys and 473 girls) and 803 parents (454 females and 349 males) from the eight public primary schools selected for this study. Although all Grade 8 pupils accepted my invitation to participate in the survey and had an opportunity to respond to the open-ended items, only 267 of them wrote comments. The pupils' perceptions of their school climate were considered a reliable source of information, given their age and the number of years that they had attended school.

School Climate

This section presents qualitative results from written comments, group interviews and my field notes on the five aspects, or 5Ps, of the school climate—*people*, *place*, *processes*, *programs* and *policies*. The aim of this section is to explain the pattern of rating of the 5Ps by participants reported in Chapter 6 and to explore possible reasons for the same.

People

This section examines relationships within the schools, including the impact of the school boards. Although the aspect of *people* was rated as *somehow inviting*, Table 6.2 showed a relatively higher rating of *people* by teachers and parents than by the pupils. Comments written by the pupils on the surveys showed that they valued their relationship with their teachers. Most of their comments were about how their teachers teach, attend to lessons and treat them. According to most pupils, teachers in primary schools in Kibera slum are caring.

Our teachers love us and tell us stories about their past lives (pupil 19, *Kappa*)

Our school teachers are polite and when you have any other question you are free to ask any of the teachers (pupil 23, *Mu*)

Our teachers do their work well and willingly (pupil 70, *Omega*)

The head teacher is polite and addresses every person in a right manner (pupil 75, *Omega*)

Our class teacher is caring, loving and understanding. Even the other teachers are kind but not all are good (pupil 143, *Omega*)

The teachers attend to pupils who need them but not all the teachers (pupil 242, *Rho*)

Although most pupils indicated that they liked their teachers, they disliked those who treated them harshly, unfairly, used excessive corporal punishment or talked to their parents inappropriately. However, pupils in all schools agreed that most teachers were hardworking, committed, friendly and caring. As indicated by the quantitative results reported in Chapter 6 (Table 6.2) about a quarter of pupils were unhappy with their teachers. From pupil responses this could be attributable to: use of abusive language by teachers, teachers attending class late (covered in the later section on school processes), not understanding their pupils and use of corporal punishment. In some schools, use of abusive language by at least some of the teachers was a common complaint.

Teachers should respect pupils so that pupils can respect them and they should stop using abusive language to the pupil. (pupil 212, *Tau*)

I may appreciate our teacher for their good work and hard work ... [but] there is some teachers who like abusing pupils and shouting... which makes me uncomfortable ... Although I like my teachers and appreciate them in whatever they do ... but I will appreciate them more if they stopped shouting and listened to pupils. (pupil 214, *Tau*)

In our school, the head teacher and the senior teacher are very good and understanding but some teachers do not understand us. (pupil 266, *Rho*)

Some pupils have observed that some teachers tended to discriminate against weak learners. They stated that some teachers gave more attention to the bright pupils and ignored the weaker ones. Pupil 6 from *Kappa* wrote, “they don’t treat pupils fairly they favour the bright ones”, an observation that was repeated by pupil 211 from *Tau* who wrote, “Most of our teachers love the clever pupils and mostly checked their books”. Some pupils reported that teachers discriminated against slower learners, treating them more harshly. A pupil wrote:

some of the teachers in this school are unfair ... for example if two pupils, one bright and the other not, but both are implicated as noisemakers ... they will not punish the whole class but if it was a slow learner child who is implicated ... the whole class will be punished. (pupil 154, *Omega*)

Most teachers described the pupils as respectful and eager to learn, despite coming from extremely poor backgrounds. Teacher 35i at *Upsilon* indicated pupils are her motivation: “what motivates me are the children when they look at you they admire you and listen to you that make me want wake up early to come to school”. The major frustration for teachers was the lack of interest and follow-up by parents.

this children most of the parents are rarely with them because most of them leave the homes very early and come back very late most of them you understand with time that they lack parental love and if you can give them that as a teacher they will have confidence in you and reciprocate that love they are very loving and caring that’s why most of the teachers say that they are loving working with them is also very nice because they are obedient most of them you can’t miss one or two who are not rude but most of them are very obedient and respectful despite coming from the slum so you learn that and enjoy while teaching them. (*Sigma* teacher 26i, personal communication, 14/10/2013)

Corporal punishment was used in most schools as a corrective measure for misconduct, but pupils were keenly aware of differences in the way it was used. Pupil 58 from *Mu* wrote “the problem in this school is that we are beaten like animals”, while pupil 66 from *Omega* also wrote, “the teachers beat children mercilessly”. It was identified as one source of tension between teachers, and between some teachers with their pupils and is discussed further in Chapter 10.

Place

Physical environment of the schools was a major concern to most participants and, as Table 6.2 showed, it was the lowest-rated aspect of school climate by pupils, teachers and parents. From the pupils' written comments the availability of water and electricity, tree cover, cleanliness of the toilets, suitability of the playing field and the security of their school were the aspects of the school physical environment that concerned them most. Some schools were without running water and electricity, despite the fact that they had the necessary installations and received government funding for maintenance and utility bills.

For example, *Kappa*, *Mu* and *Tau* had to buy water from commercial vendors for purposes of cooking and cleaning toilets, and did not buy water for pupils. This was confirmed by pupil 3 from *Kappa* who wrote, "There is no drinking water for pupils but there are some for cooking". Pupil 15 from *Kappa* complained that, "Our teachers insist that we should pay money for water and electricity but there is no water or electricity in some classes especially class eights there is no electricity". Teachers of *Kappa* were also unhappy with the lack of water and state of the pupils' toilets in the school: "... pupils' toilets are in a mess" (*Kappa* teacher 1i, personal communication, 31/10/2013) and teacher 4i lamented that, "... we don't have tap water imagine in a school [*Kappa*] like this".

In contrast, at *Omega* the school managed to consistently provide water to pupils despite the large pupil population: as stated by pupil 75, "in our school there was no single day that we have missed [water]". Where electricity was unavailable, pupils struggled to learn in poorly lit classrooms, especially during early morning and late evening hours. The pupils regarded the provision of electricity as crucial, because most of them lived in houses which are congested, noisy, without tables and chairs, without ventilation, and very poorly lit. These children have to either go to school early or leave late, to create time for individual study and do their homework. Pupil 12 from *Kappa* succinctly wrote, "We need electricity so that we can come early or leave late to study and do homework". While in *Sigma*, pupil 180 wrote: "our classes do not have electricity ... I request it be [provided]"; Pupil 217 from *Upsilon* wrote: "I would like our school to be helped to provide electricity".

In many schools, electricity is available in the administration block where the teachers work, but not in the classrooms. In some cases, it may have been connected to the classrooms, but is unavailable as the school has failed to pay the bill or not maintained the fixtures. The government provides money for these purposes through Free Primary Education funds; however, there continues to be problems in many schools.

Table 7.1 shows a summary of the state of their schools in these areas of concern. Each of these aspects is discussed in more detail in the remainder of this section.

Table 7.1

Pupils' Perception of their School Climate

School	Is drinking water available for pupils?	Is electricity in the classroom available?	To what extent is the school compound covered by trees?	What do most pupils think about the state of their toilets?	What do most pupils think about the quality of their lunch?	Does the school have a perimeter security wall?	What do most pupils say about the maintenance of their playing field?
<i>Alpha</i>	yes	no	fair	fair	fair	yes	good
<i>Kappa</i>	no	no	few	fair	fair	no	poor
<i>Mu</i>	no	no	fair	poor	good	no	good
<i>Omega</i>	yes	yes	few	good	good	yes	poor
<i>Rho</i>	yes	no	very few	very poor	fair	no	poor
<i>Sigma</i>	yes	no	few	fair	fair	yes	fair
<i>Tau</i>	no	no	a lot	poor	good	yes	good
<i>Upsilon</i>	yes	no	fair	fair	poor	no	fair

Another aspect of *place* which was of great concern to most of the pupils was the cleanliness of the toilets. These schools had modern 'flushing toilets' which need water to operate. Insufficient water for these toilets means offensive odours are produced that adversely affect the learning environment. The planners anticipated that with a growing pupil population, the school boards would construct additional toilets for all people and that the necessary water would be supplied throughout. A major reason for

the low rating of the aspect on place, shown in Table 6.2, was most probably due to the state of the toilets in these schools.

We need water in our school for toilets to be cleaned (pupil 12, *Kappa*)

The toilets produced a bad smell that you can't concentrate on what teacher is said ... (pupil 28, *Mu*).

Our toilets are always dirty I wish you could talk to our teachers and head teacher about it ... because we are at risk of contracting diseases such as a cholera, typhoid ... (pupil 61, *Omega*)

Public schools located within or at the edges of the slums are prone to vandalism and other security threats. The government advised school boards to put up perimeter walls around the school compounds rather than barbed-wire fences, to improve security and deter land grabbers. Public school boards can obtain funding for a perimeter wall by sending a proposal to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). This fund enables members of parliament to generate small development projects in their constituencies (Republic of Kenya, 2013b). Educational needs are a top priority; any public primary school board which sends a proposal for a perimeter wall is almost sure of success. *Omega*, *Sigma*, *Tau* and *Alpha* had successfully erected perimeter walls while *Kappa*, *Rho*, *Mu* and *Upsilon* had not.

School boards are responsible for making the physical environment *inviting*:

It is through the board efforts such as writing proposals that thing like putting up a perimeter wall was done ... the non-teaching workers (cooks, watchmen etc.) are being paid through the board's effort. You know the city council withdrew the support to schools and the boards are the ones to talk to parents and they know how to talk to the parents so that the school can have a better environment. Previously, the city the council was responsible for everything such as supporting and maintaining such things ablution block, garbage collector but now it's up to the board to talk to the parents so that they can pay (*Sigma* teacher 23i, personal communication, 14/10/2013).

It is unclear if the Grade 8 pupils understand how the funding system works, but they might interpret the fact that some schools have perimeter walls, while others do not, as evidence of how much the school board values their security.

Most pupils were aware of the environmental benefit of planting trees in their school compound. Pupil 35 from *Mu* wrote, 'Our school is full of green trees, hence we get fresh air which has been good in our health'. Pupil 179 from *Sigma* stated that in their school, 'Trees bring fresh air and rain', and certainly, they increase shade and

reduce dust. Efforts to increase the number of trees were often frustrated by lack of water in some schools and also by the lack of secure perimeter walls.

Processes

The assignment of grades, response to telephone calls, punctuality, how people feel about their reception by the school, involvement in decision making, attendance and promptness of beginning classes are all school processes that were considered in the current study. Although the *processes* were rated as *somewhat inviting* by all participants, Table 6.2 shows that the pupils were less concerned by school processes than other aspects of the school climate, and less concerned than parents and teachers. The aspects of school processes that did concern the pupils were teacher attendance, and promptness in starting lessons.

There are other teachers who don't teach their lessons. When they get inside the class instead of them to teach, they are just busy with phones. When it comes few days to exams they come with many test papers and command us to do then they don't mark. There is no even a red mark in the books (pupil 181, *Sigma*)

Some teachers come to class and dial their phones until the bell rings some come to class and just read us what the text books says without even explaining but after all we have remedial lessons of which we are being explained for well and pay some little amount (pupil 182, *Sigma*)

Teachers are not punctual they arrive in school any time after 8 am and yet they want money for the remedial teaching whereas they have not yet taught us (pupil 208, *Tau*)

Our school is good but some teachers never start lessons on time, they delay and that is why we cannot perform well in school (pupil 245, *Rho*)

Although pupils' involvement in school leadership is not a new phenomenon, it is uncommon in public primary schools in Kibera slum. In fact, with the exception of *Omega*, it was rarely mentioned. Pupil 62 from *Omega* wrote "their teachers also ensure that the school rules are obeyed with the help of prefects". Yet research suggests active and organised pupil leadership, according to McGregor (2007), "can serve as a catalyst for change in schools, in relation to the improvement of teaching, staff-student relationships and teacher education" (p. 86). This in turn leads to shifts in assessment, curriculum, and the organisation and evaluation of the school (Macbeath, Demetriou, Rudduck, & Myers, 2003; McGregor, 2007; Rudduck & Flutter, 2004). It also gives the schools opportunity to nurture future leaders.

Policies

Parents' and pupils' rating of the importance of school *policies* was similar and lower than that of teachers. In this study, questions about school policy were designed to capture attitudes to the daily operation of the school:

1. the willingness of teachers to help pupils with special problems;
2. pupils having an opportunity to talk to one another during class activities;
3. freedom of expression;
4. the nature of messages and notes sent home;
5. pupils' performance; and
6. the grading practices of the school.

At *Kappa*, pupils 6 and 9 opined that there were some teachers who “did not treat pupils fairly they favoured clever ones” (pupil 6) or “looked down upon pupils” (pupil 9). Nonetheless, in most schools, pupils believed that teachers were willing to help them.

Our school teachers are polite and when you are any other question you are freely to ask any of the teachers (pupil 23, *Mu*)

The teachers are ready to answer any questions that the pupils may have (pupil 60, *Omega*)

Our teachers are hardworking and like guiding us on good path (pupil 214, *Tau*)

Due to the large class sizes, teachers in some schools use group work or collaborative learning as a class management strategy. They organise pupils in groups to discuss, to carry out lesson activities and to mark their work. Most pupils enjoyed the opportunity to work together, as long as their teachers are available when they need help. Pupil 128 from *Omega* wrote “We love learning together, discussing and working in groups” and pupil 200 from *Tau* wrote “Our teachers encourage us to work and study in groups ...”

All the schools had a policy to encourage pupils to speak to teachers and other pupils in English. This policy is aimed at helping them to practice speaking in English, the third language for most children living in the slums. Most parents speak to their children in a local dialect before they learn to speak Swahili, which is the national language used normally outside the home. In some schools, children are allowed to

speak Swahili on certain days and during their ‘Ki-swahili’ lesson. Most pupils were happy to practice and used English correctly and confidently.

Programs

Table 6.2, reported in Chapter 6, showed that the aspect of school climate described as *programs* was rated equally by all participants as *somewhat inviting*. Pupils mentioned several types of programs running in the school, such the school feeding program, sports and games, educational tours and excursions, debates, prize-giving or educational days, and the provision of reading and writing materials. However, it was the school feeding program that generated most comments: depending on the school, it elicited mixed reactions. In some schools, the pupils reported that their food was well prepared and adequate, while in others there were complaints of poor preparation:

In our school we take good lunch (pupil 75, *Omega*)

The food that we eat is very well cooked and the kitchen is well organised and clean always (pupil 98, *Omega*)

The school’s food is good ... (pupil 105, *Omega*)

The food at school has no salt and it has some small stones in it (pupil 66, *Omega*)

Although the food is great it has small stones and weevils in it (pupil 83, *Omega*)

The school food is bad (pupil 219, *Upsilon*)

At lunch time everyone gets enough food (pupil 171, *Sigma*)

One aspect, though, that reverberated in all schools was the need to vary the diet. Pupil 194 from *Sigma* wrote, “some pupils go home at lunch time to eat something different ... in our school we eat one kind of food every time”. A similar concern was raised by pupils 200 and 211 (both from *Tau*) who wrote “The food given is good though not changed (balanced diet)” (pupil 200) and “In the school we don’t eat balanced diet but always eat *githeri* [mixture of boiled bean and corn]” (pupil 211).

Another common program mentioned by pupils was remedial lessons. Like most parents, pupils wished that these were free, as government policy states. The pupils were well aware of the burden these extra (and illegal) costs placed on their families. Pupil 101 from *Omega* wrote, “I would wish the staff members to offer remedial lessons free of charge for a simple reason that most of us are of low social economic

standards”. This feeling was repeated by pupil 195 from *Sigma*, who wrote, “We should be going to tuition for free because our parents are not all the same, some have money and some have no money”. The practice of offering remedial lessons at a fee (popularly referred to as ‘tuition’) was a source of tension between teachers and parents and between schools and government. This is discussed further in Chapter 10.

One program that is worthy of comment through lack of progress is computer education. The ability to utilise computer technology has become the new literacy of the 21st century and is of critical importance for individuals and nations worldwide to compete successfully in the global community (Phelps, Graham, & Kerr, 2004). The Jubilee government, under President Uhuru Kenyatta, aims at providing every child in Grade One (at, on average, six years of age) with a solar-powered laptop to encourage digital literacy (Daily Post, 2013). In the meantime, schools have desktop computers for use in the classroom—at least in theory.

Although well-wishers and donors have supported schools in Kibera by donating computers, visits to most of these schools reveal closets full of technological equipment that has hardly been used. Some of these computers were found to have been stored in a well-secured room while teaching and learning continued to be devoid of technology. In some schools, the computer room had been converted to either a general classroom or was being used as storeroom. Despite the existence of technological equipment and facilities in schools, most teachers and pupils had never used them. Possible reasons for the failure of using the available computers in schools could be due to cost implications, and the lack of capacity by teachers.

However, *Omega* had made a determined effort to encourage teachers and pupils to use computers. Pupil 107 from the school wrote, “Our school offers everything that one may want. It has also built for us library, brought computer learning ...” Teachers’ resistance to the use of technology such as mobile devices and calculators by their pupils is an area that needs to be addressed in all public schools in Kenya. Pupil 24 from *Mu* when wrote, “... not only are that phone not allowed in *Mu* even calculators”.

Parental Involvement

One important role of school boards is to actively engage parents, community members and other stakeholders in the life of the school. Board members, especially parent representatives, are expected to encourage other parents to support the school by ensuring their children attend school, have the necessary equipment, and do homework, and by visiting the school to talk to teachers about their children when necessary. Kimu (2012) found that parental involvement in most Kenyan primary schools was limited to financial contributions and compulsory teacher-parent meetings. Not surprisingly, most board members in the eight schools claimed to have worked extremely hard to encourage parents to pay school fees and to attend meetings.

Most school board members also said that they encouraged parents to work closely with teachers, especially their child's class teacher, by either visiting the school or calling them by mobile phone. Although most families are extremely poor, almost all of them own a mobile phone or have access to one (Demombynes & Thegeya, 2012). Nevertheless, results of the surveys presented in Chapter 6 revealed that parental involvement in school affairs was low, and in most cases parental engagement was in response to invitations from teachers or board members for parents' meetings often to discuss pupil's progress or payment of fees.

About two-thirds of the parents who responded to the parents' survey indicated that they supported their children's learning and about half of them claimed to have supported school procedures or policies. Most teachers indicated that poor parental involvement and proper parenting was a major source of their frustration. Some teachers had to take up parenting roles for some pupils to make up for poor parenting or absentee parents.

Another frustration is the parents where the child doesn't come to school or a child doesn't do your work and when you call the parents they will not come you will just have the child in the class with no one a lone range (*Kappa* teacher 3i, personal communication, 31/10/2013)

My frustration comes from the parent and as a community in the school since the registration of free primary education most parents have negative attitude like they don't want to follow up and join together to see what their children are doing I think they are so deep into making money they leave very early in the morning and whatever happens during the day they are not doing something the matter is going on every day (*Omega* teacher 7i, personal communication, 17/10/2013)

When pupil move from the school they go to the streets it happens because the parents don't follow up from home because at times it takes long before a parent discover that the child doesn't come to school yet the child leaves home coming to school but he or she doesn't reach school (*Tau* teacher 31*i*, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

Sometimes a child has a problem you invite the parent to come and they don't come at all (*Upsilon* teacher 37*i*, personal communication, 14/10/2013)

The boards involve parents primarily by organising the annual general meetings (AGM) and several class meetings for parents and teachers. In between meetings, 'engagement' means reminding parents to attend meetings, the provision of financial support, and sometimes discussing pupils' academic progress. The AGMs are used by school boards to brief parents about school activities and policies, and to seek parents' endorsement of their decisions. In most cases, parents were invited to the meetings through written notes sent to them by the school and delivered by their children. In some schools, parents' failure to attend such meetings could cause their children to be sent back home.

School board usually calls meetings or general meetings to discuss the school and the child performances. Normally the child is sent him home if I don't attend. This has kept me on my toes in following up the issues of school (parent 11, *Alpha*)

The school board has been arranging regular meeting creating a platform for parents to discuss on how their children can improve in performance (parent 61, *Kappa*)

I appreciate the school board for involving me in school affairs such as paying school fees and other contributions (parent 121, *Mu*)

The school informs [during parents' meeting] us of any activity going to take place in the school for the contribution of the parents before they do anything. During prize giving day they inform parents to attend so as to encourage their children which motivates them (parent 157, *Omega*)

The school calls parents do discuss how and what should be done for students/pupils to perform better in national examination (parent 283, *Tau*)

They try to make sure that the parents attend all allocated meetings and sticker on those who do not attend (parent 307, *Upsilon*)

These parents' meetings were used to discuss schools' development plans, pupils' performance, elect new board members and endorse decisions about expenditure. However, from comments made by a number of parents and my observations, there was a tendency to over-emphasise remedial classes or 'tuition' at the meetings, at the expense of other important issues.

The school board and teachers discourages many parents when they always ‘preach about money’ whenever any PTA meeting is called ignoring the fact that most parents are extremely poor (parent 241, *Sigma*)

The school is money oriented they put too much on money as compared to teaching (parent 5, *Alpha*)

They should be considerate in the amount of money they demand for. I am a parent trying to make ends meet by providing food for my family but sometimes the school acts as a stumbling block (parent 48, *Alpha*)

In most of the parents’ meetings that I attended, discussion was mostly focused on increasing school levies. The school board chairperson, treasurer and head teacher were the ones who talked—usually briefing parents on how much money was yet to be collected. Rarely was fiscal accountability discussed during these meetings, despite some parents trying to seek such explanation.

Discussion

Although pupils interacted minimally with school boards, some of them attributed the success of programs, such as free primary education, school feeding programs and others, to the commitment of their school boards. In some schools, the activity of the school board was very visible in its monitoring of school activities and visiting classes (among others). Pupils see their school board as responsible for the running of their school, having high expectations of its performance. For example, pupil 209 from *Tau* observed that “the school board always comes once per week to see how we are going on with our work”. Pupil 225 from *Upsilon* urged “the school board to continue with their good work in making sure that everything in the school is fine and in order”. Pupil 91 from *Omega* pleaded that the board “put tiles on the doors to reduce dust in the classes so that we can learn comfortably”.

In Chapter 6, results of regression analysis (Table 6.9) showed that board’s mobilisation and monitoring had a positive impact on parental involvement. One item of the board’s mobilisation was that of ‘encouraging parents to participate actively in school affairs’. For example, a school board that regularly calls parents’ meetings has a high chance of making them more involved and committed to the support of the school. The *Omega* school board is one such board: “whenever there is anything to discuss in school they always call parents and we discuss as opposed to making their own decisions” (parent 158, *Omega*). This explains the relatively high parental

involvement in *Omega*: at least a third (as shown in Table 6.4) claimed that they frequently contacted the school (either calling or visiting) to support school programs and learning. As written by parent 207 from *Omega*, “the *Omega* school board is keen on involving parents in school affairs”.

Conclusion

Most participants found the climate in their school acceptable, but it needs to be made inviting. ‘Disinviting’ aspects of the school climate that need to be addressed by school boards are:

1. unfair treatment by teachers,
2. payment for remedial classes,
3. poor attendance by teachers,
4. poor state of toilets,
5. inadequacy of basic utilities, and
6. and overuse of corporal punishment.

Comments made by the Grade 8 pupils suggest that most schools are focused on cognitive domains of learning, but have ignored the development of children’s affective and psychomotor domains. The exception is *Omega*, where the school climate seemed more *inviting* despite the large population of pupils and the disadvantages of being located within the slum, because it had made a real attempt to adopt a holistic approach to learning.

A large number of *Omega* pupils were more positive overall about all aspects of the climate in their school. This is not to deny the difficulties of learning and teaching in a school in an extremely disadvantaged location such as Kibera slum, but it suggests that schools can be made inviting to their pupils at little financial cost. Teachers’ attitudes, and an insistence on fair policies and procedures, can create a welcoming climate in which the pupils feel safe and valued, allowing them to focus on their learning.

The next Chapter 8 discusses the school-based management in Kenya and how it has impacted on school climate, parental involvement and academic performance.

Chapter 8

SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN KENYA

Evidence directly linking school-based management (SBM) with improved education quality or learning outcomes is scarce (Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell & Harris, 2008). International research, however, suggests that SBM can help create the enabling conditions for improvements (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000; Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009; Caldwell, 2005; Heyward et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 1999). Heyward, et al., (2011) stated that school-based management can achieve strategic planning, improved financial management, and increased community participation. However, no study has focused on public primary school boards in slums to determine their practices, challenges, and effectiveness.

This chapter describes how school-based management is actually practised in Kibera, Kenya and how it has affected or influenced school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. Findings reported in this chapter are aimed to answer the third research question:

Question 3: How effective is the school board perceived to be by parents, teachers and board members in setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving academic achievement?

The chapter begins by introducing the participants, and then turns to the context of the study, the key functions of the school boards and the challenges they face. The functions discussed are in nine subsequent sections:

1. how the board conducts parents' meetings;
2. role of the head teacher;
3. support for teaching and learning;
4. budgets and fiscal management;
5. physical environment;
6. interaction;
7. decision making;

8. programs; and
9. policies.

The last section concludes the chapter by highlighting key findings.

Participants

Written comments from 327 of the 803 parents who completed the surveys and group interviews with 149 participants (70 parents, 36 teachers and 43 board members) from six public schools, and field notes were analysed and used to delineate the operation of the school boards. Although eight public primary schools were selected for the study, two were omitted from the interview stage of the study because of time constraints and saturation; from my observation after conducting interviews in six schools, no new issues were raised and I considered it reasonable not to continue with more interviews. In each school, all the members of the school board (at most, twelve people) were invited to participate in group interviews. In addition, ten parents (five women and five men) were invited to participate in an interview, while eight teachers were invited. Invitations to the teachers were not based on gender, as female teachers far outnumber male teachers, but on age, work experience, employment and performance of duty. Although many parents and teachers showed interest in participating, numbers had to be restricted to ensure a manageable group.

Composition

The school boards are supposed to be the overall managers of the schools. They are in charge of budgets and fiscal matters, discipline and improvement of the school facilities among other roles, with the exception of staffing, which is still centralised. The government provides leadership and management seminars and workshops for the board members: at least eighty per cent of the existing board members indicated that they had attended at least once. Most of the school boards consisted of parents (who were the majority, at least ninety per cent), the head teacher as the secretary and ex-officio, and a teachers' representative. Although the boards could co-opt other stakeholders, such as a sponsor, only in *Rho* was a sponsor representative co-opted. In some schools, the deputy head teachers were invited to attend board meetings.

Local administration and education officials rarely attended board meetings, despite being required by law to do so as ex-officio. The board chair and treasurer were parents, as stipulated by the law. The average board member was likely to be a middle-aged male parent with relatively higher education levels (secondary school level) and higher-than-average income (see Appendix 34). Despite the lack of incentives for board members, most of them were actively involved and had to forgo their businesses or jobs to attend to school affairs, such as attending meetings. At least three-quarters of the board members had been on the board for more than a year, despite the government's requirement of one-year terms. In most schools the elections were carried out albeit a lack of quorum.

Meetings

School boards were supposed to hold board meetings regularly to deliberate on issues concerning their school. The head teacher is the one to schedule a meeting and sets its agenda in close consultation with the board chair. Most school boards formed sub-committees such as for academic, development etc., which are supposed to focus on and monitor a particular aspect of school, say school funds or textbooks. The role of these sub-committees was to closely follow up on a particular aspect of the school on behalf of the board. They were to meet and come up with strategies on improving their respective aspects and to advise the board on any other issue pertaining to that aspect. However, in most schools the sub-committees were not functional and existed only on paper. *Omega* proved the exception to this.

The annual general meeting is the most important meeting for all public primary schools because it brings together the parents and teachers of all the children. The most common practice during such meetings was for the head teacher to read a report about the progress of the school, followed by the board chair's report and then concluded by election of new board members. There was very little constructive discussion, except that the teachers and board members were seeking parents' endorsement on issues that had been decided earlier.

In most schools, class meetings organised by the board member representing that class were common. The meetings brought together parents of children in a particular level to discuss issues affecting their learning. During such meetings the class

representative would brief parents on class and school progress, while the class teacher would report on issues affecting the performance of the class. Discussion of the remedial classes or tuition topped the agenda for most of these meetings, followed by discipline of children; in some schools parents were given tips on good parenting. The following is a report of proceeding from one of *Kappa*'s class meetings:

This is a report of a Grade 4 class meeting for *Kappa* primary school held on 4th June 2012 attended by about forty-five parents (45) out of the expected three hundred and nineteen (319) which was fourteen per cent attendance. There were forty female parents and five male parents in attendance. Despite the head teacher being around she did not attend the meeting instead delegated to one of the senior teacher. The chair of the board made a brief appearance and left, leaving the treasurer to chair the meeting on his behalf.

During the meeting the teachers briefed parents on issues that affected their children such as (a) lateness, (b) lack of school diary for failing to pay 100 shillings (AUD 1.30), (c) children using abusive language, (d) most pupils not doing or completing their homework due to watching television at home while some parents give their children pocket money and they later end up in video cafes, (e) personal hygiene—some children having bad breath which affects teachers, (f) some children are reportedly being sexually harassed, and (g) failure to 'cover' the textbooks and exercise books issued by the school from the free primary education funds.

Parents were informed that the school has organised an excursion to '*paradise lost*' about 40 kilometres away and were expected to pay 1000 shillings (13 Australian dollars [AUD]) inclusive of entry fees and transport costs. The treasurer informed the parents that the school had a lot of orphans who were exempted from payment of the feeding programs but are not exempted from all the other levies. Therefore, the orphans are required to pay total annual fees of 250 shillings [which included 100 shillings for projects; 100 shillings for prize giving; and 50 shillings for electricity and water which was not provided]. The total cost for the upcoming prize giving was estimated to be 120,000 shillings (AUD 1,500).

Some parents were standing outside, and seemed hesitant to attend the meeting despite being in the school compound [they] only moved in upon being reprimanded by the treasurer. During the meeting some parents were asleep while others were clearly teenagers. The treasurer lamented that the payment of the school levies by parents was very poor. He noted that, out of the forty-five parents in attendance only six had paid for the feeding program and the school diaries.

A teacher reported that some of their pupils aspire to be *choma roaster* [person who roasts meat (barbeque) for sell along the streets], or watchmen [security officers] while others said they wanted to be *thieves*. She pleaded with parents to support them in the provision of quality education for their children. Only one parent asked a question during the meeting, wanting to know the details of the excursion. (From field notes, 4/6/2012)

In *Kappa*, the class meeting was very poorly attended. The participation of the parents was mainly to be there physically and they did not show much interest. The chair and the head teacher of *Kappa* did not attend the meeting. In *Alpha*'s grade 8 class meeting, conversely, the attendance was good: the head teacher, all board members and all teachers attended the meeting. Below is the excerpt of *Alpha*'s grade 8 class meeting:

This is a report of a Grade 8 class meeting for *Alpha* primary school held on 6th June 2012 attended by 110 parents out of the expected 193, which is fifty-seven percent attendance. The meeting started promptly at 9.00 am and was held in an open field under some trees on a cold morning. The head teacher together with almost all her teachers attended the meeting. The teachers raised several issues which included punctuality; parental involvement in assisting children with their homework; discipline and use of good language; that parents should ensure that their children feed well and maintain personal hygiene; they requested the parents to buy their children geometrical sets necessary for geometry; encouraged parents to support teachers and also to come to school to discuss their child's performance.

Parents were informed that the Grade 8 pupils were assessed thrice each term at the beginning, mid-term and end of term. The assessment at the beginning of the term was administered by the school, mid-term assessment involved a cluster of schools [both public and private] and while end-of-term exam involved only public primary schools at district level. Teachers lamented that some parents fail to sign the school diary. To improve the performance of pupils in mathematics the school had employed two part-time [casual] teachers to assist. The deputy head teacher observed that some parents were not concerned with their children's behaviors. She gave an example of an incident where a parent whose child has been away from home [did] not bother to enquire where the child had been ... despite seeing the child in the streets.

Teachers also advised parents to acquire new school uniforms since some children seemed to have outgrown the ones they had. They noted that some boys had smaller uniforms which were not fitting, which affected their concentration in class. They highlighted cases of indiscipline in the school such as: girls being keen with beauty; use of abusive language by children, [one] claiming to have heard her mother use the language against a neighbor; a child borrowed a plate from a friend and upon using it decided to urinate on it before returning. The head teacher also said that some of their girls would spend [time] outside yet their parents were unconcerned.

The head teacher cautioned the parents against late-coming and emphasised the importance of coming on time for meeting, and encouraged them to work closely with the teachers. She observed that although their pupils excelled in co-curricular activities it was not the case with [academic activities]. Parents were not checking their children's work and noted that some parents would come to school and quarrel with teachers. She also observed that some parents have trained their children to tell lies to teachers. Although the school had a library

their reading and writing skills were said to be poor because they lacked the reading culture.

The head teacher informed [the meeting] that the school had prioritised textbooks for Grade 8 and that teachers spent time with the pupils including on Saturday up to 1.00 pm. She cautioned parents whose children are sponsored against forging documents sent to the sponsors. The head teacher also noted that some parents went to school to abuse the school board chairman. She noted that despite delayed disbursement of free primary education (FPE) funds the school had managed to pay off salaries for staff payable by the parents—teachers, librarian and cooks. This was attributed to the support that the school received from payments from parents in terms of school fees. But she reiterated that the late disbursement of FPE funds had affected the smooth running of the school. Adolescent girls in the school received sanitary towels provided by an international organisation and the government. She encouraged the parents to expose their children to good habits and values for the sake of their future lives and to love them.

Remedial lessons did not take place last holiday (April) due to parents' failure to compensate the teachers. The head teacher informed the parents on the upcoming Grade 8 excursion to Lake Bogoria and requested them to pay for their children. They were informed that the Grade 8 mock examination will be held on 31st July to 2nd August 2012 while the prize giving will be on 3rd August 2012. Parents were warned that the school come next year will not accept repeaters. The head teacher informed that parents that school charge a total levy of 400 shillings annually [200 shillings used to pay staff, 100 shillings to organise prize-giving, and 100 shillings for activity]. Most parents [124 out of 193] had paid the school levies leaving about sixty parents not paid up—which is about thirty-one per cent.

The school board chair admonished parents to pay the 400 shillings and cautioned them against quarrelling with teachers. He advised them to be close to their children and counsel them through their adolescence. The chairman encouraged parents to purchase the school diary for easy communication with teachers. A parent pleaded with fellow parents to forget the past and help teachers and he said that he was happy with the school because his child secured a place at Alliance High School [one of the best high schools in Kenya] coming from the school. He advised the school that in future the prize-giving should be held earlier and suggested during the first term. While a board member [who is seeking an elective post in forthcoming national elections], told his fellow parents of his determination to acquire knowledge which made him join Form one (equivalent of Grade 9 in Australia) at the age of forty. His sentiments were meant to encouraging parents in attendance to prioritise education of their children .(From field notes, 6/6/2012)

This two excerpts show how the school boards use class meetings and annual general meeting to advise parents, report school progress and to fund-raise.

Role of the Head teacher

Most literature shows that the head teacher plays a pivotal role as the chief executive in management of public primary schools in Kenya (Benta & Enose, 2010; Lydiah & Nasongo, 2009; Mwamuye et al., 2012). The head teacher is supposed to consult the school board and seek their approval to incur any expenditure. The head teacher advises the board on matters regarding curriculum implementation, which is her/his primary role while the board is expected to hold her/him accountable for the school's performance.

The head teacher is required to call a board meeting at least once a month or at any time as the need arises to brief the board constantly on issues concerning the schools. In practice, most head teachers in the study schools were indeed playing a central role in the management of the school with little interference from the board. Most of time the head teachers preferred working and consulting with the board chair and the treasurer rather than the entire board. In one less-effective school the board members felt excluded and unaware of how the school operated, and they complained of infrequent meetings. What was apparent in most of the schools was that the relationship between the board and the head teacher was determined by the latter.

Depending on the leadership style of the head teacher, in some schools the relationship between the head teacher and the board was tense. Most of the time the tension and conflicts were caused by lack of clear demarcation of their specific roles and functions. To avoid conflicts, most boards of public schools in Kibera had allowed the head teacher to run the schools and rubber-stamped their decisions. In some schools, the head teacher used teachers to influence parents on whom they should elect as board members.

Support for Teaching and Learning

An important function and mandate of the school board is to support teaching and learning in their school. They do that by mobilising resources for the school, providing the link between the school and local community, and by making strategic decisions. However, public primary schools in Kenya are faced with myriad challenges, with the top of the list being acute shortage of teachers and high pupil enrolment. Due to understaffing (staffing is the role of the government), teachers are overworked and

overwhelmed. This shortage was caused by the government's freeze on teacher recruitment and large enrolment as a result of the introduction of free primary education in 2003.

Consequently, the public primary school boards, except the *Tau* school board, opted to employ teachers on short-term contracts and accept teachers on volunteer terms. These contractual teachers employed by the boards were paid approximately one-quarter of what the government teachers earn. The contractual teachers are supervised informally (and are not directly accountable to government), with much left to the discretion of the school board or head teacher. The motivation of most contractual teachers was to gain teaching experience that would help them obtain formal civil service teaching positions.

There are two types of volunteer teachers—trained and untrained teachers. Trained volunteer teachers are mostly graduates of teacher training colleges who are practising their acquired skills and are queuing for absorption by the government in a later date. On the other hand, untrained volunteer teachers are mostly those who have graduated from secondary schools or tertiary institutions and are either paying something back to their society by teaching in their former schools or else preparing for the prospect of further studies or employment. Whatever the circumstances in the specific schools that accept volunteer teachers, they do so to alleviate the problems caused by the serious teacher-shortage in schools—especially schools in the slums.

However, according to Duflo, Dupas, and Kremer (2012), locally hired contract teachers perform better than government teachers since they are much more likely to be present in class teaching, and their students learn more. Parent 6 from *Tau* observed that some government teachers “were reluctant and do not care because they argue that whether the children perform or not they will still earn their pay at the end of the month ... if your child can't read and perform it is your [parent's] problem” . According to Duflo et al. (2012), the government teachers' response to introduction of contractual teachers was to reduce their own efforts, which compromised their performance.

The school board is supposed to ensure that pupils receive quality education and one way of doing that is by monitoring what teachers do (Republic of Kenya, 2013). It is evident that when a board fails to monitor school activities there is laxity among

both teaching and non-teaching staff. Duflo and Hanna (2005) found that in most developing countries, especially in rural and informal settings, teacher absence is common. A study reported by Keuren (2009) showed that in Kenya, a staggering thirty per cent of public primary teachers fail to attend school. This situation is common in most developing countries as stated by Abadzi (2009); “students in developing countries are often taught for a fraction of the intended number of school hours” (p. 267). According to her study this was due to frequent unplanned school closures, teacher absenteeism, delays, early departures, and poor use of classroom time.

Most boards did not follow up what teaching and non-teaching staff were doing but instead left the monitoring aspect to the head teacher. Some school boards visited schools to monitor how teaching and learning progressed, as stated by teacher 15i at *Rho*: “the board members do follow up for example if there is a subject not being attended to; they follow up to make sure it’s attended or if the performance has dropped they come to school and ask why what is happening”. In *Tau*, teacher 29i suggested that their board should “follow up the teaching as far as teachers are concerned, whether they are doing well: not really supervision but actually to see how the teaching is being done” (personal communication, 24/10/2013). However, the teacher suggested that their board members be educated on how best they should monitor teaching because “sometimes it turns out to be witch hunting”.

Other strategies used by the school boards to support teaching and learning is by organising education tours or excursions for pupils, educational fairs or prize-giving days, and seeking sponsors for deserving children. Prize-giving days are organised to acknowledge and motivate pupils’ and teachers’ performance. In *Upsilon*, teachers were concerned about the failure of their board to motivate pupils and teachers. At times, the school just closes without “even a prayer” (*Upsilon* teacher 33i, personal communication, 14/10/2013) or sometimes “a pupil does not know whether they were number one or two” (*Upsilon* teacher 34i, personal communication, 14/10/2013).

Budgets and Fiscal Management

The school board is responsible for overseeing the expenditure of funds from the government’s Free Primary Education budget and for ensuring adherence to the spending guidelines. They are also expected to raise additional funds through any means at their disposal and ensure prudent management of those funds. In the proposed

school board governance model (see Figure 1.1) mentioned in Chapter 1, accountability was identified as a key function of the boards in public primary schools. This is particularly important for schools in the slum because the parents do not have the resources to make up any shortfall or to pay for additional services privately. The boards have a great responsibility to account to the government and the community on how funds allocated to it by government and raised from the community are spent to provide quality education. Yet in most schools the parents were not privy to how school funds are utilised, despite their immense contribution through payment of school levies.

Parents of public primary schools in the slum pay several levies, which are passed during their annual general meetings, to supplement what is provided by the government. These levies are: (1) school feeding program levies to buy firewood, (2) tuition fees to ‘motivate’ teachers who spend an extra hour with the pupils before and after classes, during lunch breaks and weekend, (3) tests and examination fees for purchasing of tests or examination papers from commercial setters, (4) fees for educational tours, (5) activities fees, and (6) school charges admission fees for every new child enrolled. There are also times when parents may be called upon for various fund-raising to help towards hospital bills, or funeral costs affecting a member of the school.

I appreciate the school board for involving me in school affairs such as paying school fees and other contributions (parent 121, *Mu*)

The school board and teachers discourage many parents from actively participating in school affairs for always ‘preaching about money’ during parents-teachers’ meeting (parent 241, *Sigma*)

So far the only thing they are keen on is asking for money from students instead of concentrating on their performance (parent 306, *Upsilon*)

Every child was allocated 1,020 shillings (14 US dollars) per annum, through the free primary education fund, for purchasing of teaching and learning materials, meeting operation and maintenance costs, such as paying for water and electricity, and for other general purposes (Hakijamii, 2010; Republic of Kenya, 2004; Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). The introduction of free primary education, however, caused enrolment in schools to far outstrip the capacity of these schools, resulting in extreme overcrowding—classes with over ninety pupils are not uncommon (see Appendix 2).

Facilities such as toilets, water and electricity became over-stretched, and costs for repairs and maintenance of the physical infrastructure skyrocketed.

The funds from the government have been considered inadequate, which is a barrier to the provision of quality education (Opiyo, 2014). Most schools raised additional funds from parents to cater for co-curricular activities, short-term teachers, excursions, feeding programs and assessment. Despite a government ban on remedial classes, the practice has continued in all schools and parents have been paying a lot of money to ‘motivate’ teachers. The school boards have been involved mostly in seeking parents’ support in the amount of school levies set by teachers. They persuade the parents to accept and pass the levies and also are used to enforce the ‘agreement’ by, for instance, coming to school and sending away children who fail to pay. However, in most cases, the role of the board stops at the fund-raising level and rarely moves to the next level of knowing how such monies are spent.

Table 8.1 shows the common levies introduced by school boards.

Table 8.1

Levies introduced by school boards paid annually disaggregated per school

School	Amount in Kenya Shillings (KES) per child annually						
	Admission	Remedial lessons	Exams & tests	Lunch	Prize giving	Activities	PTA ^a fund
<i>Alpha</i>	—	3150	—	—	100	100	200
<i>Kappa</i>	1500	1800	600	450	100	—	200
<i>Mu</i>	—	1800	—	450	—	300	960
<i>Omega</i>	2000	4500	900	300	—	—	—
<i>Rho</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Sigma</i>	—	2700	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Tau</i>	—	2700	330	900	—	—	—
<i>Upsilon</i>	2200	3600	480	500	—	300	—

Note. PTA = parents-teachers association; — shows no information; KES = Kenya shillings (1 Australian dollars ≈ 78 Kenya shillings).

Except for the chair and treasurer, other board members might not be privy to how much a school collects from the parents or by hiring of school facilities. There were

several ways that the school boards were expected to account for the school funds, but mostly this was addressed by displaying a written summary of the income-expenditure on the school boards and providing a summary during annual general meeting for parents and teachers. When I visited these schools, the template for income-expenditure was available on notice boards, but the data was not up-to-date in most schools. However, at *Alpha*, parent 30 stated that their board “gives us parents [information about] the way it uses the funds in the smooth running of the school’, while at *Sigma*, parent 265 lamented that ‘their board managed funds poorly’.

A critical aspect of a public primary school board in urban low socioeconomic settings is its ability to raise funds from other sources instead of burdening already impoverished parents. It is an undeniable fact that public primary schools in Kenya are under-funded and in dire need of additional funds to meet their most basic needs, such as to pay salaries for non-teaching staff, contractual teachers, and electricity and water bills among others (Hakijamii, 2010; Ngware, Oketch, & Ezech, 2011; Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu, & Nthinguri, 2013). The most common strategy used by boards is to resort to increasing school levies, thereby pushing costs of public education higher, to levels that threaten provision of free primary education and would ultimately result in school drop-outs. Some parents were not happy with the way their school boards forced them to pay levies, which they claimed they could not afford.

The board and teachers sometimes fails to understand if the parent doesn’t have money this is mainly because they are chasing/sending the children home for money while the parents at real sense doesn’t have money and if they go back and say that they are being forced to stay out of classes while those who have paid are in yet that is not fair (parent 67, *Kappa*)

Some school boards have tried to seek for sponsorship from individuals and organisation to fund their schools or deserving pupils or both. For example, a parent stated that in their school, ‘the board has been active in looking for sponsorships for the pupils who perform well in exams’ (parent 165, *Omega*). Another parent suggested that their board ‘seek funds from the constituency development fund (CDF) instead of burdening extremely poor parents’ (parent 255, *Sigma*). In summary, some boards have been trying to lighten the financial burden for the parents, while others have been making it heavier. Both, however, argue that they are acting in pursuit of improving academic standards.

Physical Environment

Results presented in Chapter 6 showed that at least seventy-six per cent of the parents were happy with the physical environment of their children's school. From their written comments, most of them claimed that their school boards had contributed to the improvement of the school's physical environment.

The school board has really done a good job of ensuring the school buildings are in good condition. (parent 27, *Alpha*)

They [school board] have organized for the repair of two gates which were children dangerously used as swings and employed a qualified gate man. (parent 83, *Mu*)

The board has been doing so many things to help the school for example they have built good kitchen and bought classroom desks for pupils. (parent 85, *Mu*)

The board has contributed to building of school library to be used by pupils and teachers. (parent 151, *Omega*)

The school board has been involving parents in meetings to help raise funds which were used for various school projects such as acquiring water tanks, renovating classrooms, acquiring more desks and beautification of school compound. (parent 190, *Omega*)

The school board has really tried; we have seen some slight improvements like repairs in classrooms and lights. (parent 244, *Sigma*)

They [school board] has improved security by building a perimeter wall and keeping outsiders from drawing pupils' attention or interrupting classes. (parent 253, *Sigma*)

Although most of the boards appear to have contributed to the improvement and maintenance of physical infrastructures, it is evident that some of them ignore critical areas such as provision of water, electricity, and ensuring that pupils' toilets were clean. During my visits to *Upsilon*, I observed that the toilets, both for teachers and pupils, were neglected, dirty and in need of repairs. Parent 249 from *Sigma* wrote, "I don't like the school because they don't teach well ... toilets are not clean; there is no water in the school; there are no good teachers; and inadequate pupils' desks".

Like their pupils, teachers in most school were concerned about the state and adequacy of toilets because it affected lessons. For example:

Toilets are not enough considering the number of pupils we have here the enrolment we have over 2000 and the toilets are less than 20 against the 2000 [one toilet for 100 pupils]. (teacher 4i, *Kappa*)

Imagine during break time the girls will overcrowd and even that break time is not enough for them to help themselves so even the lessons are affected. (teacher 5i, *Kappa*)

The parents, as well as the pupils, identified lack of water as a serious problem: parent 280 from *Tau* wrote, ‘our environment is clean; teachers and pupils respect one another, but the board fails to provide water for the pupils’. These comments were echoed by parents from *Kappa* as well:

The school board should provide basic needs for pupils such as water. (parent 59)

The school has no water for pupils to drink (parent 63)

The school needs water, toilets and perimeter fence (parent 73);

For me this school is can be much better but what I have insisted is that they provide water (parent 75)

The school lacks water from January to January in other words no water at all (parent 80).

Once again, *Omega* was the exception. Parents appreciated the fact that the school board had ensured water and electricity was available and the toilets were kept clean, despite having a pupil population almost three times that of *Tau*. However, even they did not escape criticism; parent 222 lamented that the board had ignored the playing field, which was dusty and making his/her daughter sick.

Interactions

Interactions outside the classroom with peers and others have an impact on the interactions between pupils and teachers, and this in turn affects learning. In this regard, an effective board is one that seeks to improve social and peer interactions within and outside school. Peer interaction, such as pupils learning effectively in groups, improves their performance because they “encourage each other to ask questions, explain and justify their opinions, articulate their reasoning, and elaborate and reflect upon their knowledge”(Soller, 2001, p. 40). Unless parents and teachers share a common vision and work together, pupils’ performance is unlikely to improve. They should be able to talk free and openly about their expectations and “must perceive the meanings and functions of parent involvement at least similarly and compatibly, if not identically” (Lawson, 2003, p. 78). The board has a role in encouraging these interactions, such as establishing a common vision for the school’s

parents and teachers and encouraging teaching practices, for example group work, that enhance pupil learning.

One way to make people want to belong is to try to ensure that all interactions between members of the extended school community are positive and welcoming. This approach mirrors the Invitational Education Theory and Practice (IETP), the main theoretical perspective of this thesis, which argues that schools need to be places where everyone feels welcome and wants to be there. Most parents in the schools included in this study claimed that their school board had been effective in bringing people in their school together and promoting good relationships.

The board has helped establish a good relationship between parents and teachers which has resulted in pupils performing well in national examination (parent 73, *Kappa*)

They [school board] have tried very much I thank them and ask them to continue working hard to improve relationship between teachers and parents (parent 133, *Omega*).

By their [school board] efforts there is good relationship between children, teachers and parents but we need to help them to prosper (parent 245, *Sigma*)

The school board has contributed and helped me have good relationship with my child (parent 294, *Tau*)

Unfortunately, this was not always the case. At *Upsilon*, parent 324 claimed that the head teacher was very harsh towards parents. Paying for remedial lessons or ‘tuition’ was identified as a negative influence on the interactions between teachers and parents: ‘the relationship between most teachers and parents is strained due to payment of remedial lessons’ (parent 304, *Tau*). Although many parents at *Omega* commended the school board for promoting good relationships within the school, parent 142 offered a contrary view saying that “it [school board] has done little and it needs to put more effort in building a free atmosphere between parents and teachers”.

The relationship between parents and teachers can be conflicted for various reasons and this affects the pupils’ capacity to learn. For example at *Alpha*, the head teacher warned parents against confronting teachers and instructed them to refer any disagreements to her instead. Moreover, although some parents were unreasonable and indifferent to teachers, the use of excessive force by teachers when punishing pupils caused conflict. In such instances the school boards have been very useful and effective in mediating between teachers and parents.

Decision Making

There is a small amount of evidence that school board governance directly influences academic achievement, but it has a powerful indirect influence as well. Effective boards make carefully planned strategic decisions, which have a high chance of producing desirable results but are also acceptable to those who are affected by the decisions (Leithwood et al., 1999; Naidoo, 2005; Smoley, 1999). The main business of a public school board is to make decisions that would lead to provision of a high quality of education in their schools; however, it is to be hoped that the decision-making process will be consultative and reflect local aspirations. Although parents from Kibera slum are extremely poor, they desire—and are determined to provide—quality education for their children. In most schools, the parents indicated that their school board considered their views when making decisions.

The school board gives room for any parent to air their suggestions during parents' meetings ... this has contributed to my involvement in school affairs because all the good suggestions are taken into account (parent 49, *Alpha*)

Whenever there is anything to discuss in school they always call parents and we discuss as opposed to making their own decisions (parent 158, *Omega*).

They [school board] organize parents meetings to involve parents in decision making (parent 165, *Omega*)

The school board has very much involved me in school affairs by consulting me and other parents before doing anything in school e.g. about school trips, offering extra time to my child (parent 168, *Omega*)

They allow us to share ideas with them (parent 315, *Upsilon*)

Nevertheless, not all parents were happy. According to parent 212, the board at *Omega* was “exclusive, tribal, non-democratic and dictatorial”. They claimed that when parents complain about ‘tuition’, the school board ‘blocks their ears’. While parent 265 from Sigma said that, “the school board rarely consults parents in regard to academic affairs and does not cooperate with teachers”.

However, there still seems to be a common assumption among the parents that the school boards are exercising their delegated authority and responsibility in the interest of the local community to the best of their ability. There is also recognition that the boards in most schools had only limited power to compel the head teacher to implement their decisions. As one board member stated, “the board is something toothless ... It is not involved in making decisions ... we just sit in meeting to deliberate and the resolutions arrived at are not implemented” (*Tau*, board member 1i,

personal communication, 13/10/2013). This supports the argument by Leithwood and Menzies (1998) that even if the boards have a strong representation of parents; they are still under professional control. For example, at *Tau* the head teacher failed to implement several of the board's resolutions:

We resolved that the monies from parents on feeding program should be managed well such as opening a separate account and accounting for it—showing details of expenditures such purchase of firewood, etc. ... up to now the account has not been opened ... there are no accounting books yet the year is coming to an end. (*Tau*, board member 3i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

We passed last term (second term) and we had talked about it last year that this structure should be removed because it was not giving the school a good image. Unfortunately, up to now it has not been done ... so who is responsible? Is it the committee's failure or the head teacher's ... or maybe there is somebody. (*Tau*, board member 1i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Most of the time the head teacher makes a decision and then communicates that decision to the board chair with the expectation that they will persuade the other board members to accept it. In a situation where a board member is seen as controversial and uncooperative, parents are coerced by teachers to drop that member to ensure that most decisions made in the schools are teacher friendly and the boards are just there to 'rubber-stamp' them.

According to some board members, decisions arrived at during parents' meeting might not be valid due to absence of male parents. In most Kenyan cultures, decisions affecting families are made by the fathers, while mothers defer to their authority. Since most of the parents attending school meetings are women, whatever resolution is arrived at has to be endorsed by their husbands. This slows the decision-making process, but it also undermines the board's power and allows teachers to make decisions while using the board to 'authenticate' them.

Programs

Bloom's taxonomy of learning emphasised the identified three *domains* of educational activities—cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude or self) and psychomotor (manual of physical skills) (Anderson & Sosniak, 1994; Krathwohl, 2002). Public schools in Kenya are supposed to organise programs that enhance children's holistic growth, such as sports/games, clubs and societies. Normal lessons end at 3.25 p.m. and the schools are expected to utilise at least one hour to engage the children in these co-curricular

activities. However, in most schools there was less emphasis on these programs. Schools were more concerned with programs which enhance pupils' cognitive development, such as educational tours, and debating among others.

In most schools studied, most parents concurred that their boards were doing their best to improve pupils' performance in KCPE:

The board is trying its best to ensure the school gets better in terms of academic performance (parent 5, *Alpha*)

They [board] organise regular consultative meeting to assess pupils' academic progress (parent 59, *Kappa*)

The board has been active in organising educational trips and workshops for pupils (parent 114, *Mu*)

The school board has been so strong and cooperative towards child's academic performance by letting the parents join hand in hand with teachers. They are actively involved in solving minor or major problems affecting the school hence children get good time to learn in conducive atmosphere (parent 149, *Omega*)

The school board has an academic subcommittee which evaluates performance of various classes (parent 273, *Tau*)

The school board has contributed to academic achievements by encouraging the pupils advising them about the importance of education in their future lives (parent 311, *Upsilon*)

In some schools, some parents felt that their school boards had not done well in improving their pupils' performance in KCPE. For example at *Sigma*, a parent wrote that "the performance of KCPE examination is a little bit low and the board need to put more effort" (parent 239, *Sigma*). KCPE scores are used for placement purposes and due to limited places, parents and candidates are pressurised to do whatever it takes to get a higher score. For example, "more than 190,000 (22%) pupils who sat for the KCPE examinations in 2014 were going to miss Form one [first year in secondary school] places' (Gachie, 2015, para. 1). Parent 244 of *Sigma* also wrote, "school board has really tried; we have seen some slight improvements like repairs in classrooms and lights. But academically our school is down our children are not doing well ... they should do something to improve in academics". According to parent 267, *Sigma* school board "should participate more actively in academic achievements and let the parents be involved in school affairs".

Most schools rewarded teachers and pupils for good performance, including seeking sponsors for excelling but extremely disadvantaged pupils. The *Omega* school board was commended for seeking to support also those pupils who perform poorly:

“The child performing bad in class the parents are being called to explain what the problem might be whether the child the teacher or the parent and it help us a lot and many other things” (parent 150, *Omega*).

Most school boards in Kibera slum put less emphasis on programs that promote the affective or psychomotor domains. In all school there was a large compound with designated playing fields yet in most of them sports and games were largely ignored. This was to create time for remedial classes, for which the schools charge ‘tuition’ fees. In the long term, this is counterproductive, since participation in sports promotes students’ development as well as social ties among them, their parents, and school, which explains the effect of participation on academic achievement (Broh, 2002). Although most parents in Kibera were ignorant about the importance of their children participating in sports or other co-curricular activities, several pupils felt that their schools should put more emphasis on participation in sports.

Our playing field is not good because there is no grass to control soil erosion (pupil 110, *Omega*).

I would like our school to have a good field for playing and put a goal post in the field (pupil 193, *Sigma*).

Our field is full of dust that causes coughs we would like grass to be planted (pupil 238, *Rho*).

School boards were more concerned about the development of children’s cognitive domains at the expense of their affective and psychomotor domains. Some pupils felt that there was need for a balance: “we are happy for having constructed the library and I know it will help us more but we will be happier if they construct also other sports facilities such as for basketball, volley ball and others” (pupil 83, *Omega*). Teacher 19i of *Rho* emphasised the importance of board supporting co-curricular activities, saying, “I tend to think that co-curricular activities are so important since it encourages the children that are not well placed academically so the board should be involved and get to understand the importance of these co-curricular activities that is sports, games and music and the like” (personal communication, 10/10/2013).

Another program that attracted a lot of comment was the school feeding program. This program has been very popular and has contributed greatly to a surge in enrolments. However, there are wide variations in how successful school boards have been at managing the program (Langer, 2011). Schools receive the same ingredients

in equal ratio per child from the World Food Program, while individual boards are expected to manage the logistics, such as provide a kitchen, employ a cook and generally manage the handling and storage of the food. Individual school boards are at liberty to add value to the food they prepare at their school, though this could lead to an increase in the school levies unless other funding can be found. In some schools there have been complaints about the way preparation was handled: for instance, parent 51 observed that “the food which is cooked in *Alpha* is not well cooked”. In the same school, parent 19 said that pupils complained that the food “was very bitter, had little stones and rotted maize seeds”. A similar concern was raised by parent 81, from *Mu* “food is not well cooked”. This is a reflection on the amount of care and supervision the board takes.

Policies

Several government policies were delegated to the school boards, such as the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE), the school feeding program, inclusive education and the provision of sanitary towels to girls. In all these policies, as indicated in *Figure 1.1*, the school board was expected to monitor the implementation, mobilise additional resources, and ensure transparency and accountability. According to Tooley, Dixon, and Stanfield (2008), who completed a study in Kibera slum, the free primary policy has realised a beneficial outcome for many children, but other studies suggest that it had failed to achieve its intended objectives due to high enrolment, a shortage of teachers (UNESCO, 2005), inadequate funds (Hakijamii, 2010; Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008), and poor quality school board governance (Kabiaru, 2013; Kikechi, Andala, Kisebe, & Simiyu, 2012; Onderi & Makori, 2013).

Because at the school level, the school board is the face of the government, parents associate the implementation of FPE as the work of their school boards. In all these schools, most parents opined that the public school boards did their best to support the FPE as evident in the following comments.

Provision of [reading and writing materials] to pupils for free has enabled [pupils] to improve their performance (parent 67, *Kappa*)

Our school board has been providing textbooks and exercise books for free (parent 109, *Mu*).

The contributions that the school management committee has brought are about the school affairs buys books for the whole school and others things like pencils,

rubbers and others. I would like to thank them very much on my behalf (parent 127, *Omega*)

They [school board] have been giving my child both books for writing and reading (parent 234, *Sigma*)

Our school board has been providing textbooks and exercise books for free (parent 109, *Mu*).

However, in some instances the school boards were in a dilemma when the government policies were not in line with the interests of the local community.

Challenges

Several challenges were identified in this study which affects academic achievement and the board's operations. The following sub-sections discuss these challenges in more detail.

Challenges to Academic Achievement

The schools in this study face a number of serious challenges due to being located in a slum environment, and these have potentially serious impacts on the pupils' academic performance. When the board members were asked 'what challenges their school faced which contributed to their poor performance in KCPE', their responses indicated that most of the challenges were closely associated with poverty. They identified classrooms in close proximity to a noisy open market, pupils being exposed to indecent and immoral behaviour, drug abuse, and involvement in criminal activities as distracting or disruptive influences. Families relying on child labour to supplement insecure family incomes are a major threat to examination results because their children are often absent and have less time for study outside school. The presence of overage pupils in the schools is also believed to have a negative impact on academic performance.

Often the children walk to and from school very early in the morning or late in the evening as they need to do their homework at school, since most of their homes do not provide them with adequate space and light, or they are attending remedial lessons. Children, especially girls, are extremely vulnerable while walking to and from school. One board member commented, "cases of pupils being raped have been reported as they passed through the market ... Some of these victims are lured by small things and

then they are taken advantage of” (*Tau*, board members 5i, personal communication, 13/10/2013). Theft of school property, such as desks, is common in most schools, and they can often be seen in the market being used to bake doughnuts or preparing foodstuffs.

Most children in the Kibera slum help their parents with domestic chores before and after school. Others are forced to help their parents financially through engaging in their family business or seeking employment during weekends and school holidays. A board member of *Tau* said that : “[due to extreme poverty] some families take boys at very tender age to participating in fending for the family's upkeep through seeking employment ... it has happened where a young boy child is kept by his parent to sell charcoal ... others are involved in selling water”.

Crime is common in Kibera and may seem an attractive way to make money to children who do not fully understand the consequences. Board members and parents were well aware of the dangers and described an incident in which a ten-year old pupil in Grade 4 at *Tau* was reported to have carried a gun to school; another student was arrested for being involved in armed robbery with violence. Sometimes this leads to tragedy: “Two former students of *Tau* primary who had completed Grade 8 last year were gunned down by the flying squad police [along] a busy road. These pupils must have been involved in criminal activities even when they were pupils of *Tau*” (*Tau*, board member 1i, personal communication, 13/10/2013). Cases of pupils in possession of firearms were also reported at *Omega* and *Mu*.

The school boards are faced with a serious challenge of managing the children’s behaviours, which are influenced negatively by their social environment. Some schools, like *Omega*, have taken the challenge and have seriously engaged the community to stamp out the vice. They involved the local administration: as stated by one other board member, “... it was there once and we abolished it ... we took it serious[ly] as board members informed the area chief ... we discussed as a community and then handled it carefully” (*Omega* board member 3i, personal communication, 12/10/2013). Therefore, the assumption that primary schools are safe places for children might not be true for those learning in Kibera.

According to board members of *Tau*, some children and some parents are involved in either abusing or peddling drugs or illegal substances. For parents, abusing drugs

takes most of their time and, as stated by some board members, makes them irresponsible. Some of the pupils in the public primary schools in Kibera slum come from families where drugs and alcohol are their source of livelihood. This makes them more susceptible to abusing these drugs and other substances when they are still young. Therefore, the school boards have the challenge of dealing with effects of drugs in some of these children.

Politics and political leadership has impacted negatively on the academic performance of most schools in the slum, as evidenced by the sharp drops in performance in national examinations (Figure 6.1) of most schools at 2003 and 2008, after a national election. Political considerations in allocation of funds affect some schools such as *Tau*:

There is a lot of political influence on academic achievement ... due to the location of the school politics has affected us a lot ... this school is administratively in [Division A] but 98% of the pupils are from [Division B]. So to get support from Division A's Constituency Funds (CDF) to support children who are not from there is difficult. (*Although now due to re-location the school is now in [Division B] but still participates in [Division A] in terms of academic affairs*) ... The location of the school makes it difficult to get CDF from either [Division A] or [Division B]... this is because those in [Division B] would allege it is in [Division A] and vice versa. (*Tau*, board member 1i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Another challenge that was considered a threat to the provision of quality education in some schools in Kibera like *Tau* is the issue of ethnicity. Kibera is a cosmopolitan settlement, housing people from most Kenyan ethnic groups, but they tend to settle together with their relatives or friends in sections called villages. Villages are dominated by certain ethnic groups and the schools in the neighbourhood tend to be dominated by children from the largest ethnic group. This makes teachers and pupils from the other groups uncomfortable and may lead to them being marginalised within the school community.

Another thing ... if you come to this school you will find most teachers are from one region ... while the political leadership was mostly from a different community. Since the two communities were political protagonists, the political leaders decided to marginalise the school due to ethnicity ... *ukabila* (ethnicity) affected to the extent that during the 2007 post-elections children from a particular community were transferred out of this school. (*Tau*, board member 3i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

There is also a likelihood of most of the board members will belong to one particular ethnic group, which might work for or against the school. If the political leadership of that region is from a different ethnic group there is less chance that the school will benefit from the Constituency Development Funds. Teachers from a different community might be target of ridicule and intimidation by pupils and parents, especially during national election time.

Challenges to the School Boards

According to Odden and Odden (1996), for school-based management to be successful board members need to be rewarded, including compensation and other incentives. The members of the boards in Kenyan primary schools are neither rewarded nor compensated for the time they spend to attend to school affairs. Most of them have to close their businesses, while those on casual jobs have to forgo a day's wage to fulfil their obligations as board members. Yet members of the boards of other government institutions are reimbursed for their transport, provided with lunch and, in some cases, paid a sitting allowance. It is worth noting that the serving board members are very committed to supporting the education of their children. The following are some of their comments:

there is nothing there ... that motivates us or if there is anything that gives us the impetus ... there is nothing ...nothing ... no motivation ... maybe if there were sitting allowances that would be motivation ... there is always tea and snacks during meeting ... there is no monetary motivation. (*Tau*, board member 1i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

You can come for a meeting from say 9am to 2pm and yet most of us ... are small traders forcing us to close our businesses to attend these meetings ... yet when they (children) come home they expect food on the table despite closing your business. (*Tau*, board member 3i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Lack of incentive, particularly monetary, was said to be deterring some new board members from continuing. They would attend one or two meetings and once they realised that there was no incentive of any form they would stop attending meetings. This made it difficult for some boards to operate and entrenched some members in powerful positions.

Grade six parents elected a representative during the annual general meeting but the person attended the first meeting and has never turned up again. When these people are elected they expect something for being a board member but when

they get in and find ‘nothing’ instead you sit from morning to 2pm without anything ... such a person will not turn up again. S/he will not communicate—no word, no calling. (*Tau*, board member 1i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

The members strongly advocated for compensation for their ‘total sacrifice’, citing that the government in the current Education Act 2010 acknowledged the need for paying them some form of allowances. Lack of incentives or compensation has resulted in very few competent and resourceful parents showing interest in the board. Consequently, school board positions have been left to those parents who are not busy or are retirees, or those involved in less-demanding jobs. The resultant effect is that such board members are likely to be less influential people in the community and are vulnerable to manipulation by the teachers.

Discussion

Most participants claimed that the school boards had positively impacted their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. A strong positive correlation was found, as shown in Table 6.11, between the participants’ perception on school board practices with their perception in the three aspects: school climate ($r=0.48$), parental involvement ($r=0.42$), and academic achievement ($r=0.53$). In other words, participants who considered their school boards were active also considered their school to be inviting, were involved in school affairs regularly, and were happy with the performance of their pupils. Findings from the survey, from written comments, field notes and group interview all suggested that the school board of *Omega* was active and had a positive impact on climate, parental involvement and pupils’ performance. Although the other boards claimed in their surveys to be active, data from the other surveys and the interviews showed that they had little impact on climate, parental involvement and pupils’ performance.

Most parents saw the role of the school boards as representing their interests in the school, acting as their ‘watchdog’ in school affairs, helping maintain discipline in school, and overseeing the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE). They expect the boards to ensure that the schools provide quality education to their children by monitoring teachers’ work, informing them about the school progress, holding regular parents’ meeting and ensuring fiscal accountability. Parents from most schools said that their boards were committed because they held regular parents meetings,

counselled children, strengthened teacher-parent partnerships and informed parents about pupils' progress.

The board members volunteer themselves to go to classes and talk to the kids even the teachers responsible and get to know about their problem then they help them they (*Mu parent 3i*, personal communication, 21/9/2013)

The board they help us because they observe how the teachers are teaching children (*Mu parent 4i*, personal communication, 21/9/2013)

Poor leadership and poor levels of parent interest in school affairs were identified as the main factors that contributed to pupils' poor performance in some schools. When asked what they would do if they were made board members, Parent 4i of *Mu* said, 'I would have changed the performance of the school; it was not good. I would say we change the school's head teacher and bring in a new one so that we see if the school is going to perform'.

Regression analysis showed that the board's support to teaching and learning has a positive influence on KCPE scores and the school climate, but negatively influenced parental involvement. Relationships between board members and people (such as parents and teachers) had no influence on KCPE scores. Boards' decisions were also found not to influence the KCPE scores but negatively influenced parental involvement. School board decisions on, for example, paying for remedial lessons, seemed to discourage parents from getting involved in school affairs. The board members' mobilisation and monitoring practice was found to negatively influence school climate: for example, failure to provide key utilities such as water and electricity made the schools 'disinviting'.

Another key finding is that the public primary school boards were more focused on cognitive development of children at the expense of affective and psychomotor domains. They played a crucial role in the implementation of government policies such as free primary education, and the school feeding program. Most of them were ineffective in financial accountability, maintenance and monitoring of school activities. Omega board was found to be more assertive, committed and visible than in others.

The greatest achievement of the public primary school boards, according to teachers, was that of strengthening teacher-parent partnerships. They were involved in educating parents, organising parent-teacher meetings and resolving conflicts between teachers and parents.

They have cleared the gap between the teachers and the parents ... parents even if you call them it's a problem but through the board they will come. (*Sigma* teacher 27i, personal communication, 14/10/2013)

I think one of their achievements is being able to convene meetings no matter how challenging it is they are able to bring parents for meeting. (*Tau* teacher 29i, personal communication, 14/10/2013)

Another achievement was the boards' ability to mobilise the parents to cater for the school and other services. In most schools, the boards were said to be working and supporting the school administration. Teacher 6i, who is part of the *Omega* administration, alluded to this: "yes I have worked closely with the board members and I must say that they very cooperative and have really assisted us". In *Sigma*, teacher 25i noted that their school board was "cooperating with the administration" (personal communication, 14/10/2013).

Conclusion

Despite the challenges affecting public primary schools in Kibera slum, a positive and committed board positively influences the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. The board's main challenges regarding the provision of quality education were social and political rather than economic. However, these boards failed to be accountable to parents on fiscal matters. Board members had to give up their own work without compensation and the lack of fully understanding ministry's guidelines lead to poor communication between the head teacher and the board. In most cases, these boards were not truly involved in the decision making processes.

The work of teachers was made difficult by large class sizes, heavy teaching loads, poor remuneration, indiscipline among some children, inadequate repairs and maintenance, insecurity, and lack of support from some parents. Despite these challenges, most teachers were motivated by the pupils' good performance, pupils' eagerness to learn, respect they receive from the children, opportunity to help a needy child, pupils' success in life, and being appreciated by pupils and parents.

Most parents and teachers regarded the employment of contractual teachers, strengthening of teacher-parent partnerships, monitoring school programs, and cooperating with teachers as the major achievements of the school boards. With regard to fiscal accountability, sanitation, and maintenance of the physical infrastructure, according to most pupils and teachers, the boards have been ineffective. Some parents

were disappointed by the inability of some boards to reduce their financial burden. In the next chapter, two schools identified as having distinct school board practices are compared.

Chapter 9

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

I am parent both at Tau and Omega and the way teachers at Omega do their work, I can say that at Tau the standard is lower (parent 11i, Tau).

One observation made in this study is that, although boards are composed of parents from similar backgrounds, they differ in their practices. Most participants concurred that their schools boards were effective in improving school climate, enhancing parental involvement, and improving academic achievement, but a close examination revealed that in some schools, the boards were more assertive, committed and visible than in others. Strong and effective school boards are essential for good schools and provision of quality education (French et al., 2008; Lewis & Naidoo, 2004), but it is not always easy to determine what effectiveness means. To develop a clearer understanding of what it means in this context, this chapter now turns to an examination of two public primary school boards that were found to be similar in context but different in terms of parental involvement, participants' perceptions of school climate and their KCPE scores. The two schools were regarded as being at opposite ends of an effectiveness continuum.

To begin with, this chapter examines the criteria used as the basis of comparison; it then examines the relationship between the school, the community and the school climate, presenting findings on the differences in the practices of the two school boards. A brief description of the two school boards is presented in the *vignette* section, which includes a summary of their differences and similarities. The last section concludes by highlighting the key finding of the comparative analysis to explain the reasons for the apparent differences.

Contrasting Results

The two schools that are the focus of this chapter are very different in terms of their KCPE scores, procedures, level of parental involvement and the ways in which members of their respective communities perceived the climate their schools in spite of the fact that they shared similar characteristics. The KCPE results (Figure 6.1) show that *Omega's* KCPE mean score was above the national mean throughout the twelve

year period, while *Tau*'s mean score was below the national mean in ten out of the twelve years, including the years during this study.

Post Hoc Tests results (see Appendix 36) show significant difference between *Omega* and *Tau*, with *Omega* being the more positive in each case in:

1. the perception of pupils on the *people* (MD = 3.62, $p < .05$), *place* (MD = 7.90, $p < .05$), *processes* (MD = 6.59, $p < .05$), *policies* (MD = 4.37, $p < .05$) and *programs* (MD = 5.21, $p < .05$);
2. the perception of teachers on *people* (MD = 14.54, $p < .05$), *processes* (MD = 13.61, $p < .05$), *policies* (MD = 13.68, $p < .05$) and *programs* (MD = 11.08, $p < .05$); and
3. the perception of parents on *people* (MD = 4.76, $p < .05$), *policies* (MD = 6.44, $p < .05$) and *programs* (MD = 7.98, $p < .05$).

There was a significant difference between *Omega* and *Tau* on the frequency of parents contacting school (MD = 6.02, $p < .05$) with *Omega* parents contacting school more often.

Multiple regression analysis results showed that the differences in KCPE scores (Table 6.8), parental involvement (Table 6.9) and school climate (Table 6.10) could be explained by some identified aspects of the school board practices:

1. how they support teaching and learning;
2. how they mobilise resources and monitor school activities;
3. how they relate with people in the school;
4. their self-perceptions; and
5. how they make decisions.

The data on pupil population (Table 6.1) show that most parents in Kibera slum preferred to enrol their children in *Omega* over *Tau*. Both these schools are from Kibera and there is no difference in the education and socio-economic status of their parents. They both had more than 85% of their pupils coming from within the slum (*Omega* — 94%, *Tau* — 89%). The differences in KCPE scores are clear, indicating that there must be different practices within these two schools that contribute to this. Since the school boards were established to oversee school operations, and there are

differences in the operations of these two boards, a closer look and comparison of these two schools should indicate practices which might contribute to school board effectiveness.

Vignettes

In this section, I present a brief description of the two public primary school boards useful for comparison. It is a summary of how I perceived the school boards based on participants' comments and experiences.

***Tau* School Board**

Tau has good buildings; a spacious compound surrounded by many trees, and fairly populated classes with adequate lighting. The school is relatively more active in games and co-curriculum activities, such as drama and music. However, learning is affected by the noisy market nearby, a foul odour from unclean toilets, inadequate teachers and low parental involvement. Although the school raises a lot of funds through leasing out school facilities, a lack of transparency and accountability has made teachers and board members unhappy. The head teacher rarely consulted the school board and avoided being scrutinised by them. The board's leadership is *somewhat ineffective* as evidenced by the few meetings held, which sometimes take too long; a lack of implementation of boards' decisions; and their failure to motivate pupils, teachers and board members. The board has been active in encouraging parental involvement but has failed to monitor toilet cleanliness or lunch preparation or teachers' practice and it has failed to take decisive action on pupils engaged in criminal activities, such as carrying guns to school. Parents have low educational qualifications or are illiterate, have low income, and are not committed to school affairs. Some lack respect for teachers, and others might never step into the school whatever happens, unless forced by local administration. They have to pay for monthly tests, end-of-term examinations, preparation of lunch, and remedial lessons. The teachers were mostly government-employed, qualified and experienced. They had relatively low *self-concept belief*; low work motivation and low pupil expectations. They showed a lack of sympathy for pupils and their parents, and used corporal punishment frequently. Some were harsh to pupils and some were regarded by students as not liking the students. Some teachers were not punctual. Most of the teachers were interested more in remedial lessons as a

source of income and the teachers failed to work effectively as a team. Pupils were very happy about their physical facilities but their performance in the national examination was below the national mean. This is an example of how a *less effective* school board can fail to utilise opportunities to build trust among teachers, parents and pupils which results into lower students achievement.

Omega School Board

Omega, situated in the poorest community, provides some of the highest quality education in Kenya. The school's performance is exemplary; it is not only better than all the other schools in the slum but also much better than most *well-off* schools. Despite the very difficult conditions of large class size, shortage of teachers, dusty grounds, noisy and chaotic surroundings, lack of adequate teaching and learning resources and pupils being from extremely poor background, the school is a role model for the other schools. *Omega* has a humble head teacher. Its teachers have high *self-concept belief*, and are caring, understanding and reasonable. Pupils' are hardworking, cooperative, focused, responsible, disciplined and motivated. There is a strong prefects' body. The school board is committed, has good relations with the teachers, acknowledges performance of teachers and pupils, monitors school programs (lunch, remedial lessons etc.), supervises toilet cleanliness, carries out maintenance and repairs of school facilities, and school performance. Parents actively participate in school affairs, keeping close contact with their child(ren)'s class teacher, never fail to attend to school's issues, and are willing to pay school levies (admission fees, fees to purchase pupils' desk, remedial lessons, monthly tests, end-of-term examination). Parents are happy to visit the school and talk to the head teacher. There is support from the surrounding community. All these facets have contributed to the school's culture of performance and lived to their motto—'do your best always'. This school is an example of how an *effective school board* can facilitate home-school partnership, regardless of extreme poverty, built through respectful and trusting relationships among families, schools and communities, which leads to increased student achievement (Allen, 2007).

Pupils' Performance

The performance of *Tau* and *Omega* in the KCPE examinations, shown in Figure 9.1, differed for the twelve year period 2002- 2013. The KCPE mean scores for *Tau* were below the national mean for 10 out of the 12 years, while *Omega*'s mean scores were above the mean throughout the entire period.

Figure 9.1. Deviation of KCPE mean scores for *Omega* and *Tau* from the national mean

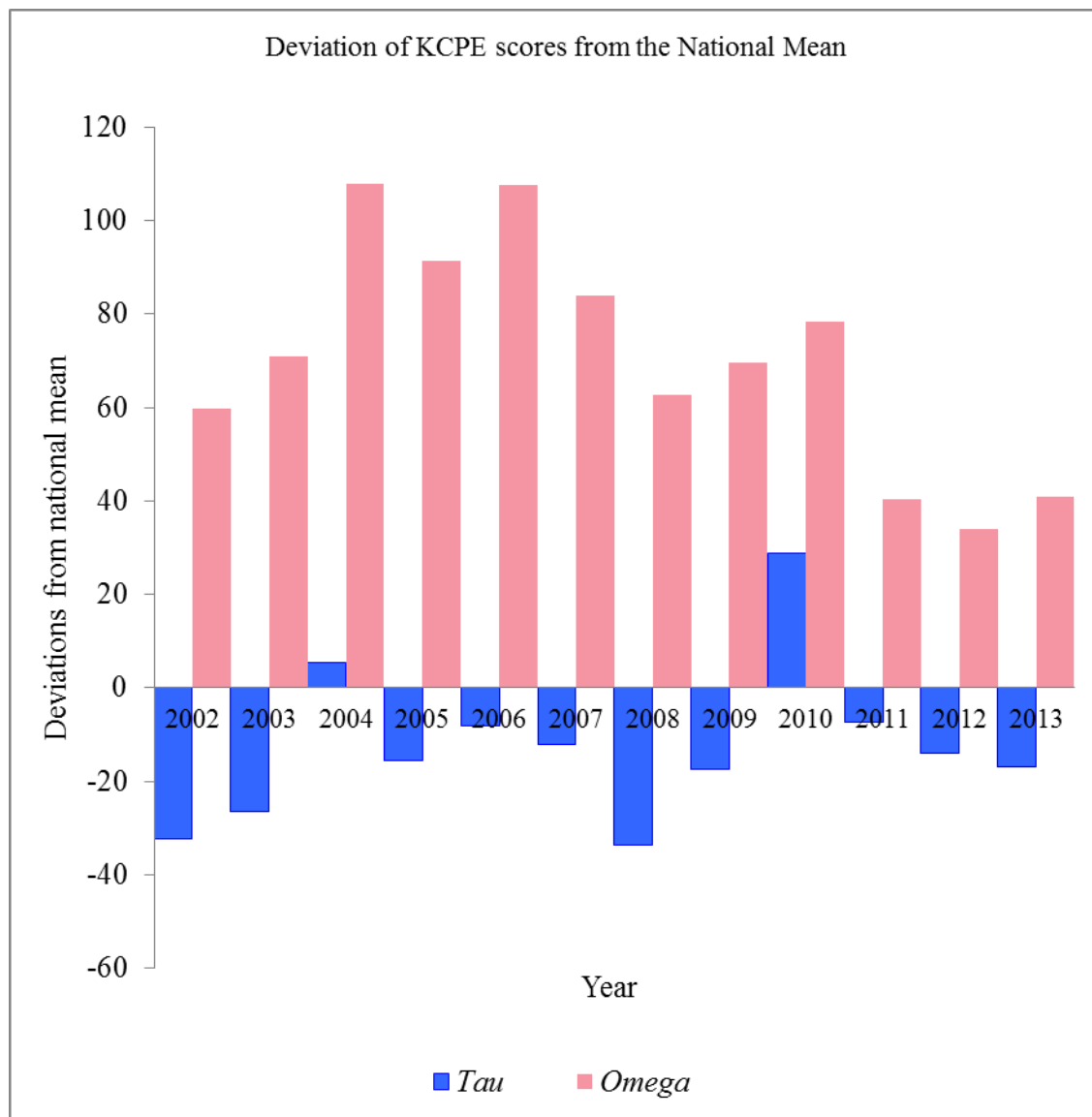


Figure 9.1. KCPE = Kenya Certificate of Primary Education; the national KCPE mean is regarded as the zero-level while bars above (positive values) the level represents *good* KCPE performance; bars below (negative values) the zero-level represents *low* KCPE performance.

Some of the reasons identified by parents, teachers and pupils at *Tau* for their school's poor performance were:

1. teachers' laxity and their poor attendance to lessons;
2. low parental involvement; and
3. failure of the head teacher and the board to effectively supervise teachers.

Some parents at *Tau* claimed that teachers in their school were more interested in 'tuition' than in normal lessons:

You know some teachers don't teach because they wait until tuition time in order to teach ... they are reluctant because of the tuition. For example if he teaches mathematics he will wait till its tuition time for him to teach. Also sometimes parents are denied report form because they have not paid tuition fee. (*Tau* parent 12i, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

Tau's performance is likely to improve if the school board and the head teacher collaborated to ensure that teachers did their work professionally.

The consensus view among parents of *Omega*, was that the school performed much better than other schools in Kibera. Parents at *Omega* attributed this to:

1. good teacher-parent partnership;
2. regular monitoring by head teacher,
3. high teachers' self-concept,
4. high pupils' attendance,
5. school culture, and
6. high expectation by parents and teachers.

The following comments are typical of parents' responses when they were asked about why *Omega* was a good school, inviting to parents and pupils:

When I compare *Omega* to other schools it is much better... When pupils of *Omega* proceed to secondary schools they perform better compared to kids from private schools they are so competitive the marks that a kid from *Omega* gets its solely through his/her sweat it's not the teachers spoon feeding them. Secondly the head teacher does a lot of follow ups when the performance of a kid drops she follows up to know why. (*Omega* parent 17i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

The communication between teachers and us is good compared to other schools in Kibera. (*Omega* parent 16i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

It is not a school where children are send home [most for non-payment of school levies]. (*Omega* parent 18i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

The school keeps the pupils so busy that you will never find them idling around easily compared to other schools. (*Omega* parent 18i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

I am an alumnus of this school and the performance was determined by our effort and that of the teachers who were active. The time that the children spent in school was more than the time they spent at home... when I was in Grade 6 there was no weekend [which is the same to date], holiday or church. (*Omega* parent 21i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

Most parents at *Omega* were impressed by their school's performance, due to the level of organisation and coordination within this school administration; this is something which appears to be lacking in the other schools. Parent 20i summarised aptly when he said:

Omega is the only school which is well organized compared to others. The teachers know their duty. There is a good communication with the parents. If there is a meeting they tell you early in advance and you will never find a kid being sent away due to school fees or any other. Even the head teacher is also organized. (*Omega* parent 20i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

According to parent 21i, the school board was responsible for setting the school's culture of hard work by teachers and pupils. Most parents at *Omega* claimed that the main contributor to the success of their school was the good teacher-parent partnership.

The Head Teacher

Although this study did not intend to compare the leadership styles adopted by the head teachers in *Tau* and *Omega*; participants' comments during interviews and field observation appeared to suggest that their leadership styles differed. The style of leadership appeared to influence the boards' operation, and parental involvement, which in turn influences the school climate and pupils' performance. Burke and Collins (2001) proposed three leadership styles — transformational, transactional and management-by-exception:

1. Transformational leaders develop positive relationships with subordinates in order to strengthen employee and organisational performance;
2. Transactional leaders establish work standards, communicate these standards to their subordinates and let them know the rewards they will receive if their performance is favourable; and
3. Management-by-exception leaders are likely to take advantage of the power to reward/penalize subordinates based on the formal authority that goes with their position in organisation. (Burke & Collins, 2001, p. 245)

The Omega head teacher was female, welcoming, courteous, approachable, good listener, commanded respect from pupils, parents and teachers. She appeared to work well and cooperatively with the board members. These qualities are associated with transformation leadership style proposed by Burke and Collins (2001).

During my first visit to *Omega*, I spent the shortest time to meet the head teacher. She was in her office consulting with one of the senior teachers and a board member. But once she was informed of my visit, she allowed me in and gave me time to explain the purpose of my visit: to carry out research. Leaving the teacher and board member in her office, she accompanied me to the staffroom where she introduced me to the teachers who were present. She then assigns a teacher to be working with me from then henceforth. (Field notes, 2/5/2012)

The head teacher does a lot of follow ups when the performance of a kid drops she follows up to know why ... (*Omega*, parent 5i, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

For example, Omega has improved because the head teacher is so close to the parents... and tried to listen to parents ... When I was a parent at Omega I could see how the head teacher tried to streamline the school and for sure the.... (*Tau*, board member 5i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

On the other hand the head teacher of *Tau* appeared reserved, lacks fiscal accountability, and related poorly with board members. For example, thieves broke into *Tau*'s food store and escaped with several bags of food stuff, of which the head teacher was aware the following morning. Surprisingly a month later the board members were not aware of the incident.

When I visited *Tau* for the very first time the head teacher was in. Although he allowed me in his office, I had to sit for a while as he attended to pupils. Apparently, teachers had referred pupils who had not paid tuition to see him and offer explanation. After explaining to him the reason for my visit, he introduced me to the secretary as my point of contact for future engagement. (Field notes, 3/5/2012)

We just sit in meeting to deliberate but the decisions are not implemented...you can have board meeting make decisions but the head teacher won't implement them... I don't know whether he is afraid or he is not getting support from somewhere. (*Tau*, board member 2i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

but there is something like feeding program (FP)... as the chair of the sub-committee in-charge of the FP you're supposed to know how the money is collected, spent and peruse the books of accounts ... but we know nothing ... we even don't know what the money is used for... (*Tau*, board member 4i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

The difference between the head teachers of *Tau* and *Omega* could be attributable to gender, and the selection processes, but there is insufficient data to really explain the reason.

Gender

Globally, women are underrepresented in leadership roles (Aiston, 2015; Appelbaum, Audet, & Miller, 2003). In Kenyan public primary schools, especially those in the rural, there are very few women in headship positions (Wangui, 2012). According to Wangui, socio-cultural factors, societal expectation and self-concept are key contributors. However, in Kibera most public primary schools have female head teachers. Seven out of the eight public primary schools studied had female head teachers with *Tau* being an exception.

Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller (2003) argue that female leadership is different and more effective than that of male leadership; they suggest that “men can learn from or adopt women style and use it effectively as well” (p. 49). A study carried out by Burke and Collins (2001) suggested that they were gender differences in leadership styles. It was difficult in the current study to determine if gender did influence their leadership styles. There are some female head teachers who school were part this study whose leadership style weren't any better.

Selection Processes

The head teachers of public primary schools in Kenya are recruited by government through its agent—the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). The TSC selects a head teacher through a competitive process considering their academic qualification, experience and performance (Teachers' Service Commission [TSC], 2014). The commission can post an external head teacher (someone who is not a member of staff there) to a school or promote a teacher in the school to the position of headship. In some countries, such as New Zealand, the school boards are actively involved in the recruitment of the school head teacher (Whitaker, 2003). The school boards are not involved in the selection and posting of head teachers. In Kenya the public primary schools boards are not involved directly in the selection of head teacher.

The head teachers of *Tau* and *Omega* were both selected and deployed by the TSC to their current positions. However, they are product of different selection process — *Tau* was recruited externally while *Omega* was internally. The head teacher of *Tau* was posted to the school from another school but the head teacher of *Omega* rose through the ranks from a teacher to being a head teacher in more than twenty years. It appears that the leadership style of the *Omega* head teacher had been influenced, to some extent, by the longevity at the school. However, this study was not able to determine if the way the head teachers related to the school boards was actually associated with the selection process.

Relationships

Several type of relationships or interactions are inevitable in any school setting, such as those between pupil-to-pupils, teacher-to- pupils, teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-parents. These interactions have been found to be associated with how people perceive their school and learning outcomes (Baker, 2006). Participants described the relationship between the school board members and teachers, and between school board members and parents, to be healthy, which has contributed greatly to their school's development. These two relationships influence greatly how teachers relate to parents, and how teachers relate to pupils. One important role of the board is that of building parent-teacher partnership which is based on trust and confidence between the parents and teachers. In this section focus is on *parent-teacher* and *teacher-pupil* relationship which was distinct between the two schools.

The teacher-parent partnership at *Tau* does not appear to be close and that could have contributed to the differences in performance between the two schools, since the pupils came from very similar backgrounds. At *Omega*, the school board has been able to bring parents and teachers together while at *Tau*, the board has difficulty doing that.

The main thing is the relationship between the parents and the teachers. When there is a problem they will call you and alert you even if it's giving tuition to them. This helped me a lot and through that my kid performed very well. So the relationship between the teachers and parents it's so good. (*Omega* parent 22i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

Parent-Teacher Relationship

The relationship between parents and teachers in *Tau* is characterised by conflict and mistrust. Even some of the *Tau* board members understand that the relationship between parents and teachers at *Omega* was more positive and worthy of emulation:

The relationship between parents and our class teacher is not somehow bad at least it is improving ...because it is very hard for parents and some teachers [to work together] ... for me to manage [to bring them together] is a great achievement. (*Tau* board member 2i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Our greatest responsibility [as board] is to mediate between parents ... [who are very hostile to teachers] ... and teachers ... Most of the time our role is talk to the parents to show them the importance of the teachers of their children...that they should not talk negatively about a teachers to their children...while also the teachers should not talk negatively about the a parent in front of the pupils... We unite the three parties (teachers, parents and pupils) together ... so that they is growth in academic achievement and discipline improved. (*Tau* board member 3i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

For example in *Omega* performance has improved because the head teacher is so close to the parents and does [her] best to listen to parents... [While in *Tau*] some children are afraid of taking messages from school to their home because of the type of reaction that their parents will show.... very discouraging comments from the parents which s/he finds it difficult to convey to the teachers. (*Tau* board member 5i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Some of the parents at *Tau* attributed the poor relationship between teachers and parents to the former's length of stay, as stated by one of parent: "mostly I blame teachers...our teachers have overstayed in this school... which has make them complacent and relaxed" (*Tau* board member 2i, personal communication, 13/10/2013). However, there are teachers at *Omega* who have been there for many years and they have very good relationships with their pupils: for example, the current head teacher has been at *Omega* for twenty-three years, rising from classroom teacher to her current position.

Another reason for poor parents-teacher relationship is the perception that the teachers are not fair and trustworthy. One of the board members described his child's experiences as an example of unfair treatment. An external sponsor relies on the teachers at *Tau* to select the top three pupils in every class each year for financial support. The board member's child has been ranked either first or second in class for the last seven years, but has never been selected by their teachers for sponsorship. But

teachers at *Tau* accuse the parents of lacking interest in their children's education and being uncooperative.

Some parents are not very much cooperative as far as the education of a child is concerned so you might send for a parent because of something the pupil has done then they fail to come. It really frustrates the teachers because we don't know to handle the case. (*Tau* teacher 4i, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

They won't come to school year in and year out. (*Tau* teacher 2i, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

In contrast, the relationship between parents and teachers in *Omega* was described by parents, teachers and board members as very cordial. One parent from *Omega* said, "...if there is a problem teachers usually call us and tell us what the problem is and we work out even without paying tuition the teachers understand us and we pay when we get the money" (*Omega* parent 8i, personal communication, 18/7/2013). The parents claimed their teachers were well organised to handle the challenges facing the school.

Parents from *Omega* indicated that the relationship between teachers and parents was extremely good, and in their opinions the children perform very well because of that. One parent stated that "the main thing is the relationship between the parents and the teachers...When there is a problem they [teachers] will call you and alert you ... This helped me a lot and through that my kid performed very well so the relationship between the teachers and parents it's so good" (*Omega* parent 10i, personal communication, 18/7/2013). The other aspect that parents at *Omega* raised about their relationship with teachers is their frequent communication. Parents are encouraged to take the telephone numbers of teachers to keep them informed about issues affecting their children and to know about their progress in school.

There was no mention of any form of conflict between parents and teachers during interview with parents or teachers or board members of *Omega*. I observed the following incident which depicted how the relationship between parents and teachers *Omega* was trusting and warm;

A joyful parent, poorly dressed, arrives at the school reception desk carrying a live chicken seeking to see the head teacher. Meanwhile the head teacher is talking to guests, among them the researcher, but is informed of the new visitor seeking her attention. The head teacher asks the receptionist to allow her in, so that she does not have to wait for long. The parent walks in holding the live chicken and explained to the head that it was her appreciation for the kind of support the school has been giving her child. (Field notes, 2/5/2012)

According to parents and teachers at both schools, the school board played a critical role as a mediator and a link between them. The board was seen as responsible for guiding parents and connecting them to teachers during class meetings. Some teachers felt that the board should also meet with teachers to address issues related to their work.

The board should also meet with the teachers from particular classes to listen to challenges and the frustrations and achievements they have so that and be able to assist in order to make them better... They should follow up [monitor] teaching as far as teachers are concerned, whether they are doing well, not really supervision but actually to see how the teaching is being done. (*Tau* teacher 2i, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Pupil-Teacher Relationship

The relationship between teachers and pupils seemed to be more cordial in *Omega* than in *Tau*, despite corporal punishment being used in both schools. The difference lies in the way in which corporal punishment was used and the attitudes expressed by the teachers. The pupils acknowledged that there were some teachers at *Tau* who were good, hardworking, encouraged them to work hard and showed them love.

Our school is good and teachers [work very hard] ... encouraging pupils to do their best in their studies and make their parents happy. (pupil 02, *Tau*)

Pupils in our school attend school every day and respect their teacher. Our teachers are good and encourage us to work in groups and give us some time for private study but they also punish us when we misbehave. (pupil 03, *Tau*).

My teacher usually encourages me to work hard ... shares with me her [life] experience ... [which makes me] love her so much. (pupil 10, *Tau*)

Nevertheless, pupils at *Tau* were more likely than those at *Omega* to believe that their teachers were harsh, rude, harsh, unreasonable and uncaring.

Teachers like sending pupils home to collect money day by day without knowing if s/he [pupils' parents] has money. (pupil 16, *Tau*)

Teachers [*Tau*] should respect pupils so that they can likewise be respected by the pupils; and they should stop using abusive language to the pupil. (pupil 17, *Tau*)

I may appreciate our teachers for their good work ... they are hardworking, and [gives us good counsel that would lead us to a prosperous future]... I would like to [urge] some teachers [who] like abusing pupils and shouting [to stop] because it make us uncomfortable... I like my teachers [but will appreciate them more] if they stopped shouting at us and [paid attention] to pupils' views. (pupil 19, *Tau*)

Our school mainly takes part in sports and win ... but it [school] is always corrupted [spoilt] by our teachers... most of them love clever pupils and mostly checked their books. They send pupils away [a lot] for school fees [without caring] if their parents will be able to pay... When the teachers are annoyed they usually abuse us using derogative terms. (pupil 23, *Tau*)

It is difficult to imagine a child feeling welcome at school in the face of such behaviour. An incident was cited where teachers of *Tau* administered corporal punishment repeatedly to innocent Grade 7 pupils, which portrayed some of them as brutal, uncaring, unapologetic and merciless to children who needed their care and understanding.

Grade 7 pupils of *Tau* were accused of stealing 57 religious books [which were misplaced and later found] from a religious group involved in a counselling program in the school and were caned for theft. The religious group later apologized to the school (teachers) but not the pupils but instead a concerned teacher went to apologize to the pupils. Some teachers [including one in senior position] were not amused by the act of apologizing to the pupils. The teacher who apologized was confronted while the innocent Grade 7 pupils were caned again. This is one incident that the members of the board felt strongly that an urgent meeting was necessary but it was never held, to their utter dismay and disappointment

I heard about the incident and the chairman promised to follow up ... up to now I have not heard about it again... I talked to the head teacher about it and informed him that if the issue is not handled properly it will discourage the grade 7 pupils from participating in the counseling program... This incident required that the board to deliberate about it and those concerned summoned and advised to apologize to the children... (*Tau* board members, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

School Climate

The school board at *Omega* was active in doing repairs and monitoring cleanliness of the toilets compared to their counterparts in *Tau*. A pupil of *Omega* was confident that their school board would make necessary repairs to the leaking roof:

Arrangements have been done to improve the buildings which have been destroyed ... leaking taps are the major problems we are facing we as pupils. But the head teacher and deputy teachers and the school committee are trying hard to repair them. As a result, we thank them and the school board. (pupil 85, *Omega*)

The main distinguishing factor for the school boards in the two schools appears to be their commitment in making the physical environment conducive for learning.

Some parents and pupils at *Tau* claimed that time management was poor. Pupil 211 of *Tau* lamented that some of their teachers were not punctual and skipped classes. A

parent at *Tau* pleaded with “teachers to stop coming late to school... for example one day my child told me their teacher had failed to attend lessons for a whole week”. She suggested that parents and the head teacher should work together to make sure that “teachers do not fail to attend lessons”. In contrast, time is of great essence in *Omega*, as written by one pupil “the timetable is strictly followed” another pupil 104 wrote that “the pupils and teachers are always punctual” (pupil 92, *Omega*). Although time management is within the head teacher’s role, the presence of school board members in the school has a positive influence on how pupils and teachers manage their time.

The survey results suggest that pupils in *Omega* are encouraged to work cooperatively and to be responsible. *Omega* has more than 3000 pupils in 39 streams with only 29 teachers, which implies that at any given time 10 streams, or almost 1000 pupils, have no teacher to supervise them. However, according to a parent, an observer will not see the pupils loitering around or making unnecessary noise because “... the school keeps the kids so busy you will never find a kid idle” (parent 7, *Omega*). Because of the high expectation by parents and teachers, *Omega* pupils work hard; they are “busy all the time studying [individual work]... everybody [teachers and pupils]” (pupil 59, *Omega*). Another pupil wrote “pupils are trying very hard to overcome laziness and idleness for the school to excel” (pupil 62, *Omega*). *Omega* teachers are supportive and “are always alert and ready to work”(pupil 65, *Omega*); they are approachable and they teach extra classes for candidates “when we are near to exams teachers offer remedial lessons to pupils free of charge” (pupil 67, *Omega*).

At Omega pupils are encouraged to:

1. work in groups: ‘teachers put us in groups to discuss’ (pupil 125, *Omega*);
2. take leadership roles: ‘teachers also ensure that the school rules are obeyed with the help of prefects’ (pupil 62, *Omega*); and
3. consult their teachers whenever the encounter problems.

In contrast, some pupils of *Tau* describe a greater percentage of their teachers as uncaring, brutal and discriminatory: “Our school does well in games or sports... Teachers are keen on bright pupils they often check their books... [They] send children away frequently for fees... When teachers are angry they use abusive language. [The teachers’] behaviour most of the time discourage us” (pupil 212, *Tau*).

There was a lot of emphasis on programs that enhance cognitive development in *Omega*, such as educational excursions. In contrast, *Tau*'s programs focused more on non-psychomotor domain. *Tau* is reported by pupils to be doing very well in sports "my school [*Tau*] normally lead in games such as netball, football, javelin and music in Kibera location" (pupil 204, *Tau*). Lack of focus in sports and other non-academic activities in *Omega* frustrate some children, as commented by one of them: "I beg the school [to please] participate in many sports so that we become healthier" (pupil 82, *Omega*); another pupil wrote "we will be happy if they [introduced different types of games] such as basketball net, a volley ball" (pupil 83, *Omega*). The two schools need to ensure programs are holistic and suitable for a child's cognitive, affective and psychomotor development.

The contribution of the school board in setting an environment conducive for learning, or a positive or inviting school climate, is clearly evident in *Omega*. The school board at *Omega* has influenced the setting of positive school climate in several ways:

1. they have ensured a positive link between parents and teachers by being firm on parental involvement more than in payment of levies;
2. they have consistently monitored the performance of non-teaching staff such as cleaners and cook by having a board member each day to visit the school;
3. they have a high expectation of teachers, parents and pupils in regard maintain the school culture; and
4. they motivate teachers and pupils by organising prize giving and allowing teachers to conduct extra lesson, although against government ban, for a 'small token'.

Quantitative results (see Appendix 39 to 43) show that grade 8 pupils from both *Tau* and *Omega* were proud of their school. They concurred that their teachers encouraged them, were generally prepared to for class, and that they were happy and enjoyed their work. *Tau* teachers used corporal punishment often, and sending away poor children due to non-payment, mostly for remedial lesson, seemed to be their common practice for most of them. According to some parents of *Tau*, they felt that their teachers lacked self-drive and were uncommitted, compared to those of *Omega*.

They claimed that some teachers were more money-minded and were not bothered with the children's welfare.

Few teachers according to me is not the main problem but their [*Tau* teachers] lack of motivation and commitment to teaching... most of them rarely give children homework...when you ask [the child] why they do not have homework ... [the answer] is today there were no teachers at school or today the teacher didn't teach. (*Tau* parent 3i, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

If you compare *Tau* to other schools such as *Omega* [where I am also a parent]... teachers of *Omega* are by far more committed than teachers at *Tau*... teachers of *Tau* instead of calling parents would instead send children away for not paying money for tuition. (*Tau* parent 5i, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

You know some teachers [at *Tau*] here don't teach because they wait until tuition time in order to teach ... teachers are reluctant because of the tuition for example if he teaches maths he will wait till its tuition time for him to teach also sometimes parents are denied report form because they have not paid tuition fee. (*Tau* parent 6i, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

Some pupils in *Tau* wrote that some of their teachers were not committed: “ [some] teachers [at *Tau*] are not punctual... they arrive in school any time after 8 a.m. and yet they want money for the remedial teaching whereas they have not yet taught us” (pupil 208, *Tau*). Although they were positive comments from parents, teachers and pupils, but there appear to exist a culture of professional negligence among teachers of *Tau* that the school board has been unable to fix.

In contrast, at *Omega*, pupils were rarely sent home for failure to pay school levies but instead parents were encouraged to contact their class teachers and discuss available options. A parent said of *Omega* that, “it is not a school where kids are chased every now and then” (*Omega* parent 6i, personal communication, 18/7/2013). Quantitative results (see Appendix 39) show that the pupils of *Omega* felt that their teachers were respectful to pupils, easy to talk to, humorous, always prepared for class, and enjoyed their work. Parents at *Omega* claimed that the teachers care for individual child, and that ...“they [teachers] know the pupils' circumstances [that some come from very poor background] and moreover they know each and every kids home is” (*Omega* parent 3i, personal communication, 18/7/2013).

A pupil described his/her class teacher: “my class teacher teaches well that you can understand; he is also a very understanding and loving teacher who can help you all children love him” (pupil 134, *Omega*). The pupil also indicated that some teachers in

Omega were harsh and unreasonable: “but there is a teacher who most of the pupils don’t love... he is hot tempered... likes caning even without no reason... he can cane the whole class because a single mistake by a pupil... It makes pupils to hate him and that makes us fail our exams in his subjects”. Nonetheless, there were many positive pupils’ comments about good teachers in *Omega*. The school boards are mandated to hold teachers accountable. For example, in *Omega*, several parents indicated that their board did monitor what teachers were actually doing.

They are always available in the school to see that teachers are doing their job effectively and also make my child to be in class. (parent 192, *Omega*)

The school board has really worked hard to ensure that they go to school every day and found out what the teachers are doing. This has really improved the performance of most children in the school. (parent 204, *Omega*)

Class representatives follow up to see what is going on between the teachers and pupils. (parent 218, *Omega*)

Summary of Similarities and Differences

Interviews with 70 parents, 36 teachers and 43 board members across the eight schools suggested that team work, a facilitative head teacher, a positive attitude, evident commitment, high expectations of students by parents and teachers, parental involvement, close supervision and strong leadership were salient practices of an effective board in Kibera slum. There were several aspects that boards of *Tau* and *Omega* shared and some that they did differently. Apart from physical location, pupils backgrounds, and the challenges they encountered, these boards did most things differently. This could explain why pupils’ performance, participants perception and parental involvement was different. Table 9.1 is summary of the comparative analysis of the two schools.

Table 9.1

Summary on Similarities and Difference of Omega and Tau

Aspect	Similarities	Differences
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils of both school are mostly from low socioeconomic background Most teachers are government employee Provided with modern physical facilities with water and electricity installations The schools are exposed to noisy, and insecure external environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Omega</i> has employed several contractual teachers to address teacher shortage <i>Tau</i> uses the facility to raise additional funds while <i>Omega</i> does not The population of pupils in <i>Omega</i> is three times that of <i>Tau</i> yet they have same capacity
Fiscal Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive equal support from government and other stakeholders such as free primary funds; feeding programs, constituency development funds etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal accountability was lacking in <i>Tau</i> but a non-issue in <i>Omega</i> The board of <i>Omega</i> subsidised lunch levy to lighten parents financial burden (parents in <i>Omega</i> pay 300 shillings per child per year for their lunch while in <i>Tau</i> a parents will pay 900 shillings per year per child) <i>Omega</i> Parents pay almost twice as much as <i>Tau</i> pays but by do send pupils away due to failure to pay
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise extra lessons or ‘tuition’ for a fee despite government ban Corporal punishment was commonly used by teachers as a corrective behavioral measure which is against the government’s law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was high expectation for pupils, teachers and parents of <i>Omega</i> than in <i>Tau</i> Time management by both pupils and teachers of <i>Omega</i> was much better than those from <i>Tau</i> <i>Omega</i> had a rigorous admission process There were more parents contacting schools in <i>Omega</i> than in <i>Tau</i> <i>Omega</i> focus more in academic related activities while <i>Tau</i> on non-academic Student leadership was more active in <i>Omega</i> than in <i>Tau</i>
School board Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board members of both schools [<i>Tau</i> and <i>Omega</i>] attended similar capacity development seminars and workshop The board members were ‘volunteers’ without any form of financial benefits or compensation The school boards had parents as the majority who also held the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board of <i>Omega</i> meet official frequently unlike the one in <i>Tau</i> that was mostly ‘fire-fighting’ The board chair of <i>Tau</i> was a high-ranking professional but mostly unavailable but the chair of <i>Omega</i> was casual workers but available. School board of <i>Omega</i> closely monitored the work of non-teaching staff [cleaner, cooks etc] while those

	positions of chair and treasurer	in <i>Tau</i> were unaware of what the head teacher was doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members of both schools were inspired by the desire to help their children perform well in national examination and to proceed to the next level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board in <i>Omega</i> tried within their means to motivate teachers and pupils The interview with <i>Omega</i> board was well structured with no interjections unlike the interview with <i>Tau</i> board members was riddled many interjections Board members at <i>Omega</i> frequently counselled their pupils while those at <i>Tau</i> did not
Parental Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents involved in school affairs were mostly mothers and their participation was through meeting attendance and paying levies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most parents respond fast, timely and swiftly when called for a meeting in <i>Omega</i> while in <i>Tau</i> the turnout was low and most of the time late. Teacher-parent partnership in <i>Omega</i> was mostly positive unlike in <i>Tau</i> which was either neutral or conflictual
Head teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both qualified, experienced and appointed by government through the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The head teacher of <i>Omega</i> was promoted internally rising through the ranks; While the head teacher of <i>Tau</i> was externally posted to the school The <i>Omega</i> head teacher is female, welcoming, courteous, approachable, good listener, commanded respect from pupils, parents and teachers. She appeared to work well and cooperatively with the board members. The head teacher of <i>Tau</i> is male, appeared reserved, lacks fiscal accountability, and related poorly with board members.

Conclusion

Contextually, *Omega* and *Tau* are similar — pupils' background, teacher factors, social–economic and cultural factors, funding opportunities, and infrastructural. However, they differed in terms of the performance of their Grade 8 pupils in the national examination, perception of participants about their school climate and parental involvement, school boards' operation, and on the leadership styles of their head teacher. The head teacher and the school board operation appear to be central to explaining the difference between the two schools.

The comparative analysis have shown that despite the challenges associated with the slum, public primary school boards are able to set a positive school climate, enhance the participation of the most disadvantaged parents in school affairs, and contribute to improvement of pupils' performance in national examination. The board can do so by:

1. ensuring the provision of basic utilities such as water and electricity throughout
2. focusing on the holistic development rather than a single domain
3. monitoring closely and collaboratively the school programs
4. strengthening the parent-teacher partnerships.

In addition to being strong, positive and committed, the *Omega* school board had a culture they worked hard to keep. They were consultative, shared a common vision with pupils, teachers, parents and head teachers, and were able to establish teacher–parent partnerships. Such a board, despite the myriad challenges associated with the slum, is able to make a significant difference to a school's culture and learning outcomes.

Chapter 10 discusses paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas in the practices of school boards of public primary schools in an urban low socioeconomic setting in Kenya.

Chapter 10

PARADOXES, TENSIONS AND DILEMMAS

Tensions, conflicts and dilemmas are common within school governance, underpinned mostly by “blurred boundaries of roles and responsibilities along with changing roles and functions of various actors” (Onderi & Makori, 2013, p. 266). This study has unearthed several paradoxes, areas of tension and dilemmas that need to be understood. These are all faced by the school boards in the eight public primary schools from Kibera included in this study. This chapter will address the fourth question:

Question 4: How do the challenges, paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions experienced by school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting affect their practice and academic achievement?

The focus of Chapter 10 is to explain, using results from group interviews, how these paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas affected the boards’ practice and students’ academic achievement. The chapter begins with a discussion of the identified paradoxes, which is then followed by a discussion of the tensions and dilemmas of the school boards. The conclusion, which is the last section, gives a summary of how these paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas have affected the board’s operations.

Paradoxes

Kenyan public primary school boards have been mandated to carry out two separate roles and functions: they act as a government agency on one hand, and on the other they are expected to take care of the interests of the local community. Playing the two roles raises critical questions about how the board behaves in situations where the government’s interests are seen as infringing on the local community’s interest, and vice versa. Examples of the unearthed paradoxes are:

1. The board’s decision-making and support for teaching and learning was related to an improvement in KCPE scores and the school being perceived as more inviting; however, it was also related to lower parental involvement.
2. The board members’ self-concept was found to correlate negatively with KCPE scores, school climate and parental involvement.
3. Pupils learning in large classes, perform better than those in small class sizes.

4. Children from well-off families living outside the slum enrol in public primary schools located in extremely poor settings such as Kibera slum.
5. Some poor parents have abandoned free public primary education for private primary schools for the poor, which operate within the slum..
6. Schools provide remedial lessons for a fee in defiance of government policy.

The following is a discussion of the six paradoxes, structured under the following headings.

1. Board's decision making and support to teaching and learning.
2. Board's self-concept.
3. Large class size.
4. Enrolment of pupils from higher socioeconomic settings.
5. Exiting free public education for fee paying private education.
6. Conducting remedial lessons despite state ban.

Paradox 1: Board's Decision Making and Support to Teaching & Learning

The board's decision-making and support for teaching and learning was related to an improvement in KCPE scores and the school being perceived as more inviting but was also related to lower parental involvement.

A higher degree of support of board members for teaching and learning was related to greater KCPE scores and the school being more inviting, but with less parental involvement. However, this situation was explained by the parents' comments: the school boards' efforts to improve teaching and learning often involved asking extremely poor parents to provide extra funds for improving school facilities and paying contract teachers, and this discouraged their participation. The parents felt that every time they went to the school, or received a message from the school, they were asked for money that they did not have. Therefore, although most parents alluded to the importance of the school boards, they were unhappy with the way these boards introduced levies that disregarded their low socioeconomic status.

I am fine and happy with the way they teach, encourage and involve my child in many creative activities but I kindly requested teachers and the rest of the staff to do away with the payment of remedial classes; most of us parents live in

slums and cannot afford much money every month. We are financially unstable and must be understood. (parent 225, *Omega*)

The board was put in a difficult position by the government's expectation that they should mobilise extra resources for the school without burdening parents. It is further complicated by the fact that most board members were themselves parents from low socioeconomic settings without financial ability, knowledge and influence to raise such funds without burdening the rest of the school's parents. This highlights a conflict between the two roles of the board—raising money as required by the government while supporting the interests of the local community, who have scarce resources.

Regression analysis, discussed in Chapter 6, showed that although school board decision-making improves school climate, it discourages parental involvement. The issues that featured most prominently in parents' meeting were monetary, which seemed to discourage parents from participating in school. Parent 5 at *Alpha* wrote, "the school is money oriented they put too much emphasis on money as compared to teaching"; parent 48 from *Alpha* advised the school "to be considerate in the amount of money they demand for. I am a parent trying to make ends meet by providing food for my family but sometimes the school acts as a stumbling block". As shown in Table 6.4 *Alpha* had the second lowest percentage of parents who communicated with the school.

Some schools collect monies from parents for provision of certain utilities but fail to provide them. For example, parent 54 of *Kappa* complained: "Most of the time children are sent home about money, sometime they say money for water and electricity but my children are saying there is no water or electricity". Such parents learn to distrust their school boards and would fail to support them in future. Decisions such as sending children away because of their parents' failure to pay school levies appear to have reflected badly on the board, and had a negative impact on parents' involvement.

The class teacher sometimes fails to understand if the parent doesn't have money this is mainly because they are chasing/sending the children home for money while the parents at real sense doesn't have money and if they go back and say that they are being forced to stay out of classes while those who have paid are in yet that is not fair (parent 67, *Kappa*)

For school boards to improve parental involvement they should be seen as fair and considerate. For example, parent 266 of *Sigma* wrote, "My children are very happy with their schools' environment ... the teachers are so polite and good and have very

positive attitudes. For instance, when I have problems, they will always lend me money like Shillings 100 or 200 (AUD 1.25 or 2.50) when I ask”.’ The approach used by school boards determines how the parents will respond.

Paradox 2: Board’s Self-concept

The board members’ self-concept was found to relate negatively with KCPE scores, school climate and parental involvement.

The positive perception of the school board about their practice or their *self-concept* appeared to have a negative impact on KCPE scores, parental involvement and school climate. In other words, the more committed some board members claimed to be, the more likely pupil performance was to be low, fewer parents were to be involved and the school was to become *less inviting* overall. This suggests that the approach used by some boards when they became actively involved in school affairs was perceived as a negative influence on the school, even though it was well-intentioned.

The government expects the public primary school boards to facilitate the development of children’s affective, cognitive, psychomotor and physical attributes (Republic of Kenya, 2013a). Smoley (1999) cautioned that lack of clarity and the resulting misunderstanding of a board’s role often led to misdirection of energy. For example, the determination of some board members to monitor teaching and learning caused a misunderstanding with teachers. The public primary school boards are in a difficult situation if they have to monitor teaching and learning—as required by the government—but are perceived by teachers as incompetent.

Involvement of board members in supervising teaching and learning has been the subject of much debate. There are those who think that the boards are inhabited by inexperienced lay people meddling in a complex profession (Sell, 2005). They go further to state that the boards are a hindrance to capable and knowledgeable administration, while the proponents counter that education is too important to leave solely to educators and administrators (Sell, 2005; Smoley, 1999). Sell (2005) argued that school boards provide a balance between the zeal of specialists and the needs of students and families, and also that they provide a link between schools and communities. This link leads to ownership of the school by the community and makes them willing to participate actively in the school’s affairs.

An example of this paradox is exemplified at *Upsilon*. Some teachers (36i, 37i and 33i) regarded involvement of the school board members in the daily operations of the school as a great impediment to their professional work. Teacher 36i claimed that “in *Upsilon* if you aren’t strong you cannot survive”, while teacher 37i added, “you cannot voice anything if you voice whether it’s in the benefit of the children you will be answerable as an individual in fact you will be picked on directly”. Teacher 33i stated that from then “the board wants to rule the school they want to dictate what happens they don’t understand their roles and interfere”. The teachers resented interference in their professional work and argued that their board was ineffective, because their school had “inadequate teaching resources” (teacher 36i), “the physical facilities like classrooms, chairs most of them are broken” (teacher 35i) and the classroom floor was described as a ‘shamba’ [farm] (teacher 34i). They suggested that the board should concentrate on their role as managers and improve the school’s facilities. If they wanted to support learning more effectively, “they should respect the teachers and work with the teachers, not undermine them”

In contrast, the *Omega* board is lauded for:

...trying a lot to help the [school] administration and teachers run the school over the years. Again they are the link between the school and the parents because they live within the community they are able to liaise with the school administration and the teachers and they make the school run swiftly without any hitch unlike any other school where they are a lot of scandal. In this school and the surrounding community I don’t think that is the case in this community I think they [board] have done a good job. (*Omega* teacher 11i, personal communication, 17/10/2013)

Therefore, unless board members adopted proper and strategic approaches to carrying out their roles, their involvement would be an impediment. It is not easy for board members (who do not have expertise in education) to balance between monitoring teaching and learning as required by government and working in the interest of the community—which includes the teachers.

Paradox 3: Large Class Size

Pupils learning in large classes perform better than those in small class sizes.

Implementing government directives regarding the enrolment of pupils has led to very large pupil numbers—in most cases, beyond the school facilities’ designed capacity. Large class sizes have become common in most public primary schools in Kenya since

the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in 2003 and since 2001, when the government ceased hiring new teachers (Duflo et al., 2012). The board has a responsibility to support these government initiatives, but also is expected to look after the interests of pupils in the school community. Although most studies suggest that small class sizes will lead to improved pupils' scores, this study showed that pupils from schools with small class sizes performed poorly compared with pupils from schools with large class sizes.

In the current study, *Upsilon* and *Tau*, with the lowest pupil-teacher ratios, posted results below the national means, as shown in Figure 6.1; conversely, the results of *Omega*, with the highest pupil-teacher ratio, were above the national means. FPE caused increased enrolment of pupils in schools, resulting in large class sizes with dilapidated facilities and teacher shortages. School boards were left with only two options to address these challenges: either to endure the shortages and overcrowding, or to employ novice teachers on short-term contracts using their own funds. Teachers indicated that large class sizes were frustrating their work and hampering effective learning, making it difficult to attend to every individual pupil, which disadvantages the slower learners. Some of them have opted to focus their attention on the brighter pupils, which is making the others very unhappy.

This study does not have adequate data to explain why *Omega* was doing well despite their large numbers, and why *Tau* and *Upsilon* were not performing well despite their smaller class sizes. However, written comments and interviews in *Tau* and *Upsilon* strongly suggested that the effective use of collaborative learning contributed substantially to their success. Comments from two *Omega* pupils suggested that it was a common practice in the school.

Teachers are very free with the pupils and when we are reaching to do our examination they put us in group and we are able to discuss (*pupil 125, Omega*).

We love learning together and discussing our working groups (*pupil 128, Omega*).

Although this approach has been adopted to manage large numbers, several studies have shown that group discussion enhances the understanding of weaker students (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2013; Smith et al., 2002); and “proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking”

(Gokhale, 1995, p. 1). Students working in cooperative teams have an opportunity to engage in discussion, are more confident about their learning, have higher retention levels, think more critically, and their scores in examination tend to improve (Johnson & Johnson, 1986; Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991). Cooperative teams, unlike students working individually, perform better and retain information longer (Johnson & Johnson, 1986). Working in groups provides opportunity for student to engage in productive discussion, helps them take responsibility for their own learning and become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991).

Paradox 4: Enrolment of pupils from higher socioeconomic settings

Children from well-off families enrol in public primary schools located in extremely poor settings such as the Kibera slum.

Table 10.1 shows a comparison of parents' level of education and family income

Table 10.1

Post Hoc Tests comparing level of education and monthly incomes of Omega parents and parents of other schools

School	Level of Education		Monthly Family Income	
	Mean Difference	Sig	Mean Difference	Sig
<i>Alpha</i>	0.29*	.000	0.44*	.001
<i>Kappa</i>	0.19	.064	0.29	.066
<i>Mu</i>	0.40*	.000	0.38*	.007
<i>Rho</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Sigma</i>	0.44*	.000	0.37*	.017
<i>Tau</i>	0.19	.074	0.27	.110
<i>Upsilon</i>	-0.02	.896	0.15	.571

Note. Positive mean difference indicate the *Omega* is relatively much better while negative represents *Omega* to be relatively less better; * $p < .05$, two-tailed; ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. Shaded values indicate that perceptions of *Omega* parents differed significantly to perception of parents in the other school.

All the public primary schools in Kibera that were studied had a few pupils enrolled who resided outside the slum. Yet the location of these public schools within the slum

would rarely attract parents from relatively well-off families to bring their children into them. Results showed that some of these parents had a relatively higher income and higher levels of education (see Appendix 34).

Although *Omega* was one of the school with more than 94% of the pupils residing within the slum, (Table 6.1), results showed that parents' level of education ($F=5.67$, $N=803$, $p<.05$) and family monthly incomes ($F=2.51$, $N=803$, $p<.05$) differed significantly from parents at *Alpha*, *Mu* and *Sigma*.

Parents with relatively higher levels of education and income were also reported to be in *Kappa* and *Sigma*, which respectively had 96% and 88% of their pupils residing within the slum. While pupils from slums would see their school physical environment as very clean when compared from their home environment, the children from well-off families were likely to find the environment and other pupils almost unbearable.

The school environment is very dirty. The teachers beat children mercilessly. The food at school has no salt and it has some small stones in it. (pupil 66, *Omega*)

The environment of our school is very dirty and pupils are very dirty likely to transmit germs. Our playing field is not good because there is no grass to control soil erosion. (pupil 110, *Omega*)

Toilets in our school are extremely dirty while the school cleaner does nothing about them. We are living a very miserable life at school and it is hazardous to our health. (pupil 151, *Omega*)

Although the information is not available in the data, pupils 66, 110, and 151 most likely belong to some of the well-off families who preferred, despite the location of school in the slum, to send their children to learn in them. Public primary education is open to all children irrespective of their status, religion, age and gender. Therefore, school boards are supposed to ensure that children, irrespective of their background, are safe, happy and feel welcomed. Although data collected in this study is too limited to conclusively state reasons for the few children from more privileged background attending schools in the slum, it appeared that school tradition and performance attract families from well-off backgrounds.

The public primary school boards are likely to find it difficult to cater for most of the needs of the children from well-off families. For example, most pupils residing within the slum would be happy with the free lunch provided at school but those from well-off families complained about the quality of such foods.

Paradox 5: Exiting Free Public Education for Fee Paying Private Education

Some poor parents have abandoned free public primary education for private primary schools for the poor operating within the slum

Another conundrum discovered by this study is that some poor parents are abandoning free public primary schools to send their children to ‘budget’ private schools. According to Tooley (2007), these parents were abandoning public education because of its inadequacies (such as poor quality and lack of accountability) in the hope that the private schools would be more responsive to their needs and desires. This conundrum was also observed in most informal settlements in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana, China, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Pakistan and India (Oketch et al., 2010; Tooley & Dixon, 2005).

Tooley (2007) argued that these private schools for the poor were of a quality far superior to free government schools in terms of teacher attendance, teacher commitment, and provision of drinking water, toilets, desks, chairs, electric fans and lightning; moreover, they outperform the government schools in academic attainment. A small number of parents, such as Parent 2i at *Mu* would have agreed with Tooley. They were of the view that large class sizes resulted in lack of individual attention, failure of teachers to check pupils’ work and enforce discipline, teachers’ laxity, and idleness of pupils, which were the reasons given for some parents moving their children from free public education to private schools for the poor.

According to me, parents look at public schools and sees that it has many pupils in class and you find some kids don’t know why they are in school. In school they just wait for break time and lunch time. Kids who try to concentrate on their studies are mostly disrupted by others ... that’s why when parent see that there is no strictness, lack of discipline, and bad manners from kids ... and because they don’t like school board they simply transfer their kids to [private schools]. According to these parents pupils in private are disciplined, classrooms aren’t congested, and teachers do their work well. While in public schools kids mark each other’s home work or school work so when the parents sees that they get discouraged and prefer to take them to more stricter schools and this habit of teachers sending kids to go buy them stuff isn’t good at all (*Mu* parent 2i, personal communication, 21/9/2013)

They [parents who transfer their children to private schools] say that in public school the population of pupils is very high and teachers don’t have time to meet with the kids interest and aren’t strict because their [teachers] kids are in private again the teachers give books to the kids but they don’t mark and the kids fails in exam the teachers don’t care but in private the teachers work harder so that the

kids pass well in their exams and so that their school can be heard but in public they really don't care (*Mu* parent 3i, personal communication, 21/9/2013)

However, according to Watkins (2000), these fee paying private schools operating within the slum offer education of “inferior quality”, offering “a low-quality service” that will “restrict children’s future opportunities”. Adelabu and Rose (2004), agree with Watkins, stating that in Nigeria, private schools for the poor are reported to offer “a low cost, low quality substitute” for public education. From my observations the main reason why parents would take their children to these private schools, despite their deplorable status, was due to sponsorship by a charity or aid organisation. In fact, some parents who have enrolled their children in private schools at lower grades have moved them back to the public primary school at higher grades when they had trouble paying:

During my visit to *Sigma* in the second school term (schools in Kenya run for three terms), a parent came to the school with two of her daughters seeking admission for them in Grade 8. The girls were learning in one of the private schools within the slum, but had lost sponsorship and the parents were unable to keep them there. They failed to attend lessons for almost two months as the parents tried to raise the money and decided to re-admit them in public school. The school was not ready to admit the girls during the second term and in Grade 8 but instead advised the parents to bring them back the following year (field notes, 21/6/2013)

Despite their poor reputation, these private schools for the poor receive funding from sponsors/donors, which they use to pay teachers and provide basic assistance to pupils and families. However, as these schools are business enterprises, the owners, known as ‘school directors’, have to make a profit, attract more money from parents and sponsors, and therefore do whatever it takes to ensure that the school reports a better score. Some of their strategies include teachers drilling students in exam questions rather than teaching a broad curriculum, grade inflation and registering their weaker pupils to sit for KCPE examination in different schools.

In private where my child was schooling they teach well but during exam time since the head teacher wants to impress parents, if she sees that you pay school fees well, they alter their scores to look as if the child is doing well when he is not. However, when you ask the kid about what they got correct in test the child is unable to explain. This is when the child says that the teacher gave them answers. I got mad and complained several times at the school and told the teachers let the child do their own work and give the child marks to his/her own genuine performance doesn't matter whether I pay school fees there is no need for you to give him a good number and when you ask him/her something they

say they don't know because the teachers used to give them answers but in government side its good (*Mu* parent 4i, personal communication, 21/9/2013).

Some parent will pretend to be poor so that the children gets sponsor. A parent living in a slum cannot afford to take a pupil to a private school which pays almost shillings 40000 [approx. 500 Australian dollars] a year. That is when you find someone just opening one roomed house and make it a class then lets pupils attend it in barefoot and ragged clothes then takes a picture and shows it to the white people so as to get aid. (*Omega* parent 20i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

When they [sponsors] want to visit their homes they are taken to a wrong home so poor so as to paint the picture that the kids can't help themselves. Hence the children learn until form four [equivalent of Grade 12] they have no problem like the one owned by a prominent person. In this school even if a pupil scores 250 marks [out of 500], they are assured of secondary education. While in *Omega* you will get a child from *Omega* has 350 marks but with no school fees therefore they will not get a chance that's why in Kibera when a child reaches Grade 6 or 7 parents opt to look for sponsors. (*Omega* parent 17i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

This study was not able to compare the performance of these private schools for the poor with the national mean. From participants' experiences captured during the interviews, the main reason for this conundrum was not for the purposes of quality education, but for economic benefit. They take their children to these private schools after getting a sponsor or hoping to get one. While data is unavailable to show the performance of these private primary schools, none of them were lauded by interviewees for producing quality results.

Paradox 6: Conducting Remedial Lessons Despite State ban

Provision of remedial lessons for a fee in defiance of government policy

Common strategies used by the public school boards in Kibera slum for improving academic achievement is by employing contract teachers, organising remedial lessons, briefing parents on their children's academic progress, and counselling. Other less-common strategies include organising educational tours or excursions for pupils, educational fairs or prize-giving days, monitoring school programs and seeking sponsors for deserving children. The success of most of these strategies depends on how effective the school boards have been able in securing parental support.

One strategy that has been a source of tension between teachers and parents on one end, and teachers and government on the other, is offering remedial lessons for a fee or

‘tuition’. The money collected from this form of tuition is shared among teachers using an agreed formula, which varies in terms of the amount from one school to another. In most schools, the class teachers are the ones who collect the money.

The teachers have two books one for the subject they teach and the other one for collecting money. (*Tau* parent 12i, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

Most teachers claim that they need more time to complete the syllabus and to give individual attention to children. This may be true, but it appears some teachers also need ‘motivation’ to help their pupils in the form of fees. Some parents see ‘tuition’ as a way for teachers to make money from them, even though the teachers earn a great deal more than parents.

It was abolished and it is also true that most parents have mixed opinion on it because most parents believe with ‘tuition’ their kids will do well and improve especially in the national exam I think on the other side I can support it that it’s good that it was abolished. (*Rho* teacher 20, personal communication, 10/10/2013)

The school board has helped in extra ‘tuition’ for the child to improve in academic achievement. (parent 10, *Alpha*)

The board has tried all their best in the academics by putting evening ‘tuitions’ for our children. (parent 83, *Mu*)

Too much money is charged for extra remedial lessons (parent 221, *Omega*)

Teachers to stop depending tuition money, let them be serious with normal hours and the children will pass. If they have not managed the normal hours how are they going to recover the two extended hours? Tuition should be voluntary. (parent 316, *Upsilon*)

It is good that they [government] abolished because it will reach a time that you will be forced to do it and if you refuse you will be blacklisted as unsupportive ... for example I am not offering ‘tuition’ and not ready to do it in future. (*Upsilon* teacher 33, personal communication, 14/10/2013)

If you compare the child in public school, for example our school is large numbers if you look at the time allocated it’s not enough to deliver to this large number so what we need is extra time and that extra time is what the government has abolished now this disadvantaged children when do you attend to them? They just get lost and when you look into private schools the number is not as large as in public schools yet the private tuition goes on private schools and they will do the same exam now you see our children will be disadvantaged in fact we sacrifice ourselves you just stay with the child not expecting any payment but just to help the child. (*Kappa* teacher 4, personal communication, 31/10/2013)

If you abolish ‘tuition’ in schools you should increase the number of teachers... because, if you don’t increase then you don’t abolish ... the reason for ‘tuition’ was to [give teachers extra time] to at least reach every child [which was not

possible] during normal lesson. [It is not possible for a teacher] to attending to 112 pupils, mark their books, give them homework and assignments during the normal lesson [40 minutes]... [It is also true] that some teachers used it [for making money] ...some do not teach during normal lesson then appear during 'tuition'... (*Omega* board member 7, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

The government banned fees for remedial lessons or 'tuition' to protect parents from being exploited and to allow children time for doing their homework and participating in other co-curricular activities. Despite the ban and government's threat to sack teachers who charge tuition, including those who participated in this study, schools have continue [sic] offering extra tuition for cash (Ngugi, 2013). Most teachers support the practice because it gives them more time to attend to the weak learners and complete the syllabus, as well as additional income. The ban elicited strong reactions from teachers, parents, teachers' union, and school boards (Ngugi, 2013). It is perceived as an attempt to deny the poor children quality education and give advantage to the children of the rich. It is not clear, however, if the ban applies for private schools.

The government has caused real division among its parents so that those who have should continue having, their [haves] children's education should be better and those who don't have should remain that way and even the little that they are given such as 'remedial lessons' or 'tuition' they should not get... yet both [haves and 'have nots'] are compared using the same examination at national level. A child living in Kibera whose parents are extremely poor benefits much more through learning with others during the 'tuition'. If this child goes home she or he will be preoccupied with their parents' businesses such as help the mother to sell 'mandazi' [doughnuts], fetch water etc. While children whose parents are financial able go home after school and find a teacher at home ready for 'tuition'. So when this child from Kibera is fetching water and selling 'mandazi' up to let's say 9pm the other one is busy being tutored yet both will sit for the same examination at the end of their Grade 8 level. Who will excel? That's why you find it come out mixed because of such issues. (*Kappa* teacher 1, personal communication, 31/10/2013)

Some teachers are taking advantage ... they [teachers] have realised 'tuition' is a lucrative trade for them to earn a living, to pay their loans ... most teachers concentrate on 'tuition' more than normal lessons ... they teach reluctantly during normal ... (*Omega* board member 1, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

I don't like this issue of contributions in school... they do not consider the less fortunate parents when they propose money for contribution. This affects the kids when they are sent him to collect the money hence they should sit down with the parents and discuss before proposing another issue is this sending kids home to go and bring money at time we as parents do not have it stresses us out. (*Omega* parent 22i, personal communication, 18/7/2013).

Jeruto and Chemwei (2014) found that teachers and parents had devised new strategies to circumvent the ban by referring to it as ‘remedial teaching’, which is conducted during extra hours within the week and on Saturdays. Some schools hire other venues, such as churches, to continue with the practice as stated by teacher 2 at *Kappa*: “still there is private tuition in the houses, churches those who are able you have even a teacher in the house it’s only the one who is not able the poor parent who is suffering”.

In the Education Act 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2013), the government mandated the school boards to promote the best interest of the institution, and promote quality education—but at the same time it appears to curtail those provisions. The board members, teachers, parents and pupils perceive tuition as an opportunity to improve their performance to match those of schools in other settings. They argue that the government appears to use double standards for rich and for poor, which they see as a strategy by the rich to block the poor by denying them access to quality education. The board is in a difficult position because with regard to provision of extra lessons or tuition, the state law does not match the interests of the community.

Tensions

The following areas were found to cause tensions that affected how the boards operated in the schools included in this study:

1. Use of corporal punishment as corrective measure for bad behavior
2. Large number of female teachers
3. The relationship between head teacher and the school board

Tension 1: Use of Corporal Punishment

Use of corporal punishment as corrective measures for bad behavior

Corporal punishment is allowed in some countries and in certain American states (Grayson, 2006), but was outlawed in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Nevertheless, despite its abolition, teachers in most schools have continued to practise it with the full knowledge of their school boards. Pupils who are living in the slums are exposed to behaviours and social practices that are inappropriate. Some of them are easily lured into some of these bad behaviours, which are noticeable in schools, and parents expect

teachers and the school boards to correct them. For example, two parents of *Mu* were concerned about teachers' inability or unwillingness to handle cases of pupils' bad behaviour:

in this school discipline is very low especially in Grade 7 and 8; yet the teacher in charge of discipline or senior teacher have not taken the opportunity to discipline kids. You will find in classes some pupils steal teachers' phones ... surprising the senior teacher does not act — not even warning the pupils. The teachers just watch the children misbehave. (*Mu* parent 6i, personal communication, 21/9/2013).

My child told me that a girl insulted a teacher... the girl dared the teacher to report her to old principal ... she was confident the head teacher cannot do anything to her. (*Mu* parent 3i, personal communication, 21/9/2013)

Common corrective strategies used by public primary schools included involving parents, guidance and counselling of students, manual work, corporal punishment and verbal reprimands (Ouma, Simatwa, & Serem, 2013); corporal punishment was the most popular measure reported to be in use in the schools studied. Nevertheless, it was used excessively in some schools. Some parents, such as parent 135 of *Omega*, urged the board 'to stop the caning of pupils in the school'.

Corporal punishment, although outlawed by the Kenyan government, is used in all schools to deter bad behaviour among pupils. This is one example where the government has put the boards in a tough position because the law is not in line with community expectation. If the boards do not allow teachers to use corporal punishment they will be accused of doing nothing to improve discipline in the school. If they do allow corporal punishment they are breaking the laws that they are supposed to enforce. However, the problem that was of concern to parents and pupils was not the use of corporal punishment, but using it unfairly and excessively as was the case with the missing religious books discussed in Chapter 9 pp 215-6.

Tension 2: Huge Gender Disparity in Staffing of Teachers

The assumption that the large number of female teachers undermines pupils' performance

Globally, there are more female teachers in primary education than male teachers (Johnson, 2008). In the United States, Carney (2007) states that "just a quarter of public school teachers are men ... Indiana has one of the highest percentages of male teachers at thirty-one per cent, more than six percentage points above the national

percentage” (para. 4). In the United Kingdom, more than a quarter of primary schools do not have a single male teacher (Lipsett, 2009). In public primary schools in Kibera slum the number of female teachers (eighty-three per cent) is almost five times that of male teachers (seventeen per cent). The number of male primary teachers outnumbers female teachers only in some primary schools in the rural areas.

Some parents and board members have linked the presence of large numbers of female teachers in their schools to poor performance in the KCPE exams. This perception is a source of tension between parents and teachers in some school.

Having many female teachers in school might also influence the drop in performance they should at least balance because this affects the indiscipline of the kids (*Mu* parent 6i, personal communication, 21/9/2013)..

A school should not have very many teachers of one gender but here we have so many female teachers. We need to have a balance in terms of gender for them to be active and have them compete on performance of their subjects. But when all of them are female teachers then [they converse and talk for long] and end up going to class late even for 15 minutes... you go to class for only 20 minutes... you go to give exercise to students without teacher teaching concepts (*Tau* board member 03, personal communication, 13/10/2013)

Nevertheless, empirical evidence does not support the claims that the gender of a teacher can influence a pupil’s performance (Carrington, Tymms, & Merrell, 2008). The popular belief among most parents in Kibera slum was that there was a link between pupils’ performance and teachers’ gender implying that boys are most likely to perform better if taught by male teachers. According to Lipsett (2009) “it is particularly important for boys to have positive male role models as they grow up” (para. 6). The low ratio of males to females in the teaching profession suggests that it is difficult to recruit males to teaching as a career. One reason suggested as to why the male population does not want to teach is due to low salaries for teachers (Carney, 2007). However, this reason is contestable because some men have been observed to take jobs with very low pay in spite of possessing qualification that are requisite for joining the teaching profession. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine reasons for the huge gender disparity of teachers in Kibera slum.

Most communities in Kibera are patriarchal societies where the man acts as head of family and as decision-maker. Although single mothers are common, this type of family would still be attached to a male head, such as an uncle or grandfather. Therefore, despite the preponderance of female teachers being commonplace, it would

still be seen by most parents to be against the norm to have more female teachers than male teachers. This tension is one that the boards cannot control because it is the government that posted teachers to those schools, and there are acute teacher shortages.

Tension 3: Board – Head teacher Relationship

Poor relationship between head teacher and the school board

It is incontestable that the school head teacher plays a central role in the determination of a school's academic achievement (Kowalski, 2010; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Robinson, 2007). The head teachers are principally supposed to supervise the implementation of the curriculum by ensuring that teachers do their work professionally. They are the implementation 'arm' of the school board and advise the board on what needs to be done for their school to realise positive learning outcomes. When the head teacher and the board do not have a good relationship, tension arises. In *Tau*, for example, a change of head teacher in 2008 (Figure 6.1) appears to have caused a sharp rise in KCPE scores in 2009 and 2010, while Parent 4i of *Mu* attributed the drop in pupils' performance in KCPE to the current head teacher:

My view I think the current head teacher is to be blamed because when **A** [former head teacher] was here the performance was good. Unfortunately, whenever a good head teacher is brought they don't stay long they are transferred. Since **B** [current head teacher] came in this school the performance dropped the head teacher doesn't care whether the kids perform or not. There was a deputy head teacher, from **Z** ethnic group, who was very nice and dedicated to her work but suddenly we heard the head teacher sent her away. The school is now full of one ethnic, from the head teacher to the deputy and other teachers are all from **Q** ethnic group there is no mix except one of two teachers from the other ethnic groups. During **C**'s era [head teacher who preceded **A**] the school was nice and the performance was good but when she [**C**] left parents were not happy ... she had suggested that *Mu* starts a secondary school but since **B** come she doesn't talk about it at all. **D** (a senior teacher) went for transfer to **L** [a neighbouring primary school] but come back to *Mu* so there is something fishy going on there. Other good teachers when they are transferred the head teacher will not allow but for **D** [a friend of **B** and hails from the same ethnic group] who has been transferred several transfers she still comes back to *Mu*. (*Mu* parent 4i, personal communication, 21/9/2013)

In some schools, such as *Rho* and *Omega*, the school boards and parents were very happy with their head teachers. The tension between some school boards and the head teachers occurred as a result of their contrasting roles, which at times required that they monitor what the head teacher does and at the same time support them. On many

occasions, the head teachers have resisted the attempts by boards to control them and have resorted to independent operations. For example, in *Tau*, the head teacher employed a teacher on contract and sacked him without involving parents.

We just had that the employed teachers were fired we don't even know how but also we don't even know when they were employed. We would like to know the criteria they use to employee teachers for example do they look at their level of education. For example [sic] one day my son came home and told me that the headmaster brought in a new maths teacher but he did not understand anything and he is caning us a lot (parent 11*i*, *Tau*).

It is important to remember that head teachers are also part of the boards and have the opportunity to influence the boards' decisions. For example, in *Omega*, some board members alluded to the fact that the head teacher tacitly influenced some decisions made by the boards. This study, though, did not collect data from head teachers and so was not able to ascertain their on how school boards had contributed to setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving academic achievement.

Dilemma

Two main dilemmas were found to affect the operation of the boards yet this study has been unable to provide solutions.

1. How can schools avoid the effects of national politics on their academic performance since they are government-funded?
2. How do school boards that are elected during a poorly attended annual general meeting represent the interest of most of the missing parents?

The following sections discuss these dilemmas in more details.

Dilemma 1: National Politics

How can schools avoid effects of national politics on their academic performance since they are government funded?

During the last twelve years, national elections have been held three times at five-year intervals—in December 2002, December 2007 and March 2013. As shown in Figure 6.1, the KCPE scores of most schools dropped sharply in the year after an election. According to most of the participants in this study, national elections have had a negative affect on the pupils, teachers and the schools.

Schools

All public primary schools in Kibera were used as polling stations in each of the three national elections, and some were also used as campaign venues for politicians (Oswago, 2012). Some schools, such as *Omega*, were exposed to extremely disturbing and distressing noise levels and civil chaos, as they were located near a popular venue for political rallies, known as ‘Kamkunji’. Schools frequently have to close to make way for political party nominations and final election campaigns. These interruptions interfere with the school calendar and prevent teachers and pupils from completing the syllabus.

Political contests, which involve all sort of people, scenes of violence and destruction of properties, were common in several polling stations. The aftermath of such violence, destruction and looting is that schools used as polling stations need to carry out repairs or renovations. There is no extra money given to schools to compensate them, so they are forced to re-allocate funds meant for teaching and learning resources to repair or replace facilities and equipment lost during the electioneering period. Although the government expects schools to support the electoral process, there are no contingent measures put in place to help protect schools from destruction or to repair or replace destroyed school property.

Another aspect that affects learning is the recruitment of teachers as polling officials. In the last general election, the Electoral Commission required more than 250,000 polling officials, and because of their education, knowledge and position in the community, teachers were targeted for senior positions as returning officers, presiding officers and deputy presiding officers (Hassan, 2013; Oswago, 2012). However, engaging teachers as electoral staff has serious implications for teaching and learning, since teachers have to spend time out of class and the children are left unsupervised.

I think this year it [national elections] has really affected the learning ... most of these schools were used as the polling stations during that time pupils did not go to school. Political party nomination took three days while the preparation for and voting during the elections is expected to take more than one day ... The government through the ministry of education needs to agree with the electoral body and come up with measures to ensure learning is not interrupted during such elections. . (*Omega* board member 9, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

I think national election has really affected the education. The people whom they are using to become the presiding officers or returning officers are the teachers. My suggestions are that in future, polling station should not be in school. Secondly, teachers should not be recruited as electoral official but instead give those position to other qualified people including students ... [In] Kenya we have enough human resource who can do that because it's another way we are going to devolve other duties to other people those who already have jobs to stick to their jobs and those who don't have we can employ students who have already graduated at the end the results which they get they will bring to the government. (*Omega* board member 3, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

I support the sentiment of board member 3. I remember of a day I went to school and found most teachers were away. I later learnt they had gone for the interviews for position associated with elections such being agents, presiding and returning officers. They should get people outside who are not teachers and also they should not use the schools I think there are churches they could use or hire halls because they always interrupt learning and at the end of the day if the school doesn't perform they blame the teachers and yet it's the government fault. (*Omega* board member 9, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

Teachers are willing to participate in the electioneering processes for two main reasons: monetary and to improve their curriculum vitae. When teachers are invited for interviews for promotion they are often asked for evidence of their contribution to the community and participating in election gives them advantage. The board is therefore faced with the dilemma on how to ensure learning is not interrupted, and at the same time support national policies.

When the schools are used as polling station they are susceptible to vandalism. Party nomination exercises have been violent and in the process school properties have been destroyed. Schools are forced to divert monies meant for educational purposes to repairs and replacement.

They use the electricity and water for free... (*Omega* board member 3, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

... don't forget the damages at the expense of the school. (*Omega* board member 5, personal communication, 12/10/2013)

A public primary school board would find it difficult to approach the government to demand extra monies due to their reliance on the same government for the general school operating budget.

Teachers

Another political influence on pupils' academic achievement is ethnic rivalry bred by political parties. Where one ethnic group is aligned with a particular party, it affects

parents, teachers and pupils. As mentioned in Chapter One, Kenya has forty-three ethnic groups with different dialects and diverse cultures. Wamwere (2003) argues that ethnicity in itself is a positive distinction and has nothing to do with hatred, but *negative ethnicity*, as he describes it, is what led to genocide in Rwanda and was identified as playing a part in Kenyan post-election violence in 2007. According to Wamwere,

To most Africans, ethnicity is not necessarily negative, but something neutral and harmless that describes ethnic particularity ... *negative ethnicity* manifests itself when we begin to imagine that we are superior to others because our religion, food, language, songs, culture, or even looks are better. Assumed ethnic superiority leads to *negative ethnicity*. (pp. 2021)

The political elite who are the main architects of the political system conduct their campaigns based on ethnicity, exploiting poor people with different ethnic identities to forward their own political agendas (Yieke, 2010).

Ethnicity is not one of the criteria that the government uses to post teachers to a school, and thus teachers from several different ethnic groups may find themselves teaching in the same school, or teaching children from many different communities. During periods of heightened political activity, relationships between teachers and their pupils or parents from different ethnic backgrounds can become strained and the learning process is affected negatively.

Pupils

Political talk at home makes the pupils conscious about which political party they should support. This distracts children as young as nine from learning, because some of them stop concentrating on their studies and start maligning their classmates and sometimes their teachers, whom they perceive to be supporting a different party.

What I can say is that there are parents who go deeply into politics and even forget their kids they sleep politics, eat politics... (Omega *parent 19i*, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

Even in the school you find out that the kids belong to different parties at their young age e.g. Coalition Of Restoration of Democracy [CORD] and the other Jubilee you find them arguing and yet they are young (Omega *parent 17i*, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

You will find our young kids carrying banners and chanting the slogan “haki yetu” [popular Swahili slogan used to agitate for human rights] (Omega *parent 18i*, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

You will find out that when a kid knows that he/she is a LL, another one knows that they belong to KKY and another one knows that they belong to ethnic group MMM. This awareness causes tribal groupings, from Grade 1 to 8, which make learning tense (Omega *parent 20i*, personal communication, 18/7/2013)

Because of the history of violence during and after elections, the worst being after the 2007 elections, the election period causes anxiety and distress in some families (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights [UNHCR], 2008). In order to avoid being harmed by violence, many families in Kibera slum decide to move back to their rural homes until after the electioneering period (European Union Election Observation [EU-EOM], 2013). Children from these families are forced to abandon classes for weeks or months as they may not be able to get a place in the local school or it may not be as academically advanced as the school they attended in Kibera. Missing school affects their performance and consequently the school's mean scores. Moreover, a sizeable number of pupils dropped out of school completely after the 2007 election. The violence in and around Kibera was so severe that many families did not feel it was safe to return; or they were away for so long that the children did not wish to return to school or were too old (Sana & Okombo, 2012).

National elections will continue to present the school boards with a dilemma for the foreseeable future. The school boards cannot prevent teachers from working as electoral officials or party organisers since they lack the authority to discipline them and they would have difficulty in preventing the government, through the Electoral Commission, from using schools as polling stations. The boards need government and political support to run the schools and might be penalised if they did not support the status quo. Also, the local community has a great interest in the elections and expects the schools to be used as polling stations. It is also a fact that teachers are among the most learned people in the community and their contribution to national governance is expected. Therefore, despite the negative effects national elections have on public primary schools in Kibera the school boards have no capacity or power to improve the situation.

Dilemma 2: Board Elections

How do school boards elected during a poorly attended annual general meeting represent the interest of most of the missing parents?

One common criticism of the representativeness of the boards is that the process of electing members is usually marred by low voter turnout, compromising the boards' real democratic value (Connolly & James, 2011; Sell, 2005; Smoley, 1999). The elections of board members in most schools in this study took place even though the meetings lacked a quorum. A board constituted during a meeting with such a low turnout of parents cannot be said to be representative, creating a dilemma for the school. The board must decide if the election can proceed, questioning if such an election can be regarded as democratic and if these board members are confident that they are accepted by all the other parents.

In order to improve the representativeness of boards, Sell (2005) suggests the use of incentives to the officer bearer. Lack of incentives has made the boards fail to attract the highest-quality people from the community (Smoley, 1999). For example, in *Tau*, some board members claimed that some newly elected board members expected to be paid incentives or compensation, but when they realised there was none, they withdrew.

There is nothing which motivates us or gives us impetus to serve ... there is nothing ... nothing ... no motivation ... maybe if there were sitting allowances that would be motivation ... there is no monetary motivation. (Tau board member 1, personal communication, 24/10/2013)

In Kenyan public primary schools, the election of board members is performed once a year during the annual general meeting for teacher and parents. I observed that such meetings were attended by female parents (who are mostly semi-literate and housewives), guardians, relatives or even friends. In several instances, the meeting started late. Parents are normally taken through the school's progress report and financial accounts before being subjected to an election of office bearers. The elections were mostly undertaken in a hasty manner and by acclamation, and the few male parents or vocal parents stood a higher chance of being elected. A similar scenario was observed in the United States schools, where the boards are regarded as democratic (Sell, 2005). Many people are uninterested in being elected, while in some areas, the

interests of the community are not represented, prompting a takeover by state or federal government (Land, 2002).

A strong board is important in seeking to represent the parents and balance the authority of the head teacher. Unfortunately, the attendance of parents was low at the annual general meetings, and most of those in attendance appeared to be uninterested in becoming involved with the board. For example, a board member stated:

Recently after electing a Grade 6 parents' representative since the class did not have a representative—we called a class meeting and only five turned [up] out of sixty-five. Although there was no quorum to have elections for the sake of the children we had no option but to request one parent to step-in since I was already a Grade 4 representative. (*Tau* board member 2i)

Discussion

The main paradoxes, tensions, and dilemmas faced by public primary school boards were, in most cases, caused when the state laws do not match the interest of the community. Since independence, the Kenyan government has established a number of committees and taskforces to review the education system and tackle the emerging issues with a view to improving the quality of education and delivery of education service (Republic of Kenya, 2001). The recommendations arising from the reports of these committees and taskforces have guided educational policy formulation in enhancement of growth and development in the country. However, Makori (2005) observes that majority of the commission reports were either rejected or only partially implemented. Amutabi (2003) notes that, many of the education committees and commissions in Kenya appear to be appointed in response to certain pressures and crises to assuage public concern.

Public primary school boards have in recent times been the focus of education policy formulation in Kenya. They are seen as avenues to improve the quality of education in Kenya. Issues that concerned the education sector in Kenya fifty years ago are still a challenge today. Education is still segregated for the rich and for the poor; poverty, ignorance and disease like HIV/AIDS are threatening access to education. The education system is still academically-oriented and exam-centric with an overloaded curriculum. The burgeoning informal settlements in urban centres are caused by high rates of unemployment, especially among the graduates and heavy rural–urban migration. The cost of education continues to rise, despite the introduction of free

primary education due to school levies; there are teacher shortages in schools, yet there are enough trained teachers who remain unemployed. There is high demand for skills for the current knowledge economy but employers complain that training institutions are unable to supply them with graduates with up-to-date skills, forcing them to run in-house training for new employees; and social values and virtues are at its lowest, as evidenced during the post-election violence in 2008.

However, due to political interference, the reactive nature of the government, lack of proper consultation and stakeholder involvement, ad hoc education review, and poor and hurried action has hampered the effective implementations of the committees' and taskforces' recommendations. Education quality could greatly be improved if the paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas facing the school boards are addressed through a system of close consultation with parents and the local community, a periodic process in which an ongoing program of research and development feeds planned, and through empirically-based improvement. The government should avoid populist recommendations, such as abolishing of 'remedial lessons', instead make realistic recommendations that will improve the education standards in all settings especially the urban low socioeconomic settings.

Conclusion

This study has shown that, regardless of socioeconomic settings and other external factors, it is possible with effective school governance practices for public schools to provide quality education. However, the board has two conflicting roles, which contribute to a number of paradoxes, tensions, and dilemmas that they need to resolve. These have been handled with different degrees of effectiveness by different boards, but for some of these issues, solutions do not appear to be available in the current climate. However, with closer consultation between government and local community some of these tensions, paradoxes, and dilemmas could be addressed.

The next chapter concludes the findings of this study and makes recommendations.

Chapter 11

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The focus of this study was the effectiveness of public primary school boards in urban low socio-economic settings in Kenya. The study was driven by the belief that quality education for the poor is a global concern and is a priority for eradicating poverty worldwide. School board governance in the Kibera slum presents a complex situation involving many factors but in the present study the focus was on three areas of responsibility of these boards: school climate, parental involvement, and academic achievement.

In a summary of the findings, this study found that the selected schools were similar in that they faced the same problems and challenges that resulted from their location in the slum. They had to find ways to deliver quality education to children from extremely disadvantaged families—more than 85 per cent of the pupils in each school lived in Kibera slum. All had to raise extra money to cover cooking and delivery of food, extra support teachers, school maintenance and other improvements to the school, after-school tuition, commercial trial exams, and other school programs such as educational excursions and tours. However, the boards of the eight schools in this study responded very differently to these problems and challenges. Moreover, school board practices were found to be related to school climate, parental involvement, and academic achievement. This study has confirmed that public primary school boards in urban low-socioeconomic settings do influence provision of quality education.

Most of public primary school boards in Kibera are committed to the provision of quality education to the children. This was in spite of their relatively low education levels compared to teachers and their meagre income. Most of the board members are clear about their roles and functions and try to carry them out diligently. In some schools the boards' effectiveness is undermined by the head teacher and parents. In most schools studied, the board appeared to work well with the head teacher but in a real sense they were operating as the head teacher's 'rubber-stamp'. Despite the board's existence, the authority and power to run and manage school resources was

with the head teacher. The relationship between the head teacher and the board was positive in most schools; while in some it was tense, which affected the board's operations. These boards were in a conflicting position. They were required to implement government policies and at the same time to pursue community interests which at times was against the government's policy.

A summary of the findings related to the five research questions is presented in this chapter. These questions focussed on the ways in which the school board members, parents and Grade 8 pupils perceived the school boards in terms of their effectiveness, operations and ability to respond to the paradoxes, conflicts and tensions which they encountered on a regular basis.

The significance of the research instruments including the IETP questionnaires and interview prompts is discussed. The benefits of using a mixed-methods approach that involved collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in providing the opportunity to present a diversity of views and opinions are outlined.

The role of the researcher, to inform and add to the body of educational research, is explained, and the limitations and delimitations of the study are discussed.

Finally, there are recommendations for future action, including further research.

Summary of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The main focus of this study was to determine how public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings impacted on school climate, parental involvement and pupils performance. An effective board was associated with their ability to make their school inviting, enhance the involvement of parents in school affairs and to improve Grade 8 pupils' performance in KCPE. The data collected was found to be valid, reliable and suitable to determine the board's effectiveness. This study concludes that in spite of the very difficult circumstances that the boards in Kibera operated; they are able to impact positively on school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance.

The following sections present the key findings in response to the five questions that guided this study.

Question 1: Participants' perceptions

What are the perceptions of grade 8 pupils, teachers, parents and board members about their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

This question was answered in three parts: school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement.

School Climate

This study has found that most participants considered their school climate as somewhat inviting (Smith, 2013). While this might be concluded to be acceptable, there is a lot of room for improvement. There were differences between schools on different aspects of school climate. The aspect with the greatest disparity was *place*, with schools' ratings ranging from 'inviting' to 'most disinviting'. Many of the Grade 8 pupils and parents were unhappy with the poor maintenance of physical facilities such as toilets, and unavailability of water or electricity. In other aspects of the school climate there were few differences. However, parents were concerned about the high payments for remedial lessons, and excessive use of corporal punishment. Most of the pupils were happy with their teachers, claiming that most of the teachers were very hardworking, compassionate and friendly. Teachers claimed to be motivated by their desire to help their pupils prosper but they were frustrated by the low parental involvement and in some cases, by the working conditions.

Parental Involvement

According to many of the teachers, parents and board members, unless stimulated by the school boards, parents in public primary schools in Kibera slum were unlikely to be involved. The parents considered themselves to have participated actively in school affairs through attending meetings and paying school levies. Although most parents were committed to ensuring their children received quality education, poor relationships with teachers and inability to pay levies appeared to discourage their participation. Parents' desire for their children to perform well was demonstrated by their willingness to pay for extra lessons, despite being extremely poor.

Supporting several previous studies (Collins, Cooper, & Whitmore, 1999; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sheldon & Epstein, 2010), this study confirmed that parents can increase children's academic success through involvement with schools and

communities. In schools where parents were more involved, students were motivated, had confidence, performed much better in the national examinations and exhibited less disruptive behaviour. However, participation of parents in school affairs in public primary schools in this urban low socioeconomic setting was very low. Their participation is dependent on how *inviting* the school is and how active the school board members are. Results of this study show that although parental involvement was low in most schools, intervention by the school board had a significant influence and was quite effective in improving parental involvement.

The common obstacles to parental involvement in public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings identified by this study were:

1. disinvolving schools where parents and teachers having a conflictual relationship;
2. frequent demands for money from parents;
3. teachers lacking knowledge and skills to deal with parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds;
4. lack of parental education and skills and
5. job pressures on parents.

The result has been low participation in school affairs which has contributed to:

1. board members being elected by few parents; and
2. non-inclusive decisions.

This low participation is also perceived by many as lack of parental interest in education, which has led to a lack of motivation by pupils and low morale among teachers.

Academic Achievement

Performance of Grade 8 pupils in the national examination was observed to have been on the decline in all schools since the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in 2003. According to participants, the most common causes for the decline were large class sizes, shortage of teachers, frequent school closures, and low parental involvement. The performance of *Omega*, despite experiencing similar challenges to other schools, was above the national mean, which is attributable partly to their school

board practices. The *Omega* board was found to be firm on parental involvement, and they regularly supervised school programs, maintained a positive school culture, and worked collaboratively with their head teacher.

Pupils in public primary schools in Kibera slum performed much better when their board was involved in monitoring school programs, frequently engaged parents, and had a higher expectation of the pupils. Collaboration and team work among board members were found to be important aspects of an effective board, and necessary if a board is to monitor school programs and activities, such as the cleaning of toilets, remedial classes, and preparation of lunches. These aspects of the school have an effect on students' learning.

Question 2: Operation of the school boards

How do school boards of public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya operate?

The policy makers intended the public primary school boards, irrespective of the setting, to operate using the stewardship model. The stewardship model is based on the assumption that the boards and the head teacher (as chief executive) would work towards a common goal for the school, which was an inviting school climate, high parental involvement and better pupils' performance in KCPE. The model emphasises trust and close social ties between the board and the head teacher.

The most common practice of the boards was to rubber-stamp the head teacher's decision. In other words, public primary school boards adopted, unknowingly, the *managerial hegemony* model of governance, which states that although the stakeholders, such as the parents, may have legal powers and mandates, they have ceded their control to the professionals—in this case, the head teacher (Cornforth, 2004). In most cases, the head teachers used the boards to raise school levies, including those required for remedial lessons or tuition, despite the government ban. Although on paper, school boards formed sub-committees to oversee school affairs, in most schools these were non-functional.

These boards were mostly involved in organising parent-teacher meetings, ensuring that parents pay school levies, and resolving conflicts between teachers and parents. In most schools, full board meetings were rare, except for informal meetings

between the head teacher, treasurer and the board chair. Most boards rarely monitored how teachers did their work, were less active in the maintenance of the physical environment, and failed to hold the head teachers to account on fiscal matters. However, despite having a relatively low education level, lack of financial incentives, and low income, most board members were committed to supporting their school to improve pupils' performance. This was exemplified by *Omega*, a positive and committed public primary school board, which collaborated with teachers and parents, and had a positive influence on pupils' KCPE scores, school climate and parental involvement.

Question 3: Perceived efficacy of the school boards

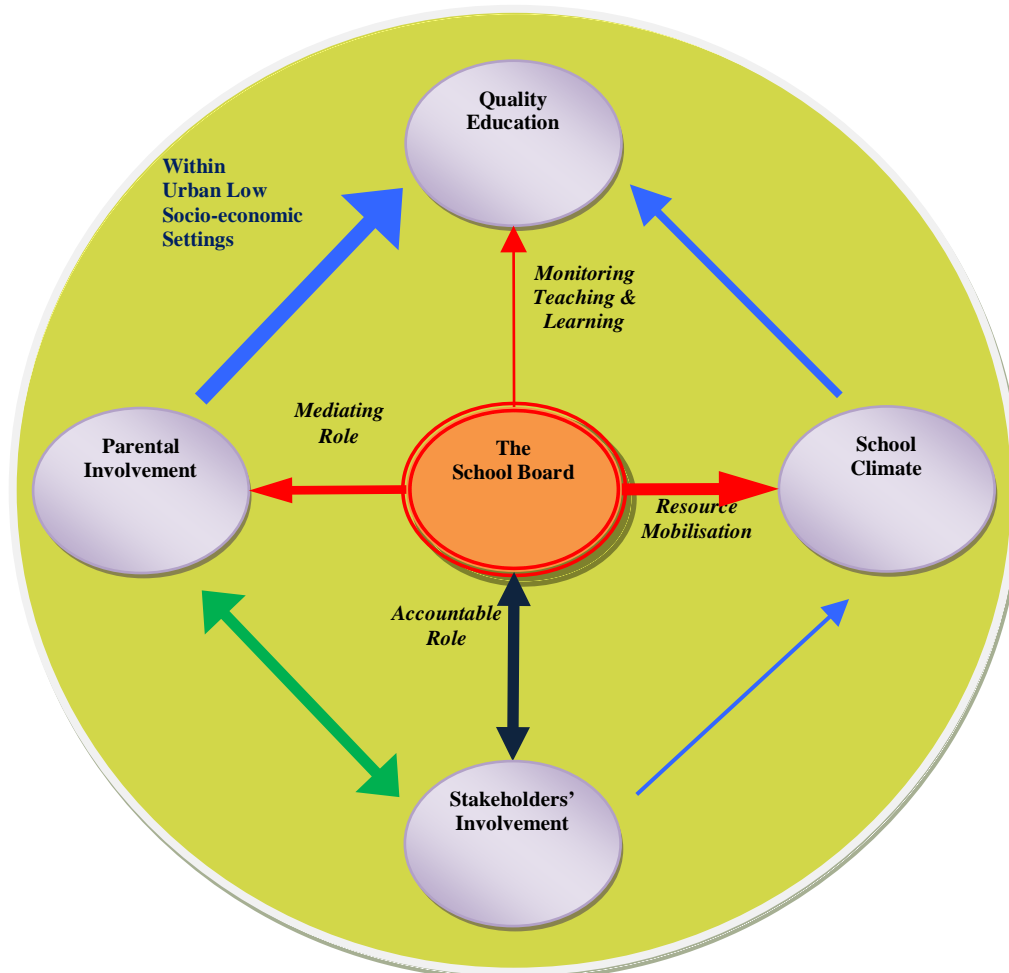
How effective are the school boards perceived to be by parents, teachers and board members in setting the school climate, enhancing parental involvement and improving academic achievement?

To determine how the school boards were effective I considered three models to explain the data: Espoused, Operating and Effective. The *espoused model* was the hypothesised model where the board was expected to impact on four aspects: quality of education provided in the school, parental involvement, stakeholder involvement, and school climate. The *operating model* represented the current practice of these boards based on participants' perceptions and experiences. In this study, the gap between the espoused and operating models was used to represent the effectiveness of the public primary school boards in Kibera slum, Kenya. The future of the school boards is encapsulated in the *effective model* which is a proposal from this study on how these boards should operate.

Espoused Model

Figure 1.1 (reproduced here as Figure 11.1) is the espoused model of public primary school board.

Figure 11.1. Espoused Model of School Board Governance



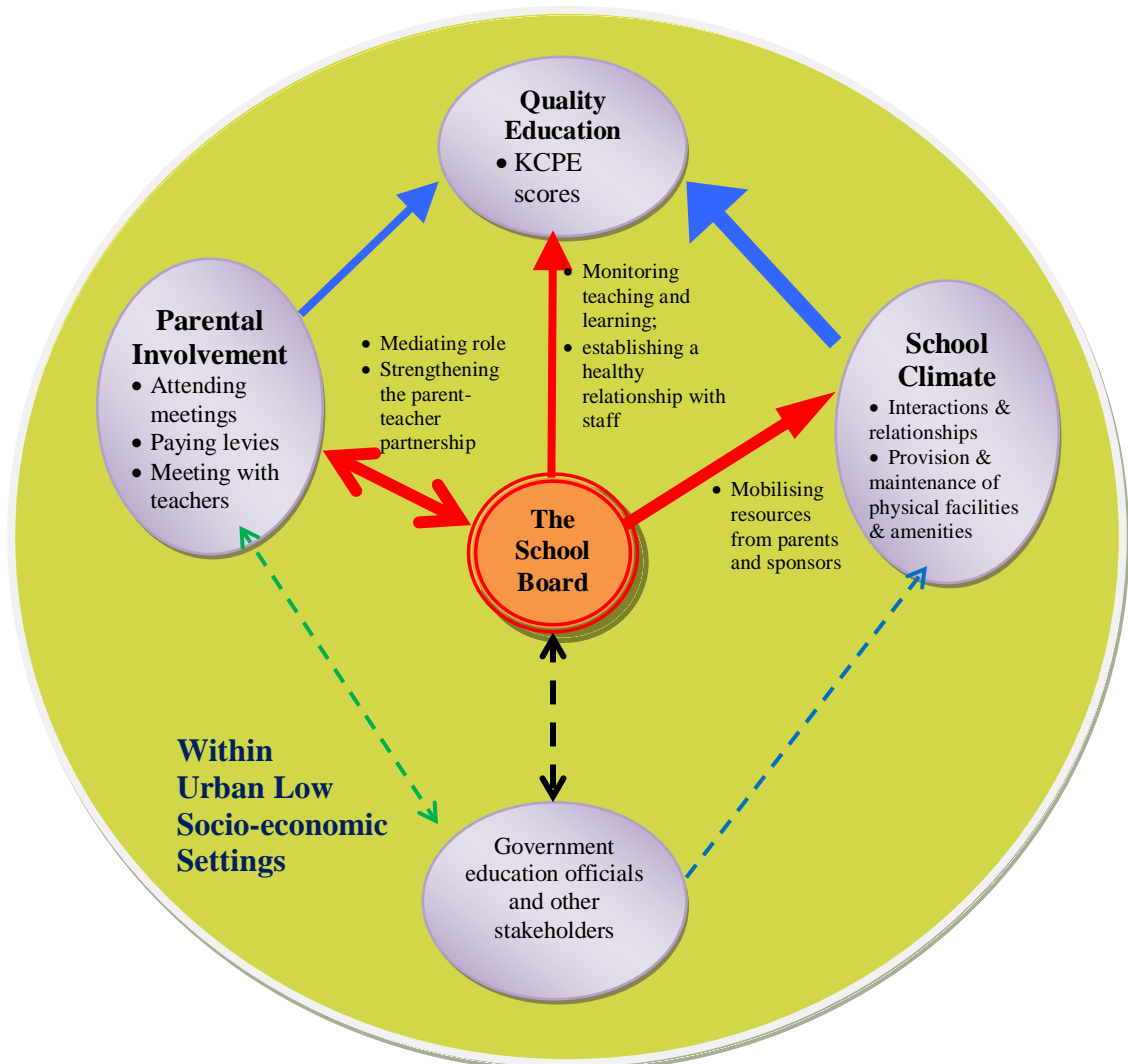
According to the Kenyan Ministry for Education (Republic of Kenya, 2013a), the public primary school boards are expected to: (1) monitor school operations, (2) raise additional resources for schools, (3) function as a link between school and the local community, and (4) account to stakeholders. These boards were intended to strongly encourage parental involvement and to make the school welcoming, which in turn would improve the quality of education provided to the children living in the slum. The interaction between the school board with other stakeholders, such as the education officials, local administration and sponsors, was anticipated to be a positive influence on parental involvement and school climate. Therefore, the interactions with other

stakeholders were espoused as a source of synergy in the performance of these boards. Results of this study revealed that the model used varied from the espoused model in several ways discussed in the next section.

Operating Model

The operating model represents the current situation of school board governance in public primary schools in the urban low socioeconomic settings based on participants' perceptions and experiences. Figure 11.2 shows the operating model of school governance in these public primary schools.

Figure 11.2. Operating Model for School Board Governance



The operating model differs from the espoused models in three ways:

1. the school climate was found to be the most influential of the factors examined in this study in the provision of quality education;

2. there was a two-way relationship in the operational model between parental involvement and school board instead of one-way as in the espoused model; and
3. although participation of government education officials and other stakeholders was anticipated, in the espoused model it was found to be missing.

Most participants indicated that their school boards had a positive influence on their school's academic performance. Parents saw them as bodies that represented their interests, were effective in connecting them to school, provided an avenue to make suggestions, and provided responsible school development. However, while the parents were positive about the boards, they raised concerns about some aspects of their performance, such as unavailability of water and electricity. Most parents recognised that these boards were trying to make a difference in the schools and most parents were happy with how the boards followed up on school programs. However, in some schools this was seen as intrusive.

Although pupils were unable to elaborate on school-board effectiveness, their comments suggested that most boards had not created a positive physical environment. Most teachers and parents asserted that the boards were instrumental in bringing them together and resolving conflicts between them. However, there was negligible interaction between the boards and key stakeholders, such as officials from the ministry of education, local political leaders or local administration.

According to most participants of this study, the school boards were effective in improving the quality of education in three ways:

1. through their direct involvement in school affairs;
2. stimulating parental involvement;
3. monitoring school programs and climate.

Although there were differences between schools, results showed that the public primary school boards in Kibera slum influenced the quality of education, parental involvement and school climate in equal measure. Although education officials, local politicians and local administration (such as the area chiefs) are required by law to be part of the boards as ex-officio, their participation was noticeably absent. Perceptions

of the participants about school climate were strongly related to the provision of quality education. In other words, in schools where the participants were happy about their school climate, pupils performed much better.

Effective Model

The results of this study suggest that in urban low socioeconomic settings public primary school boards do indeed matter. When eight public primary schools were examined, controlling teacher-factors, socioeconomic-factors, and resources, the perception of participants on their school climate, and parental involvement differed between the schools. Of these schools, *Omega* was the outstanding school in Kibera slum both with regard to participants' perceptions and pupils' performance at national examination over a period of twelve years (2002–2013).

The *effective model* is considered to be the most suitable model for school board governance in urban low socio-economic settings such as Kibera. This model is close to how the *Omega* school board operated. Compared with participants in other schools, participants in *Omega* were more positive about their board and its contribution to setting a welcoming environment, pupils' performance and school climate. Compared with other boards, this board was more active with regard to supervision of staff and school programs, working closely with teachers, dealing with parents resolutely and firmly' acknowledging teachers' and pupils' efforts, maintaining high expectations of all learners and maintaining school culture.

An effective public primary school board in urban low socioeconomic settings is intended to influence education quality both directly and indirectly. Figure 11.3 shows the *effective model* of school governance in public primary schools in urban low socioeconomic settings.

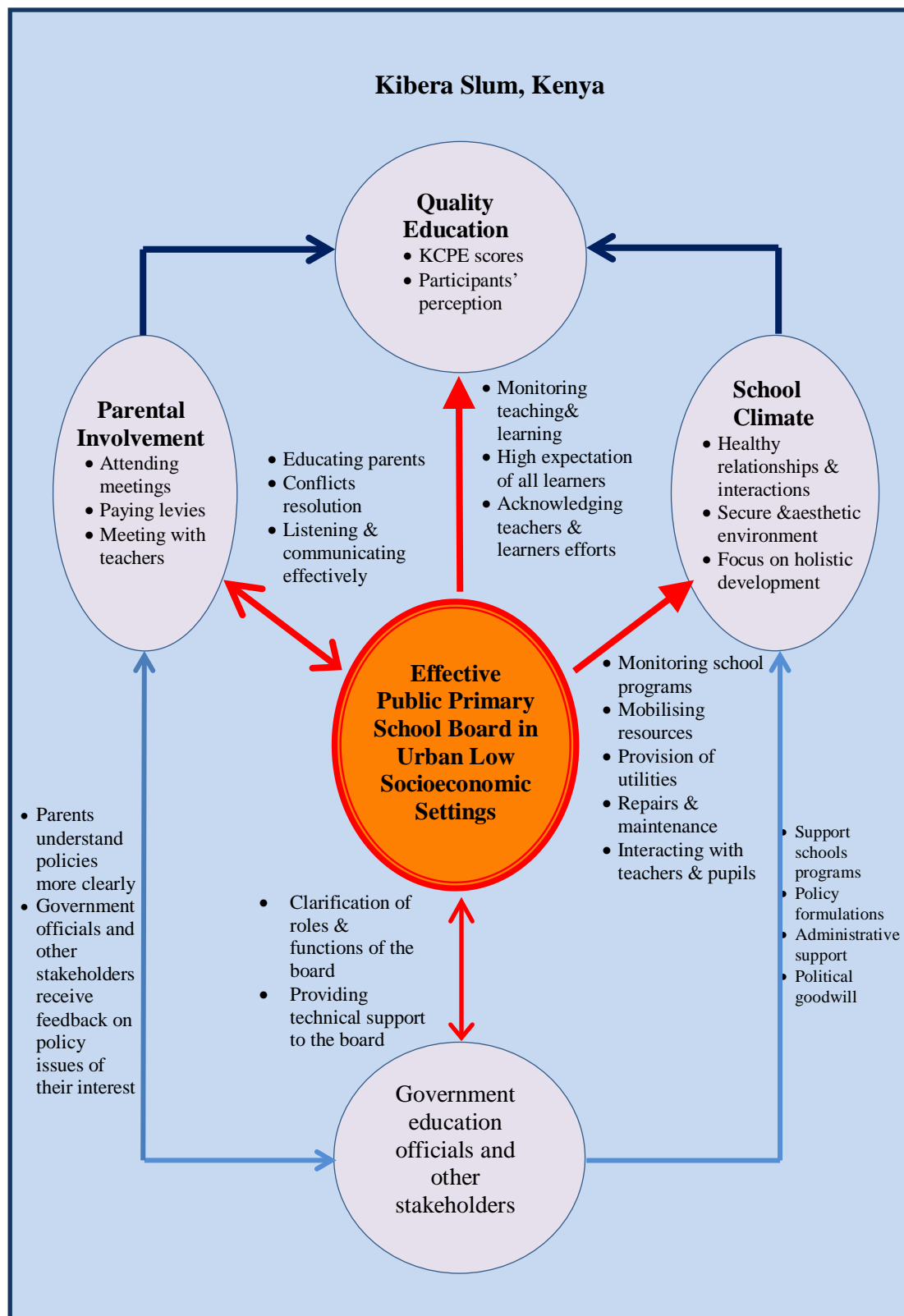
Figure 11.3. The Effective Model for School Board Governance

Figure 11.3. The Effective Model for school-board governance in urban low socioeconomic settings in Kenya. KCPE=Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.

The board can *directly* influence the quality of education provided in the school by monitoring teaching and learning, creating high expectations of all learners, and acknowledging teachers' and learners' efforts. The board can *indirectly* improve the quality of education through setting an inviting school climate, stimulating parental involvement and by involving education officials and local leaders.

To make the school climate inviting, the board should be able to:

1. promote healthy relationships between different people within the school
2. make sure the school is secure and the environment aesthetically pleasing
3. focus on the holistic development of the pupils rather than on cognitive domain only.

Frequent visits by board members to schools to monitor work done by staff, organise repairs and maintenance of physical facilities, ensure availability of basic utilities, and to talk to teachers and parents all contribute to making schools in slum settings inviting in spite of their disadvantages. The involvement of other stakeholders, especially the local administration and education officials, would have strengthened the school boards' operations, including addressing some of the tensions, paradoxes, dilemmas and challenges faced by the boards. The school boards will be more effective if they become transparent and accountable. The involvement of government officials is also crucial for purposes of ensuring the accountability of the executives. For example, the boards will benefit through their interaction with education officials, who would help them clarify their roles and functions to avoid conflictual relationships with the head teacher.

According to the participants from most of the schools studied, parental involvement was minimal, yet other studies indicate that pupils' scores improve greatly when their parents are involved (Henderson, 1988; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill et al., 2004; Sheldon & Epstein, 2010). Although poor parents have been found to be less involved in school affairs, a positive and committed school board can stimulate their involvement. The boards can do that by educating the parents, resolving conflicts between parents and teachers, and listening and communicating effectively.

Question 4: School boards' dilemmas

How do the challenges, paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions experienced by school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting affect their practice and academic achievement?

The paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas faced by the public primary school boards in Kibera slum occurred as a result of trying to find a balance between state requirements and the interests of the local community. For example, despite being extremely poor, the parents were willing to pay for extra lessons or tuition, yet the government banned the practice in public schools. Some paradoxes occurred as a result of board members not having clear understanding and required knowledge on governance. For example, the board members were convinced that extra lessons, rather than teachers' practice, were responsible for good performance in the KCPE.

Although all schools experienced similar paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas, the schools differed in their approaches to addressing them. However, the big solution to these paradoxes, tensions, and dilemmas concerned the relationship between the boards and the people in the schools. For instance, while in some schools payment of school levies was an issue, in another it was a non-issue, not because the parents had more money, but because the school board and head teacher handled the issue sensitively and established a good relationship with the parents. In schools where there were overall high expectations, a shared vision and collaboration, the effect of the paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas on the boards' practice and the academic achievement was minimal.

Question 5: Perception of the Board and practice

How are the perceptions of pupils, teachers, parents and board members related to the school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement?

In schools such as *Omega*, *Rho* and *Alpha*, participants were positive despite their difficulties. Their school climates were found to be more inviting, parents more involved, and the pupils' KCPE scores were higher. For example, although *Omega* had the highest pupil-teacher ratio, overcrowded facilities and was located next to a political hot spot, the teachers' and pupils' attitudes were positive. Therefore, how participants viewed themselves indeed matters, in that it affected how they handled their school climate, how parents were involved and how the pupils performed.

Participants in high-performing schools with higher levels of parental involvement and an inviting climate had high levels of self-esteem. The results of this study strongly suggest that a relationship exists between self-esteem and school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement.

Participants with high self-esteem worked harder to attain high academic achievement, and make their climate inviting. Parents who were proud of their school were frequently calling teachers to find out about the progress of their child and were willing to offer any kind of support required. Teachers were also happy to be associated with good performance and did their best to improve the school against all odds.

Research Design

This study used mixed-method design within a pragmatic epistemology to reveal how the public primary schools operated within a slum setting. It allowed for the triangulation of several research methods, which produced robust data and information, adequate for answering the five questions which guided this study. The results of this study were interpreted from the view point that child development was, as argued by Bronfenbrenner (1979), influenced by social, political and economic conditions. The study found that the board's main challenges to the provision of quality education in the public primary schools in the slum were mainly social and political rather than economic. Invitational Education Theory and Practice (IETP) (Cain et al., 2011; Purkey & Novak, 2008) was central for examining how the school boards were setting the climate by focusing on five key aspects of *place, people, processes, policies* and *programs*.

Research Methods

This study used a sequential explanatory mixed-method design which involved the collection of quantitative data followed by qualitative data sequentially. Data collected through different methods, namely surveys, field notes, and interviews, were triangulated to improve the validity of the findings.

Quantitative data collection

Quantitative data was collected on aspects of the study that were considered critical to governance of public primary school boards in a slum setting, such as pupils' scores, family monthly income, and perceptions of teachers, parents and pupils about the school and frequency of parental involvement. As stated in Chapter 6, 1,790 participants from eight public primary schools in Kibera slum (representing more than a sixty per cent return rate) responded to surveys and 149 of them, including parents, teachers and board members, participated in group interviews. Three types of survey instruments were used and three types of interview protocols were used, tailored specifically for the different groups.

Inviting School Survey – Revised (ISS-R)

The ISS-R (Smith, 2011) measured perception of participants in five key aspects of the school climate. The participants' responses showed that the instrument was reliable in measuring those aspects. Although the instrument is applicable internationally, there were items which required paraphrasing to capture the local context.

Parents' Questionnaire (PQ)

PQ was designed by adopting several items of ISS-R to measure the perception of parents on the five aspects of the school climate—people, place, processes, policies and programs. It has two other sections, which determine parents' frequency of involvement and school board practices. Although the instrument was found to be reliable, there were several issues that were raised during the interviews that would need to be included in any future survey, such as questions regarding extra lessons or tuition and corporal punishment.

School Board Members' Questionnaire (SBMQ)

SBMQ was used to determine the school boards' practices with regard to their participation in stimulating parental involvement, their roles and functions, and their involvement in school programs. The instrument was found to be reliable. It was not designed to be able to determine the frequency of board meetings and the monitoring of school programs among other aspects, which were identified in the interviews as areas of concern in the board governance.

Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data was later used to explain the quantitative results, particularly paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas. Participants' experiences in school governance of public primary schools in the slum were captured through the interviews. The design enabled the combination of the two approaches, which led to a clear understanding of the public primary school boards operating in the slums. There were findings from quantitative data that would have remained unanswered if participants' experiences had been excluded.

Interview Protocols

Three types of interview protocols were used for parents, teachers and board members. These protocols sought similar information on six aspects:

1. what the board had achieved;
2. how parents were involved;
3. what the board's should have done to improve school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement;
4. how the national election had influence academic achievement;
5. the conundrum of poor parents abandoning free public education to fee-paying private schools within the slum; and
6. why the school had continued to conduct extra lessons or tuition despite the government ban.

The responses from parents, teachers and board members were used to explain the differences in the perceptions of the six aspects. In addition to the six aspects, the teachers' protocol had three other aspects which sought to determine:

1. their motivation and frustrations;
2. why they decided to pursue higher qualification at their own cost despite low salaries; and
3. what type of support they received from the education office.

The school board members' interview protocol, apart from the common six aspects, sought to determine their perception on five other aspects:

1. gender disparity in enrolment of pupils;

2. why free public education was costly;
3. the existence of over-age pupils in primary schools;
4. their perceptions of their decision-making process; and
5. challenges they faced as a result of being located within a slum

These interview protocols offered me an opportunity to understand these aspects from different standpoints. The interview protocols were broad enough to allow participants to express their opinions on salient aspects of school boards.

The Role of the Researcher

This study used the pragmatic epistemology approach, which encourages studies aimed at providing solutions to problems affecting humanity using whatever method — *what works* (Mailler, 2006). Depending on the problem at hand, the researcher can use quantitative or qualitative or both, to collect information relevant to answering the research questions. The role of the researcher is to determine which method or methods would be appropriate and most likely to provide answers to the research questions. In arriving at answers to these questions the researcher has a choice of inductive or deductive logic. During the process of analysis the researcher is free to be either objective or subjective but is supposed to consider the different assumptions as well as different worldviews. Pragmatists believe that values play a large role in conducting research and that researchers are guided by their personal value system.

In this study, I endeavoured to understand how the public primary school boards in an urban low socioeconomic setting were operating, considering that most of them were composed of parents from Kibera slum. My key roles as a researcher were twofold:

1. To determine the best approach of combining quantitative and qualitative paradigms through systematic collections and analysis of data. In mixing the two paradigms careful consideration was taken to select methods which were appropriate and most likely to provide answers to the question being investigated; and
2. To consider the different world views in arriving at answers without imposing my own views.

Limitations and Delimitations

In the present study, there were a number of perceived methodological limitations that need to be considered. The present study used a *purposive sampling technique* rather than a *probability sampling technique* in order to choose the setting and location of the study. The technique is considered more effective than random sampling in studying a phenomenon unique to a particular group of people, such as those living in the slum; indeed, its inherent bias contributes to its efficiency (Guarte & Barrios, 2006; Tongco, 2007). The selection of Kibera slum was subjective, based on my own observations and judgement, which limits the generalisability of the findings in this study to this setting. However, the findings generated in this study could be applicable in similar setting in most developing nations, and the questions raised and findings provide critical information that could be considered elsewhere.

The present study used the Inviting School Survey–Revised (ISS–R) questionnaire (Smith, 2013), an internationally validated instrument, to measure the how welcoming the schools studied were. Although the instrument was effective for use in this study, its reliability was affected negatively by a few items which were misconstrued by participants due to cultural differences. For example, the term ‘remedial lesson’ which is meant to be free was misconstrued as ‘private tutorship’ which is not free. To increase its reliability in a particular setting, adaptation for local needs is required. Another limitation of this study was in the selection of parents and teachers who participated in the interview. There was an overwhelming response from parents who would have liked to be interviewed, but only the first ten were invited. Allowing the head teacher to select which teachers could participate is also likely to have impacted on this study. In both instances, there was a possibility that some information was not collected that may have changed the direction of the findings.

After analysis of the information collected, there were issues that needed to be clarified through a second interview. However, the researcher, at this stage, was no longer in Kenya. This second interview could have clarified some aspects, such as the enrolment of pupils from rich families schooling within the slum. The head teachers, local leaders, and education official were not interviewed as key stakeholders, which would have helped in clarifying certain issues raised in this study. An in-depth document analysis was not performed; however, reading through the records of

minutes of board meetings from two schools assisted in establishing the questionnaires and the interview protocol.

Due to time constraints mainly because of the elections and their schedule, it was not possible to interview the head teachers. Their perceptions are important and this is a limitation of the study.

Impact of the Study

The existence of school boards has led to opposing opinions concerning their relevance. On one hand the boards are seen as important to improving quality education (Land, 2002; Smoley, 1999), yet on the other hand they are seen by some as an impediment (Sell, 2005). The findings of this study suggest that in this urban low socioeconomic setting, the school boards are critical to the provision of quality education for children from poor backgrounds. It has also revealed that the leadership style of the school, especially the boards, is related to the educational outcomes realised in a particular school. Therefore, the finding of this study provides information that the policy makers and the boards themselves can use to improve their capacity. As shown in Figure 11.4, the public primary schools boards were indeed in a position to impact positively the quality of education provided in a particular school.

The selected schools were all similar in that they were in the same slum setting with more than 85 per cent of their pupils from Kibera; they all had lunch programs with equivalent food provided by the government; they were all government schools with similar infrastructure; all had teachers funded by the government in equal measure and all had access to further funding for which they could apply. All of the school boards were composed of parents, who were in the majority (more than 80 per cent), and teachers. All had to raise extra money to cover cooking and delivery of food, extra support teachers, school maintenance and other improvements to the school, as well as after-school tuition, commercial trial exams, and other school programs such as educational excursions and tours.

However, there were many differences between the eight schools, and these were deeply affected by differences in the school board practices. These differences were reflected in how schools enhanced their security through means such as building perimeter walls; in their employment of extra teachers; the amount of levies charged

and how they were extracted (flexible to excluding pupils) and spent; the administration of punishment; food management and control; pupils' performance in national examination (KCPE); board operations, such as frequency of meetings; the formation of sub-committees; the monitoring of school operation; and relationships within and without the schools.

School board practices were found to be related to school climate, parental involvement, and academic achievement. Generally, within each school, teachers, parents and pupils held similar perceptions of their school climate, parental involvement and academic achievement. However, there were differences between schools. These differences in participants' perception were a result of the various schools' different approaches and strategies used to address similar challenges. This study has confirmed that public primary school boards in urban low-socioeconomic settings do influence provision of quality education.

Conclusion

The overarching research question that this study sought to answer was how public primary school boards within urban low socioeconomic setting in Kenya impacted on the school climate, parental involvement and pupils' performance. Two public primary schools were identified, both of which were serving an analogous group of pupils, predominantly from extremely poor families. One school was high-achieving, had greater parental involvement, and participants were positive about their school climate. The other school was low-achieving, had lower parental involvement and the perception of most participants was neutral. Both schools were studied in an attempt to identify those differences that seemed most responsible for the variation in pupils' KCPE performance, participants' perceptions and parental involvement between the two schools. The results showed:

1. The differences in KCPE scores in these two schools seemed to be attributable to differences in self-concepts of pupils and teachers;
2. The practices of the school boards in the schools appeared to have a strong influence on parental involvement and the setting of the school climate; and
3. Parents, pupils, teachers and board members in the high-achieving schools had a shared vision and a climate of high expectation

In the current study, the board's performance was conceptualised in four dimensions shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 15)—accounting, mediator, monitory and resource mobiliser. According to teachers, parents and board members, the boards were effective in their mediation roles and as resource mobiliser but less effective in their fiscal accounting role. They were somewhat effective in monitoring non-academic programs but very little attempt was seen in monitoring teaching and learning.

The core result of this study is that, after controlling for socio-economic status, teacher-factors, and school funds, the public primary school where participants were positive about their school climate and board, had more parents involved in school affairs, and higher pupils' scores in KCPE was the one that had a positive, committed, and assertive board. This study suggests that: an effective public primary school board in an urban low socioeconomic setting such as Kibera slum is one that has evinced the following characteristics: monitors closely the teaching and non-teaching activities in the school; has high expectation for parents, teachers and pupils; adopts effective strategies for listening and communicating with teachers and parents; ensures the provision of basic utilities throughout; and shares a common vision with teachers, parents and pupils.

Currently, most of these public primary school boards are plagued with inadequate human and physical resources, tensions resulting from poor interactions with teachers, and parents; balancing between government and local interests; lack of compensatory strategies for the board members; unwillingness of the head teachers to allow board involvement in fiscal matters; low parental involvement; and inadequate support from other key stakeholders such as education officials and local administration.

However, in spite of these challenges, the current study has shown that, with a positive, assertive and committed board it is possible, with inviting climate and active parents, to realize positive academic achievement. In addition, most board members were aware of their roles and functions, they were enthusiastic, ready to sacrifice their income to support their schools.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of the public primary school boards in urban low socioeconomic settings are given at the government and school levels.

Government Level

The government can improve the effectiveness of boards by developing the capacity of the board members, introducing principles of Invitational Education Theory and practice (IETP), and providing support for board members, establishing a network for the public primary school boards, and through consideration of the impact of government elections on the safe and efficient running of the schools.

Capacity development

Although school board members are genuinely making efforts to improve their school climates, involve parents and improve students' academic achievement, they need a better understanding and empowerment to carry out their roles and functions effectively. The current capacity development initiatives by government were mostly one-off workshops and seminars, which appear to have been inadequate. The board members need to understand their strategic role in building a productive relationship with the head teacher while holding them to account for school performance (DoE, 2014). In order to improve the capacity of the board members, the government should:

1. Establish a continuous training program which address all aspects of public primary school governance;
2. Revise the existing manual for school boards (the school management committee guide) to reflect the current situations drawing from experiences of existing board members; and
3. Appoint officers, at national and local level, specifically to advise the board members on the nature of their functions and duties and ensure the boards operate efficiently and effectively.

Providing support to the board

Public primary school boards in Kibera slum are composed of parents, who are the majority and are low-income earners with low education levels. Most of them work as casual labourers or in small businesses, which gives them a daily income. Although these boards have been in existence since independence in 1963, they gained prominence due to their central role in the implementation of the free primary education in 2003. They were assigned more roles and functions by law despite their limited understanding of education matters. The boards' effectiveness was judged by the participants based on their contribution to school's performance in national examinations, financial accountability, and their responsiveness to local concerns, yet they were composed of parents without requisite knowledge and skills.

However, if they have support from government and other stakeholders, these boards are able to carry out their mandates effectively. One such support is to protect them from losing their daily income as a result of their participation in school affairs. There is an urgent need to recompense the board members in recognition of their expenses and their time. Although the government has acknowledged the need to compensate the public primary school boards, the policy is yet to be implemented.

Building Networks

A county, or regional, or national body, such as the USA's National School Boards Association (NSBA), is required to bring together school board members to share experiences and receive professional guidance. Such a body—called, perhaps, the Kenya Public Primary School Board Association (KPPSBA)—would supplement the government's effort to train board members in a more structured way, advise the government on reforms in school-based management, advocate for the welfare of school board members, spearhead school effectiveness research in primary schools in Kenya, publish periodic newsletters and develop manuals, guidebooks and learned documents on board membership.

Introduction of the Invitational Education Theory and Practice

The school climate was rated by most participants as *somewhat inviting*, indicating a need for further improvement. However, the participants were not aware of what an *inviting* school was like. If the principles of Invitational Education Theory and

Practices (IETP) (Purkey & Novak, 2008; Smith, 2011; Steyn, 2007) were to be introduced to public primary schools in the slums, they would be able to use that knowledge to improve their climates. Using the Inviting School Survey – Revised, schools can determine the level of how inviting their school climate was and be able to identify their areas of weakness. I recommend the introduction of IETP in all Kenyan schools and other institutions of learning.

Election considerations

Using public schools for electoral purposes during the national elections, held every five years, has adversely affected pupils' performance as shown in Figure 6.1. To minimise these effects, the government should:

1. ensure that national elections are held at a time or period that will not lead to school closures, such as during the school holidays; and
2. compensate schools used for the electoral purposes for repair, maintenance or purchase of new facilities that have been damaged or lost in the electoral process.

School Level

The following recommendations are important to improving the effectiveness of these boards.

Listening and Communicating Effectively

Effective communication mechanisms by school boards are key requirements for their meaningful deployment. Unless they pay more attention to improving their communication with teachers and parents, school boards are likely to succumb to loss of confidence and unnecessary conflicts with parents or teachers or both. The most common strategy used to pass information to parents was found to be through parent-teacher meetings. Considering that most of the parents are involved in casual work, frequent meetings cause loss of income and are therefore a source of distress to many. Attendance at meetings causes parents to lose income, and at the very same meetings they are asked for additional levies. Therefore, school boards need to use several strategies to communicate to parents, such as through school diaries and mobile text messages.

Ditrano and Silverstein (2006) stated that parental involvement in schooling is more beneficial to children who are economically disadvantaged. This study found that parental involvement in schools in Kibera slum was mostly in the form of attending meetings as passive participants who were rarely listened to. Some of the parents interviewed shared their experiences of stress, powerlessness, and alienation from the schools and the boards, which arrive at decisions that directly affect them. The results have been less parental involvement, which negatively affects the pupils' performance. Therefore, the school boards should adopt a bottom-up approach, where parents are consulted adequately before decisions are made on their behalf.

Educating Parents

Ingram, Wolfe and Lieberman (2007) collected survey data from economically disadvantaged parents from Chicago public elementary schools. They found that “schools that are struggling with unsatisfactory student achievement may benefit from focusing parent involvement efforts on building parenting capacity and encouraging learning-at-home activities” (p. 479). This study, which involved parents from extremely poor backgrounds, showed that most parents understood their involvement to be through:

1. payment of school levies;
2. attending meetings; and
3. providing basic learning materials to their children.

While these are important, they have little influence on pupils' academic achievement compared with assisting with their child's homework (Booth & Dunn, 2013; Sheldon & Epstein, 2010). Therefore, the school boards need to educate parents on how they can support their children's learning after school, despite their extremely disadvantaged background.

Shared Vision

All public primary school have a school motto, such as *Tau*'s 'aiming for the best', which encapsulates the school's beliefs or ideals. In the case of *Tau*, their ideal is to do their best in terms of their services, and in realising their outcome. This shared vision or community mind becomes the primary source of their motivation, authority and hard work for the school. The school board, together with the head teacher, teachers, parents

and pupils should be united to make this ideal a reality. However, in this study, results showed that the vision was not shared by all stakeholders: teachers in some schools were more eager to earn extra income from remedial lessons rather than in providing quality education in the day-to-day classroom, a vision very different from that of the parents and the government. The school board has a critical role of ensuring that the school community share a common mind.

Alexander (1989) suggested that having a shared vision requires use of either persuasion or other available resources. The public primary school boards in Kibera slum should state what they want their school to be like, and what the role of each person should be, and the board should be consistent. The boards need to encourage teachers, parents and pupils, by motivating them and leading by example.

Improving Election of Members

Reports have shown that in some countries it is difficult to find parents who are willing to join the school boards (Bush & Gamage, 2001; Connolly & James, 2011; Land, 2002). In some of the studied schools, participants reported difficulty in finding and retaining a board member. The lack of interest in school boards in Kibera slum was found to be due to lack of incentives or compensation. Consequently, the people elected are those who are available, and they may lack the capacity to influence school policy. Another challenge was the fact that elections of board members were usually conducted during the working day when most parents are at work.

To improve the number of candidates available for election to be members of the board, annual general meetings should be scheduled on days when most parents are available and able to attend, such as during the weekends. My second suggestion is that schools should send invitations to all parents, encouraging the applications of those who are willing to be board members. Such an invitation should articulate the roles and function of a board member. This information should then be published for parents in advance of the meeting. This is in the interest of making the board elections more visible and raising parental involvement and discussion.

Directions for Further Research

The findings of this study are specific for Kibera slum. Further questions arising include:

1. what are the perception of the head teacher on the efficacy of the school board?
2. What are the interactions between the head teacher and the school board members and how do these affect board and school operations?
3. What decision-making mechanisms are used by public primary school boards?

Relationships within the school are a key component and need further investigation, particularly the relationship between the school board and the teachers. While the schools were all in Kibera, they were actually in two different administration districts and the impact of the district on school operations should be investigated.

While this study was specific to Kibera, the findings could be applicable for other public primary schools in similar settings. Further research is required to determine how the public primary schools boards will impact on parental involvement, school climate and academic achievement in a different setting. Such a study should use a more contextualised ISS-R questionnaire, extensive document analysis, and apart from teachers, parents and board members, the interviews should include the head teachers, local leaders and education officials. The study should also include school board practices, such as monitoring of school programs.

Creating knowledge about school board operations and the roles and individuals of all involved in the wider school community should provide a basis for improving education.

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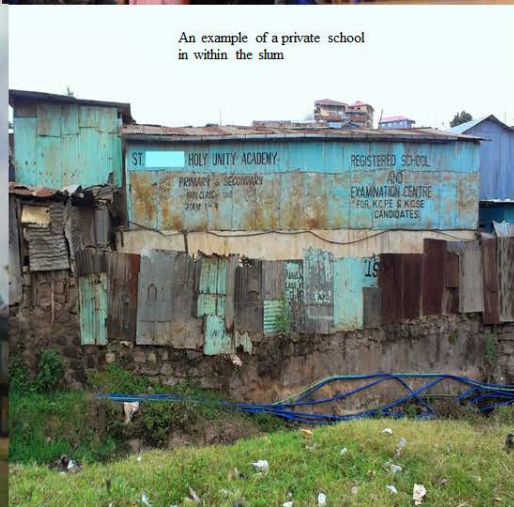
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Map of Kenya



Appendix 2: Kibera Slum, Kenya



Appendix 3: Management Theories

Theory	Characteristics
Administrative Control	Shifting decision making from one level of hierarchy to another such as from the district to the school by granting of increased authority to the school principals (Murphy & Beck, 1995). Teachers and parents serve in an advisory capacity, but the principal make final decisions and take responsibility for those actions, right or wrong. The principals might be responsible for constructing the school budget 'in consultation' with staff, parents and community members; but the principals are not required to establish site councils and much of the consultation is conducted informally or ad hoc basis
Agency theory/ Compliance model	Principal-agent theory or agency theory, is based on the idea that the management of an organization operates as the agent of the shareholders (or board) and assumes that the owners of an enterprise (the principal) and those that manage it (the agent) will have different interests (Cornforth, 2004). According to this theory, the purpose of the board is to control the manager (principal or superintended or head teacher) while, the board should be independent of management, and their primary role is one of ensuring managerial compliance.
Community Control	Community control shift power from professionals to the community members who are accountable to the community (Murphy & Beck, 1995). The decisions of the boards represent the real voice of parents and community members through their representation, and holding the key position of the chair and treasurer.
Democratic Perspective	Democratic model proposed by Cornforth suggests that the job of board members is to represent the interests of members of the organization (Cornforth, 2004). Key ideas and practices of democracy include: open elections on the basis of one person one vote; pluralism i.e. that representatives will represent different interests; accountability to the electorate; the separation of elected members, who make policy, from the executive, who implement policy decisions.
Deconcentration	Deconcentration merely involves shifting of workload from central government ministries headquarters to staff located in offices at site outside the national capital. The government's unwillingness to decentralize this service could be due to nature of the service that targets a group at risk such as the poor or for political reasons. The main purpose is to bring service near to the people.
Delegation	Delegation implies the transfer or creation of broad authority to plan and implement decisions concerning specific activities - or a variety of activities within specific territorial boundaries - to a semi-autonomous public or private organization that is technically and administratively capable of carrying them out (Rondinelli, McCullough, & Johnson, 1989). Responsibility is shifted from centralized system to bodies representing specific interest groups in society which are established and operated by members. However, serious limitations such as members lacking the capacity and the technical knowhow to carry out those responsibilities threaten efficiency and quality of the outcome.
Deregulation	Through privatization and deregulation some governments have divested themselves of responsibilities for functions either by transferring those functions to voluntary organizations or by allowing them to be performed by private businesses (Rondinelli et al., 1989). By allowing private entities to run educational institutions, <i>as advocated in some states in America</i> , access to quality service is likely to be expanded and infrastructure improved. Voluntary organizations in Sri Lanka, for example, have come to play an important role in delivering services to meet basic human needs. They run daycare centres, nursery schools, provide vocational training, and non-formal education.
Devolution	Service provision and maintenance can often be improved by devolving responsibilities to local governments or administrative units such as the school boards. Devolution requires that the schools boards be given autonomy and independence, and be clearly perceived of as a separate level over which central authorities exercise little or no direct control. They are given clear and legally recognized boundaries over which they exercise authority, and within which they perform their functions. However, devolution of educational functions is likely to create disparities between schools, communities, and

socioeconomic status.

Efficiency	Decentralization is expected to mobilize and generate resources that are not available under centralized conditions and that the decentralized systems can utilize available resources more efficiently. The reasoning behind this argument is that by giving the local community and private sector a greater role in making educational decisions, they would express a stronger sense of commitment to overall educational enterprise (Weiler, 1993). Local communities or private firms are unlikely to make added resources available to an educational system over which they will have just as little influence as they had before. The results would be generation of additional resources for school construction and maintenance, payment of teachers' salaries and so on. Consequently, the schools will feel obliged to respond by using the available resources more wisely and efficiently.
Learning Culture	In this argument, decentralization of education system is being advanced with regard to the nature and the context of the learning process. It is meant to provide greater sensitivity to local variations, by focusing on student's and a school's specific learning environment to reflect local and regional cultures and traditions (Weiler, 1993). For example, allowing schools to use student's mother tongue is seen as providing a more functional bridge between learning at home and learning in school. However, on one hand, the importance of culturally specific learning environments and learning media is being increasingly recognized; on the other hand, the demands of modern labor markets and communication systems seem to require more generalized and uniform competencies, skills, and certifications at national and international levels.
Managerial theory	hegemony Management Hegemony Theory states that although the shareholders may legally own and control large corporations they no longer effectively control them (Cornforth, 2004). Control having been ceded to a new professional managerial class, and the board's control is limited to 'rubber stamping' management decisions, except in situations where there is a crisis and board members become more involved. The board is 'essentially symbolic to give legitimacy to managerial decisions'.
Professional Control	Professional control represents a shift in the balance, in an individual school, from control of all important issues by the principal to some degree of open discussion with the staff (Murphy & Beck, 1995). One of its major thrust is to reduce the domain in which the principal holds unilateral sway and give those who work inside the system (teachers) a direct and deciding vote. Although a school board might exist they are 'teachers-driven' due to their strong representation.
Redistributive	Redistributive argument has to do with sharing power and authority to regulate behavior (institutional and individual) and through the allocation of resources (human, materials or finance) (Weiler, 1993). Typically, the authority is exercised by the state and its agencies and schools are required to exercise the same authority on behalf of the state. For example states set standards for qualification for students at different levels (often both at the point of entry into and the points of exits from educational institution), but it is the schools that are required to enforce this regulation on behalf of the state. Therefore, the role of the board is to see full implementation of state's policies at the school level.
Resource theory	dependency Resource dependency theory views the primary role of the company board to provide resources to managers, while the main functions of the board is to maintain good relations with key external stakeholders in order to ensure the flow of resources into and from the organization (Cornforth, 2004). Board members are selected for the important external links and knowledge they can bring to the organization, and to try to co-opt external influences.
Stakeholder theory	The stakeholder approach suggests that the role of the board is to represent the interests of the client groups served by board members, by incorporating different stakeholders on the board (Cornforth, 2004) . This is the most popularly adopted perspective in education, particularly school governance, since the board is composed by representation from different stakeholders-parents, education officials, teachers and students. However, this leads to a political role for boards negotiating and resolving the potentially conflicting interests of different stakeholder groups in order to determine the objectives of the organization and set policy (Bush & Gamage, 2001; Cornforth, 2004; Resnick & Bryant, 2010).

Appendix 4: Grade 8 Pupils' ISS-R Questionnaire

Section A

Please select the appropriate response by ticking (✓) against your choice

1. Are you a: (a) boy (b) girl
2. How old are you? (a) Below 13 (b) 13 (c) 14 (d) 15yrs (e) More than 15 yrs
3. How long do you take to reach the school?
(a) Less than 10 minutes (b) Between 10 to 30 minutes (c) More than 30 minutes
4. Who do you live with?
(a) Parents (b) Grandparent (c) Guardian (d) Children Home (e) Others (Specify).....
5. Who is responsible for your schooling?
(a) Parents (b) Grandparent (c) Guardian (d) Sponsor (Specify) ...

Section B

Participants were requested to rate the following statements concerning their school using the five-point Likert scale of agreement: **5** – Strong Agree; **4** – Agree, **3** –Undecided, **2**- Disagree and **1** – Strongly Disagree.

Statements

6. Pupils work cooperative with one another
7. Everyone is encouraged to participate in games programs
8. The head teacher involves everyone in the decision-making process
9. The furniture (for pupils' or teacher's) is pleasant and comfortable
10. Teachers are willing to help pupils who have special problems
11. Teachers in this school show respect for pupils
12. Marks for tests and exams are fairly are assigned
13. The air smells fresh in this school
14. Teachers are easy to talk with
15. There is a health and wellness program in this school
16. Pupils have the opportunity to talk to one another during class activities
17. Teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives
18. The school compound is clean and well-maintained
19. All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely
20. Teachers are generally prepared for class
21. The toilets and urinals in this school are clean and properly maintained
22. School organises programs such educational tours and excursions
23. Teachers show a sense of humor*
24. School policy permits and encourages freedom of expression by everyone
25. The head teacher's office is attractive
26. People in this school are polite to one another
27. Everyone arrives on time for school
28. Good health practices are encouraged in this school

29. Teachers work to encourage pupil's self-confidence
30. Notice boards are attractive and up-to-date
31. The messages and notes sent home are positive
32. The head teacher treats people as though they are responsible
33. Space or room is available for pupils independent or individual study
34. People often feel welcome when they enter the school
35. Pupils work cooperative with each other
36. Interruptions to classroom academic activities are kept to a minimum
37. Safety measures (i.e. fire alarm) are well posted and seem reasonable
38. People in this school are happy and want to be here
39. A great percentage of pupils pass examinations in this school
40. Many people in this school are involved in making decisions
41. People in this school will try to stop destruction of school property
42. Classrooms offer a variety of furniture (desk) arrangements
43. The school sponsor co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc.) activities other than games or sports
44. Teachers are happy and enjoy their work
45. Toilets and water taps are well maintained
46. Pupils are proud of their School
47. Daily attendance by pupils is high
48. Daily attendance by staff is high
49. There are comfortable chairs or seats for visitors
50. Teachers share out-of-class experience with pupils
51. There are other courses (First Aids, peer counselling etc.) out of school curricula that are organised for pupils
52. The grading practices in this school are fair
53. Teachers offer remedial lessons to their pupils free of charge
54. The lighting in this school is more than adequate

SECTION C: Any Other Comment or Comments about your school

Note. Grade 8 pupils were provided space to write their comments in Section C

Appendix 5: Teachers' ISS-R Questionnaire

Section A

Please select the appropriate response by ticking (✓) against your choice

1. What is your sex? (a) Male (b) Female
2. How old are you?
 (a) below 25yrs (b) 25-29 yrs (c) 30-34yrs (d) 35-39yrs
 (e) 40-44 yrs (f) 45-49 yrs (g) 50 yrs or more
3. What is your highest professional qualification?
 (a) Certificate/P1 (b) Diploma (c) Bachelors (d) Masters (e) Others (Specify).....
4. Who is your employer?
 (a) Government (b) Parents & teachers association (c) Volunteer (d) Other (Specify)...
5. How long have you been a classroom teachers?
 (a) Below 5yrs (b) 5-9yrs (c) 10-14 yrs (d) 15-19yrs
 (e) 20-24 yrs (f) 25-29 yrs (g) 30 yrs and more

Section B

Participants were requested to rate the following statements concerning their school using the five-point Likert scale of agreement: **5** – Strong Agree; **4** – Agree, **3** –Undecided, **2**- Disagree and **1** – Strongly Disagree.

Statements

6. Pupils work cooperative with one another
7. Everyone is encouraged to participate in games programs
8. The head teacher involves everyone in the decision-making process
9. The furniture (for pupils' or teacher's) is pleasant and comfortable
10. Teachers are willing to help pupils who have special problems
11. Teachers in this school show respect for pupils
12. Marks for tests and exams are fairly are assigned
13. The air smells fresh in this school
14. Teachers are easy to talk with
15. There is a health and wellness program in this school
16. Pupils have the opportunity to talk to one another during class activities
17. Teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives
18. The school compound is clean and well-maintained
19. All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely
20. Teachers are generally prepared for class
21. The toilets and urinals in this school are clean and properly maintained
22. School organises programs such educational tours and excursions
23. Teachers show a sense of humor*
24. School policy permits and encourages freedom of expression by everyone
25. The head teacher's office is attractive
26. People in this school are polite to one another

27. Everyone arrives on time for school
28. Good health practices are encouraged in this school
29. Teachers work to encourage pupil's self-confidence
30. Notice boards are attractive and up-to-date
31. The messages and notes sent home are positive
32. The head teacher treats people as though they are responsible
33. Space or room is available for pupils independent or individual study
34. People often feel welcome when they enter the school
35. Pupils work cooperative with each other
36. Interruptions to classroom academic activities are kept to a minimum
37. Safety measures (i.e. fire alarm) are well posted and seem reasonable
38. People in this school are happy and want to be here
39. A great percentage of pupils pass examinations in this school
40. Many people in this school are involved in making decisions
41. People in this school will try to stop destruction of school property
42. Classrooms offer a variety of furniture (desk) arrangements
43. The school sponsor co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc) activities other than games or sports
44. Teachers are happy and enjoy their work
45. Toilets and water taps are well maintained
46. Pupils are proud of their School
47. Daily attendance by pupils is high
48. Daily attendance by staff is high
49. There are comfortable chairs or seats for visitors
50. Teachers share out-of-class experience with pupils
51. There are other courses (First Aids, peer counselling etc) out of school curricula that are organised for pupils
52. The grading practices in this school are fair
53. Teachers offer remedial lessons to their pupils free of charge
54. The lighting in this school is more than adequate

SECTION C: What is your Comment or Comments on how your school management board has contributed to setting the school the school climate/environment and the academic achievement?

SECTION D: Any Other Comment or Comments about your school

Note. Teachers were provided space to write their comments in sections C and D

Appendix 6: Parents' Questionnaire (PQ)

Section A

Please select the appropriate response by ticking (✓) in the boxes

1. What is the name of your child school? (*Alpha, Kappa, Mu, Omega, Rho, Sigma, Tau & Upsilon*)
2. What is your sex? (a) Male (b) Female
3. What is your highest level of education?

(a) None	(b) Complete primary
(c) Did not complete primary	(d) Completed Secondary
(e) did not complete secondary education	(f) Complete University/Tertiary
(g) did not complete university/tertiary	(h) Others (Specify)...
4. What is your source of income?

(a) Business	(b) Casual worker	(c) Civil servant	(d) Housewife
(e) Farmer	(f) Professional (teacher, lawyer, doctor etc)	(g) Other (Specify)...	
5. What is your approximate monthly Family Income (in Kenya Shillings):

(a) Below 5,000	(b) between 5,000 and 9,999
(c) Between 10,000 and 14,999	(d) between 15,000 and 19,999
(e) 20,000 and more	

Section B

Participants were requested indicate the in the following actions/practice the five-point Likert scale of agreement: **5** – more than once per week; **4** – almost every week, **3** –almost every month, **2**- once or twice a year and **1** – never.

6. I telephone my child's school
7. I visit my child's school
8. My child's school writes to me
9. I talk to my child's teachers
10. My child's school invites me to attend parents meetings
11. My child's school invited me to school to discuss his/her performance
12. I have volunteered to help in my child's school
13. My child's school provides information to help me understand school programs
14. I raise funds for my child's school
15. I help my child in doing school work i.e. homework

Section C

Participants were requested to rate the following statements concerning their school using the five-point Likert scale of agreement: **5** – Strong Agree; **4** – Agree, **3** –Undecided, **2**- Disagree and **1** – Strongly Disagree.

16. I enjoy talking with my child's teachers
17. Teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives
18. The school compound is clean and well-maintained
19. All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely
20. Teachers care about my child
21. The school board pays attention to my suggestions

22. School organises programs such educational tours and excursions
23. The school is preparing my child for a prosperous future
24. School policy permits and encourages freedom of expression by everyone
25. The head teacher's office is attractive
26. Adults who work in my child's school treat children with respect
27. I feel welcome in my child's school
28. The school board has helped the school academic performance
29. Teachers work to encourage pupil's self-confidence
30. The school notice boards are attractive and up-to-date
31. The messages and notes sent home are positive
32. The head teacher treats people as though they are responsible
33. Space or room is available for pupils independent or individual study
34. People often feel welcome when they enter the school
35. The school board tries to involve all parents in school affairs
36. Interruptions to classroom academic activities are kept to a minimum
37. I am invited to meetings so that I can learn about what is going on in the school
38. People in this school are happy and want to be here
39. I am happy with the performance of the school in the national examination
40. Many people in this school are involved in making decisions
41. Parents are happy to have their children in this school
42. The school board has helped me participate in school affairs
43. The school sponsor co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc.) activities other than games or sports
44. Our teachers appear to be happy and enjoy their work
45. The school board is very active in my child's school
46. My child is proud of his/her School
47. My child attend school daily
48. There are comfortable chairs or seats for visitors
49. Teachers share out-of-class experience with pupils
50. The school organises seminars or workshop to educate parents
51. School board has helped in the development of the school
52. Teachers offer remedial lessons (extra) to their pupils free of charge
53. The school board and teachers have good relationship
54. Parents and teachers in this school have good relationship

Section D: What is your Comment or Comments on how your school management board has contributed to your involvement in school affairs and your child's academic achievement?

Section E: Any Other Comment or Comments about your school

Appendix 7: School Board Members' Questionnaire (SBMQ)

Section A

Please select the appropriate response by ticking (✓) in the boxes

1. In which school are you a board member? (*Alpha, Kappa, Mu, Omega, Rho, Sigma, Tau & Upsilon*)
2. What is your sex? (a) Male (b) Female
3. What is your age?
(a) Below 35yrs (b) 35-44 yrs (c) 45-54yrs (d) above 54 yrs
4. What is your highest level of education?
(a) None (b) Complete primary
(c) Did not complete primary (d) Completed Secondary
(e) did not complete secondary education (f) Complete University/Tertiary
(g) did not complete university/tertiary (h) Others (Specify)...
5. What is the source of your daily income?
(a) Business (b) Casual worker (c) Civil servant
(d) Housewife (e) Farmer (f) Professional (teacher, lawyer, etc)
(g) Other (Specify)...
6. What is your approximate monthly Family Income (in Kenya Shillings):
(a) Below 10,000 (b) between 10,000 and 19,999
(c) Between 20,000 and 29,999 (d) between 30,000 and 39,999
(e) Between 40,000 and 49,999 (f) 50,000 and more
7. How long have you participated as a board member in this school?
(a) Less than 1 year (b) 1 to 3 years (c) 4 to 6 years
(d) 7 to 9 years (e) More than 9 years
8. What training have you received as board member?
(a) None (b) financial (c) leadership (d) management (e) others (specify) ...
9. Whose interest are you representing in this board?
(a) Parents (b) Teachers (c) Pupils (d) Sponsor/donor (e) Other (Specify)

Section B

Participants were requested to rate the following statements concerning their school board using the five-point Likert scale of agreement: **5** – Strong Agree; **4** – Agree, **3** – Undecided, **2** – Disagree and **1** – Strongly Disagree.

10. Our board encourages parents to participate actively in school affairs
11. I take time as board member to counsel pupils on their future lives
12. We ensure that the school compound is clean and well-maintained
13. Our board has been accountable to parents & the community
14. Our board has been effective in seeking support from donors/well-wishers for the school
15. Our board pays attention to suggestions from parents and teachers
16. We offer advice and guidance to teachers
17. We support teachers in ensuring that the pupils are well behaved
18. We support the head teacher's effort to improve our school's performance
19. I feel welcomed when I visit the my child's school
20. Our board has helped improve the school's academic performance
21. Our board works co-operatively with teachers
22. Our board treat parents respectfully and with dignity

23. I feel free and comfortable to make suggestions that can be considered by the board
24. The head teacher treats the board as though they are responsible
25. Most decision made in the board reflects the members' opinion
26. Most decision made by the head teacher reflects the board's views
27. I try to attend all board meetings
28. I am happy with the performance of the school in the national examination
29. Our board involves many people in making decisions
30. I am happy to have my child/children in this school
31. Our board supports co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc.) activities other than games or sports
32. I am happy to be a board member in this school
33. I have attended seminars/workshop to educate me as a board member
34. Our board has contributed in the development of the school
35. Remedial lessons (extra) for pupils is a money making venture for teachers
36. The school board and teachers have good relationship
37. The school board and head teachers have good relationship
38. Our school is surrounded by very supportive community
39. There are community members who support (i.e. donation etc.) to the school
40. Many people in the community are happy to support the school
41. I raise funds for my child's school
42. I help my child in doing school work i.e. homework
43. As a board member I visit the school to follow up the activities i.e. lunch, development etc.
44. As a board member I visit my school to see what teachers are doing with the children
45. As a board member I have reported to the head teacher any case of indiscipline of pupils or any other case which affects the schools image negatively
46. I promote the image of the school positively to the community
47. Being a member of the board has helped be a better parent
48. My participation in the board has improve my understanding of teaching and learning process
49. Most decisions made in the board are made by the head teacher

Appendix 8: Teachers' Interview Guide

1. What is your motivation as a teacher in your school? What are your frustrations?
2. What do you consider as the greatest achievement of your school management board?
3. What could the school management board do to improve academic performance, parent involvement and school climate?
4. It is interesting that some parents in Kibera have removed their children from public primary schools to private primary schools. Why do you think they have done that?
5. Kenya has had several general elections including the just ended one in March 4, 2013. How has national politics influenced your school's academic achievement?
6. Several teachers have acquired diploma and degrees from several locally recognized universities using their own funds. What motivates primary school teachers to be willing to fund their university education?
7. Remedial Classes known as "*Private Tuition*" has been abolished by the Ministry of Education while parents have mixed opinion about its benefit. What is your opinion concerning the issue?
8. What challenges does the school experience due to being locate within the slum? What are you doing to address these challenges?
9. What kind of support would you like to receive from the local education office or the Ministry?

Thank you for your Cooperation

Appendix 9: Parents' Interview Guide

1. What made your school board a really good board? What do you see as the most important roles and functions of the school board? If you were a member of the school board what would you like changed in the school?
2. How have you been involved in your former child's school and what are your experiences? How would you have liked the school board to involve you?
3. It is interesting that some parents in Kibera have removed their children from public primary schools to private primary schools. Why do you think they have done that? What is your comment?
4. What is your opinion on the school's academic achievement and climate? What would you like to be done in the school in terms of the academic achievement and climate? What should the school board do to improve academic performance and school climate?
5. Remedial Classes known as "*Private Tuition*" has been abolished by the Ministry of Education while parents have mixed opinion about its benefit. What is your opinion concerning the issue?
6. Kenya has had several general elections including the just ended one in March 4, 2013. How has national politics influenced your school's academic achievement?

Thank you for your Cooperation

Appendix 10: **School Board Members' Interview Guide**

1. What do you consider your greatest achievements as a board? What is your motivation as members of the board? What are your frustrations? What do you see as the most important roles and functions of your board?
2. What should the board do to improve academic performance, parent involvement and school climate? What is your comment on the effectiveness on your board? Explain briefly.
3. The involvement of parents in school affairs in public primary school has been minimal especially for the male parents. What are some of the reasons for this situation? What has your board done to get more parents involved in school affairs?
4. It has been observed that in public primary schools in the slum – including your school- the enrolment of girls is higher than for boys. What are some of the reasons for such a situation?
5. Kenya has had several general elections including the just ended one in March 4, 2013. What do you see as political influence on the school's academic achievement?
6. Selection of members to the school board has been said not to be so good. How did you become a board member? In future, how would you like the members to be selected?
7. Some parents argued that the cost of public primary school is almost the same as that of private primary schools in Kibera if not more. What makes public primary schools costly? How can these costs be minimized?
8. Remedial Classes known as "*Private Tuition*" has been abolished by the Ministry of Education while parents have mixed opinion about its benefit. What is your opinion concerning the issue?
9. Data revealed that there is a considerable number of grade 8 pupils who can be considered over-age i.e. age more than 16 years old. What are some of the possible reasons for this situation?
10. Some parents said that the school boards have made decisions which they considered not to be suitable. They are of the view that some board members are influenced by either school administration or other domineering members. What is your view on this argument in regard to your board? What skills do you require to make you as board members discharge your duties more competently?
11. What challenges does the school experience due to being located within the slum? What are you doing to address these challenges?

Appendix 11: Revision of Teachers' ISS-R Questionnaires

Teachers' ISS-R questionnaire had an additional *section C* introduced to specifically capture comments on school boards and its contribution school climate, parental involvement and students' academic achievement. A new *section D* was introduced for any other comment(s) by the teacher respondents.

Items in *section A* of teachers' ISS-R were numbered from 1 to 5; while the options in the professional qualification were revised to: [a] *P1*, [b] *Diploma in Education (DEd)*, [c] *Bachelors of Education (BEd)*, and [d] *Master of Education (MEd)* and the item on *academic qualification* teachers was removed.

The following statements in *Section B* of both teachers' and pupils' ISS-R was paraphrased as follows:-

Original item 4: The furniture (for pupils' or teachers) is pleasant and comfortable [*revised:* The desks for pupils are pleasant and comfortable]

Original item 7: Marks are assigned by means of fair & comprehensive assessment of work and effort [*revised:* marks for tests and exams are fairly assigned]

Original item 10: There is a health program in this school [*revised:* There is a health and wellness program in this school]

Original item 12: Teachers take the time to talk with pupils about pupils' out-of-class activities [*revised:* teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives]

Original item 14: All telephone calls to this school are answered promptly (quickly) and politely [*revised:* All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely]

Original item 16: The restrooms (toilets and urinals) in this school are clean and properly maintained the word "restrooms" was found unfamiliar hence removed [*revised:* The pupil's toilets in this school are clean and properly maintained]

Original item 17: School programs involve out of school experience (e.g. educational tours and excursions [*revised:* school organizes programs such as educational tours and excursions]

Original item 18: Teachers show (exhibit) a sense of humor the word exhibit was removed [*revised:* Teachers show a sense of humor]

Original item 25: Notice (bulletin) boards are attractive and up-to-date the word bulletin was removed [*revised:* Notice boards are attractive and up-to-date]

Original item 32: Fire alarm instructions are well posted and seem reasonable [*revised:* Safety measures (i.e. fire alarm) are well posted and seem reasonable]

Original item 36: Many people in this school try to stop vandalism (breaking of school property) when they see it happening [*revised:* People in this school will try to stop destruction of school property]

Original item 41: School buses rarely leave without waiting for pupils [*removed*]

Original item 43: Daily attendance by pupils and staff is high [as split to two separate statements *item 47:* Daily attendance by pupils is high and *item 48:* Daily attendance by staff is high]

Original item 48: Teachers spend time after school with those who need extra help for free" [*Revised:* Teachers offer remedial (extra) lessons to their pupils free of charge]

Note. The ISS-R questionnaire for pupils and teachers had different number of questions but similar close-ended questions.

Appendix 12: Revision of Parents' Questionnaires

The initial parents' questionnaire had three *sections A, B, and C* which were revised to include another *sections D and E* for open-ended items. Spaces were provided in these sections to solicit participant's comment. *Section D* was introduced to specifically capture comments on school board and how it had contributed to their (parents) involvement in school affairs and the academic achievement of their children. *Section E*, which was previously *section D*, was provided to capture any other comment(s) from the participants.

In *section A*, the numbering was revised to have the name of the child's school as *item 1* while an additional item on *monthly family income* was introduced as *item 5*. The fourth option of *item 2* on *level of education* was stroked with tertiary to read *university/tertiary*. The following statements in *sections B & C* were paraphrased as follows:

Item 4: I call my child's school [*revised:* I telephone my child's school]

Item 15: Teachers take the time to talk with pupils about pupils' out-of-class activities [*revised:* Teachers take time to counsel pupils on the future lives]

Item 17: All telephone calls to this school are answered promptly (quickly) and politely [*revised:* All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely]

Item 20: school programs involve out of school experience (e.g. educational tours and excursions) [*revised:* school organizes programs such as educational tours and excursions]

Item 44: School buses rarely leave without waiting for pupils [*removed*]

Item 51: Teachers spend time after school with those who need extra help for free [*revised:* Teachers offer remedial lessons to their pupils free of charge]

Appendix 13: **Revision of Pupils' ISS-R Questionnaires**

The ISS-R pupils' questionnaire initially had six sections but was later reduced to three while *section C* was revised to capture any other comment(s) by pupils.

In *section A* of the pupil's ISS-R questionnaire, items were numbered and three additional items were added as follows:

Item 3: How long do you take to reach the school? (Options: [a] less than 10 minutes; [b] between 10 to 30 minutes; and [c] more than 30 minutes)

Item 4: Who do you live with? (Options: [a] Parents; [b] Grandparent; [c] Guardian; [c] Children Home, and [d] Others)

Item 5: Who is responsible for your schooling? (Options: [a] Parents; [b] Grandparents; [c] Guardian, and [d] Sponsor)

The options of age were revised as follows to:

Original Options: instead of: [a] 12years, [b]13years, [c]14years, [d] 15years, [e]16years, [f]17years, [g]18years; and [h]more than 18years.

Revised Options: [a] Below 13years, [b]13 years, [c]14years, [d]15years and [e] more than 15 years

Sections B, C and D of pupil's ISS-R questionnaire [during pilot study] were merged into one *section B* [after pilot study]. The column for *Not Applicable (N/A)* was removed in both ISS-R questionnaires for pupils' and teachers' because the statement was found not to apply.

Another statement to be removed in both questionnaires was *Item 41* which stated that "school buses rarely leave without waiting for pupils" because none of the school had a bus and seemed to imply that a school should have a bus.

Appendix 14: Revision of Interview Guides

Teachers

The original interview guide for teachers and the revised one had the same number of questions. However, during the piloting of the instrument only two out of nine questions were retained, two were paraphrased while five were replaced with new questions. Those replaced were found to be soliciting similar responses, while new questions were included to help explain paradoxes, dilemmas and tension that arouse during the analysis at stage [stage one] of this study.

Some of these paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions were as follows:

Question 1: What is your motivation as a teacher in your school? What are your frustrations?

Question 4: It is interesting that some parents in Kibera have removed their children from public primary schools to private primary schools. Why do you think they have done that?

Question 5: Kenya has had several general elections including the just ended one in March 4, 2013. How has national politics influenced your school's academic achievement?

Question 6: Several teachers have acquired diploma and degrees from several locally recognized universities using their own funds. What motivates primary school teachers to be willing to fund their university education?

Question 7: Remedial Classes known as *Private Tuition* has been abolished by the Ministry of Education while parents have mixed opinion about its benefit. What is your opinion concerning the issue?

Parents

Originally, the parents' interview guide had twelve questions which were later reduced to only six questions. This was because it took more than two hours for participants to go through the twelve questions while some questions were not clear to the participants. Three questions, similar to those for teachers, which begged for explanation, were included as follows:

Question 3: It is interesting that some parents in Kibera have removed their children from public primary schools to private primary schools. Why do you think they have done that?

Question 5: Remedial Classes known as "*Private Tuition*" has been abolished by the Ministry of Education while parents have mixed opinion about its benefit. What is your opinion concerning the issue?

Question 6: Kenya has had several general elections including the just ended one in March 4, 2013. How has national politics influenced your school's academic achievement?

School Board Members

The initial board members' interview guide had six questions which were observed to have left out very pertinent issues faced during the data collections. Since the study focuses on the efficacy of the board the instrument was expanded to include six more questions as follows:

Question 3: The involvement of parents in school affairs in public primary school has been minimal especially for the male parents. What are some of the reasons for this situation? What has your committee done to get more parents involved in school affairs?

Question 4: It has been observed that in public primary schools in the slum – including your school- the enrolment of girls is higher than for boys. What are some of the reasons for such a situation?


Question 6: Selection of members to the school committee has been said not to be so good. How did you become a committee member? In future, how would you like the members to be selected?

Question 7: Some parents argued that the cost of public primary school is almost the same as that of private primary schools in Kibera if not more. What makes public primary schools costly? How can these costs be minimized?


Question 9: Data revealed that there is a considerable number of grade 8 pupils who can be considered over-age i.e. age more than 16 years old. What are some of the possible reasons for this situation?

Question 10: Some parents said that the school committees have made decisions which they considered not to be suitable. They are of the view that some committee members are influenced by either school administration or other domineering members. What is your view on this argument in regard to your committee? What skills do you require to make you as committee members discharge your duties more competently?

Appendix 15: Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) scores 2002 to 2011


THE KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL
'On the Frontline in Quality Assessment and Examinations'

All official correspondence should be addressed to:
The Council Secretary/Chief Executive



KNEC is ISO 9001:2008 Certified

REF: KNEC/CONF/RS/DS/DR/2013/002

2nd May, 2013

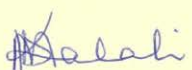
Mr. Tom Mboya
University of Nairobi
P O Box 30197
NAIROBI

RE: REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF THE NATIONAL MEAN SCORES FOR KCPE EXAMINATION FOR THE YEARS 2002 TO 2011

We acknowledge receipt of your letter sent to us *in September 2012 via email* on the above mentioned matter.

Following your request for the details of the National mean score for KCPE examination for the years **2002 to 2011**, we wish to forward the data to you as shown in the table below:-


Year	Mean Score (Marks)
2002	285
2003	274
2004	241
2005	251
2006	237
2007	237
2008	235
2009	242
2010	221
2011	249




DIANA MAKAU
FOR: COUNCIL SECRETARY/CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Appendix 16: Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) scores 2012 to 2013



THE KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL
'On the Frontline in Quality Assessment and Examinations'


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REF: KNEC/GEN/R&QA/DS/DR/028/076

21st July 2014

Tom Mboya Okaya
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa
P. O. Box 62157- 00200
NAIROBI

**RE: DATA ON THE SCHOOL & NATIONAL MEAN SCORES FOR KCPE
EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR THE YEARS 2012 & 2013**

We acknowledge receipt of your email of **10th July 2014**, on the above subject.

The data you requested is as outlined in the below tables:-


Table I: Mean Scores for each School

SCHOOLCODE	SCHOOL NAME	MEAN	
		2013	2012
2040		237	236
2040		281	289
2040		242	228
2040		232	207
2040		239	231
2040		232	218
2040		229	227
2040		237	236

Table II: National Mean Scores

YEAR	MEAN
2012	247
2013	248

Should you require any clarification on the data, kindly do not hesitate to get in touch with the undersigned.


G. GATHUNGU
FOR: AG. DS, RESEARCH & QUALITY ASSURANCE DIVISON

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Appendix 17: Australian Catholic University's (ACU) HREC clearance



Human Research Ethics Committee Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Marj Horne Melbourne Campus
Co-Investigators: Madeleine Laming Melbourne Campus
Student Researcher: Tom Mboya Okaya Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
School Board Governance in urban low socio-economic settings: a multiple case studies in Kibera Slum in Kenya

for the period: 02/03/2012-28/02/2013

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: 2012 32V

Special Condition/s of Approval

Prior to commencement of your research, the following permissions are required to be submitted to the ACU HREC:

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (2007) apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
 - proposed changes to the protocol
 - unforeseen circumstances or events
 - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: Date:20/03/2012
(Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

Appendix 18: National Council for Science & Technology (NCST)'s clearance

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telegrams: "SCIENCETECH", Nairobi
Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102
254-020-310571, 2213123
Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249
When replying please quote

P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref:

NCST/RCD/14/012/61/4

Date:

8th February, 2012

Tom Mboya Okaya
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa
P. O. Box 62157 – 00200
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*School board governance in urban low socio-economic setting: A case study of public primary schools in Kibera Kenya*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Langáta district** for a period ending **28th February 2013**.

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner & the District Education Officer, Langáta district** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf form** of the research report/thesis to our office.


DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, FSC
DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
Langáta District

The District Education Officer
Langáta District

Appendix 19: District Commissioner Clearance



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL SECURITY

Telegrams:
Telephone: 020-2044802
When replying please quote

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
LANGATA DISTRICT
P.O. Box 30124 - 00100
NAIROBI.

Ref. No. LGT/ED/10/9/ (135)
and date

..... 17th April, 2012

All Chiefs

Thro'

The District Officers
LANGATA DISTRICT

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION- TOM MBOYA OKAYA

The above named student is a student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. He is authorized to carrying a research on *"School board governance in urban low socio- economic setting: A case study of public primary schools in Kibera Kenya"*.

Kindly accord him the necessary assistance.



V. M. MUTISO
FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

CC. Tom Mboya Okaya

Appendix 20: Clearance from *Rho*

TO
MR. TOM MBOYA OKAYA
P.O. BOX 35121-00100
NAIROBI.

8/06/2012.

Dear Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM THE SCHOOL.

Your request to collect Data from the school for the purposes of research on Education has been granted.

You will be expected to conduct yourself with utmost professionalism.
Keep confidential data secret and provide useful feedback which can help the institution move forward.


Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

For Headteacher

Appendix 21: Clearance from *Upsilon*

NAIROBI CITY COUNCIL



When Replying Please Quote: **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Ref. No.: Date:

28th May 2012

To,

Mr. Tom Mboya Okaya
Australian Catholic University, Melbourne Campus

Dear Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO CUNDUCT RESEARCH

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at **Joseph Kang'ethe Primary School** following your request. You are permitted to administer questionnaires to pupils and teachers of our schools. We are looking forward towards working with you and affording you all necessary support towards your research.

Regards

Yours Faithfully



Appendix 22: Information Letter to Participants [Questionnaire]**Dear Participant,**

You are invited to participate in a research study that I am undertaking to understand how the public primary school board has contributed to setting school climate, involving parents and community, improving your school's academic performance. This study has low risk anticipated as a result of your participation and care has been taken to minimize any inconvenience to you. I do not believe these questions will cause you any inconvenience or discomfort, but I am grateful for your time and help.

I would like you to complete a questionnaire that will take about **30 minutes** and then return it to your school. The information you provide will make a significant contribution to our understanding of how your school board has contributed to your setting your school's climate, involving parents and community, and improving academic achievement. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to provide information that will enable Ministry of Education to develop programs which will improve school governance in public primary schools in urban low socio-economic settings and academic achievement of pupils in your school.

Consent to participate in this study is through signing the two copies of the consent forms and returning the researcher's copy and retaining your copy. You are not forced to participate in this study; you do not have to complete the questionnaire or give reasons for declining not to complete it. All data collected in these questionnaires is confidential-your name and the name of your child's school will not be mentioned in the study report or in any publication, only aggregated data will be published.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed in writing to Associate Professor Marj Horne (marj.horne@acu.edu.au) or Dr. Madeleine Laming (M.Laming@murdoch.edu.au) or the undersigned at the address below or telephone (+61 3) 9953 3291

I would be happy to provide feedback to your school on the results of the study. This study has been approved by the National Council for Science and Technology (Kenya), Ministry of Education (Kenya), Director City Education (Nairobi) and the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (Australia).

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Tom Mboya Okaya

Signature:

Student Researcher, Email: ttokay001@acu.edu.au Mobile: (+254) 716 368 014

P.O. Box 35121-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Associate Professor Marj Horne

Signature:

Appendix 23: Information letter to participants [Survey]



INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: School Board's Governance in Public Primary Schools in Kibera, Kenya

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Associate Professor MARJ HORNE

CO-SUPERVISOR: DR. MADELEINE LAMING

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: TOM MBOYA OKAYA

PROGRAMME: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) EDUCATION

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a research study that I am undertaking to understand how the school management committee has contributed to setting your school climate/environment and your academic achievement.

This study has low risk anticipated as a result of your participation and care has been taken to minimize any inconvenience to you. I do not believe these questions will cause you any inconvenience or discomfort, but I am grateful for your time and help.

I would like you to complete a questionnaire that will take about **35 minutes** and then return it to your school. The information you provide will make a significant contribution to our understanding of how the school management committee has contributed to your involvement in school affairs and academic achievement and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to provide information that will enable Ministry of Education to develop programs which will improve school governance in public primary schools in urban low socio-economic settings and academic achievement of pupils like you.

Consent to participate in this study is through signing the two copies of the consent forms and returning the researcher's copy and retaining your copy. You are not forced to participate in this study; you do not have to complete the questionnaire or give reasons for declining not to complete it. All data collected in these questionnaires is confidential-your name and the name of your school will not be mentioned in the study report or in any publication, only aggregated data will be published.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed in writing to Associate Professor Marj Horne (marj.horne@acu.edu.au) or Dr. Madeleine Laming (M.Laming@murdoch.edu.au) or the undersigned at the address below or telephone (+61 3) 9953 3291

I would be happy to provide feedback to your school on the results of the study. This study has been approved by the National Council for Science and Technology (Kenya), Ministry of Education (Kenya), Director City Education (Nairobi) and the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (Australia).

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Mboya Okaya'.

Mr. Tom Mboya Okaya

Student Researcher, Email: tomokay001@acu.edu.au Mobile: 0716 368 014

P.O. Box 35121-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marj Horne'.

Associate Professor Marj Horne

Australian Catholic University Limited, ABN 15 050 192 660
Fitzroy Campus, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, Australia
Locked Bag 4115 Fitzroy MDC, Fitzroy, 3065, Australia
CRICOS registered provider: 00004G, 00112C, 00873F, 00885B

Appendix 24: Information Letter to Participants [Interview]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for accepting to participate in a research study that I am undertaking to understand how the school committee has contributed to parental involvement in school affairs and your child's academic achievement. This study has low risk anticipated as a result of your participation and care has been taken to minimize any inconvenience to you. I do not believe interview will cause you any inconvenience or discomfort, but I am grateful for your time and help.

I invite you for a group interview on [*an agreed time*] at Savelberg Retreat Centre (near Adams Arcade) opposite Jehovah Witness Hall. The interview will take about ONE Hour and will be recorded. Tea and snacks will be provided while transport will be reimbursed [reasonable rate] per participant. The information you provide will make a significant contribution to our understanding of how the committee has contributed to setting school climate, parental involvement in school affairs and academic achievement. You will be satisfied to know that you have helped to provide information that will enable Ministry of Education to develop programs that will improve school governance in public primary schools in urban low socio-economic settings and academic achievement of pupils like your child.

Consent to participate in this study is through signing the two copies of the consent forms and returning the researcher's copy and retaining your copy. You are not forced to participate in this study and you are free to decline to attend the interview or give no reasons for declining. All data collected in the interview is confidential-your name and the name of your child's school will not be mentioned in the study report or in any publication, only aggregated data will be published.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed in writing to Associate Professor Marj Horne (marj.horne@acu.edu.au) or Dr. Madeleine Laming (M.Laming@murdoch.edu.au) or the undersigned at the address below or telephone (+61 3) 9953 3291

I would be happy to provide feedback to your school on the results of the study. This study has been approved by the National Council for Science and Technology (Kenya), Ministry of Education (Kenya), Director City Education (Nairobi) and the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (Australia).

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Tom Mboya Okaya,

Signature:

Date:

Email: ttokay001@acu.edu.au Mobile: 0716 368 014

P.O. Box 35121-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Associate Professor Marj Horne

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 25: **Informed Consent Form**

Please sign both copies of the consent form and keep this copy for your records

I (*the participant*) have read and understood the information in the letter inviting participation in the research, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in to complete this questionnaire which will take approximately **30 minutes** and return it. I realise that I can withdraw my consent without adverse consequences until the questionnaire is submitted: after that time there will be no means of identifying individual participants. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Name of Participant: Mobile:
.....

(Block letters)

Signature: Date:

Please tick in the **box** if you are also willing to participate in the interview lasting **NOT MORE THAN 40 minutes** understanding that the interview will be audio-taped as well.

Note: For those willing to be interviewed please fill in your contact or mobile number.

ASSENT OF PARTICIPANTS AGED UNDER 18 YEARS

I..... (*the participant aged under 18 years*) understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in responding to questionnaire that will take **NOT MORE THAN 30 minutes**, realizing that I can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for my decision.

SIGNATURE:
.....

DATE:

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Date: 31/07/2012

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR: Date: 31/07/2012

Appendix 26: **Results of Little's MCAR Tests**

School Climate		People	Place	Processes	Policies	Programs
Pupils	Chi-Square	398.848	176.423	98.912	74.182	58.098
	df	377	182	108	56	62
	Sig.	.210	.603	.723	.052	.617
Teachers	Chi-Square	186.159	92.812	84.288	33.008	86.029
	df	163	87	47	33	50
	Sig.	.103	.315	.001	.467	.001
Parents'	Chi-Square	277.954	42.637	88.444	15.358	35.494
	df	257	38	78	17	22
	Sig.	.176	.278	.196	.570	.034
School Board Practice		Chi-Square		df	Sig.	
Parents		276.337		260	.232	
Board members		456.324		434	.221	

Appendix 27: The variance inflation factors (VIF)

School Climate					
Dependent Variables	Independent Variables				
	People	Place	Processes	Policies	Programs
People	1	1.764	2.024	1.684	1.709
Place	2.660	1	2.329	1.873	1.660
Processes	2.416	1.847	1	1.818	1.715
Policies	2.617	1.930	2.363	1	1.674
Programs	2.851	1.837	2.393	1.798	1
^b values of VIF less than 3 [threshold] suggests that the variables are independent [not collinear]					
School Board Practice					
Dependent Variables	Independent Variables				
	Self-efficacy	Mobilisation & Monitoring	Relationships & interactions	Teaching & Learning	Decision making
Self-efficacy	1	1.228	2.580	1.165	2.487
Mobilisation & Monitoring	1.467	1	2.505	1.259	2.684
Relationships & Interactions	1.491	1.211	1	1.349	1.220
Teaching & Learning	1.287	1.164	2.580	1	2.678
Decision making	1.379	1.246	1.171	1.344	1

Appendix 28: **Residual Plots: KCPE-School Board Practice**

	Residuals Statistics^a (N =8)			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Predicted Value	217.78	263.82	247.26	14.286
Std. Predicted Value	-2.064	1.159	.000	1.000
Standard Error of Predicted Value	9.977	24.138	13.364	4.786
Adjusted Predicted Value	172.37	262.43	240.18	28.742
Residual	-33.515	53.083	.000	26.096
Std. Residual	-1.189	1.883	.000	.926
Stud. Residual	-1.294	2.278	.090	1.128
Deleted Residual	-39.666	77.702	7.084	41.095
Stud. Deleted Residual	-1.391	5.666	.514	2.205
Mahal. Distance	.002	4.258	.875	1.440
Cook's Distance	.000	1.770	.400	.689
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.608	.125	.206

Appendix 29: **Residual Plots: School Climate-School Board Practice**

	Residuals Statistics^a (N =8)			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Predicted Value	73.1013	77.7409	76.0724	1.43982
Std. Predicted Value	-2.064	1.159	.000	1.000
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.876	2.119	1.173	.420
Adjusted Predicted Value	70.7584	77.7433	75.6935	2.15825
Residual	-4.35282	3.68580	.00000	2.29096
Std. Residual	-1.759	1.489	.000	.926
Stud. Residual	-1.914	1.802	.055	1.071
Deleted Residual	-5.15162	5.39519	.37891	3.16277
Stud. Deleted Residual	-2.799	2.429	.019	1.451
Mahal. Distance	.002	4.258	.875	1.440
Cook's Distance	.000	.753	.223	.307
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.608	.125	.206

a. Dependent Variable: School Climate

Appendix 30: **Residual Plots: Parental Involvement-School Board Practice**

	Residuals Statistics^a (N =8)			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Predicted Value	60.380	62.714	61.875	.7244
Std. Predicted Value	-2.064	1.159	.000	1.000
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.597	1.444	.800	.286
Adjusted Predicted Value	58.470	62.894	61.621	1.3420
Residual	-2.2447	1.6927	.0000	1.5617
Std. Residual	-1.331	1.004	.000	.926
Stud. Residual	-1.437	1.092	.052	1.049
Deleted Residual	-2.6185	2.6051	.2543	2.1020
Stud. Deleted Residual	-1.620	1.113	.025	1.089
Mahal. Distance	.002	4.258	.875	1.440
Cook's Distance	.000	.874	.208	.278
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.608	.125	.206

a. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement

Appendix 31: Results of Principal Component Analysis on School Board Members' Questionnaire

Comp onent	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.394	19.984	19.984	7.394	19.984	19.984	4.002	10.817	10.817
2	4.144	11.200	31.184	4.144	11.200	31.184	3.867	10.452	21.268
3	3.644	9.848	41.033	3.644	9.848	41.033	2.749	7.429	28.697
4	2.817	7.614	48.647	2.817	7.614	48.647	2.689	7.267	35.964
5	2.099	5.674	54.321	2.099	5.674	54.321	2.652	7.167	43.131
6	2.011	5.435	59.756	2.011	5.435	59.756	2.533	6.847	49.978
7	1.857	5.019	64.776	1.857	5.019	64.776	2.407	6.506	56.484
8	1.482	4.004	68.780	1.482	4.004	68.780	2.339	6.323	62.807
9	1.432	3.870	72.650	1.432	3.870	72.650	2.242	6.059	68.866
10	1.160	3.135	75.785	1.160	3.135	75.785	2.012	5.437	74.303
11	1.158	3.129	78.914	1.158	3.129	78.914	1.706	4.610	78.914
12	.962	2.599	81.513						
13	.929	2.510	84.022						
14	.713	1.928	85.950						
15	.653	1.766	87.716						
16	.610	1.649	89.365						
17	.562	1.520	90.885						
18	.505	1.366	92.251						
19	.423	1.143	93.394						
20	.340	.918	94.312						
21	.334	.902	95.214						
22	.303	.818	96.033						
23	.252	.680	96.713						
24	.230	.622	97.335						
25	.202	.545	97.880						
26	.193	.521	98.401						
27	.142	.383	98.783						
28	.106	.287	99.070						
29	.092	.249	99.319						
30	.060	.162	99.481						
31	.057	.155	99.636						
32	.053	.144	99.780						
33	.040	.109	99.889						
34	.024	.066	99.955						
35	.008	.021	99.977						
36	.007	.019	99.996						
37	.001	.004	100.00						

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix 32: Factor loadings from responses by school board members

	Factor Loadings
Board's Self-Concept ($\alpha = 0.795$, Mean = 86.4%)	
The school board has helped me be a better parent	0.739
I feel welcomed when I visit the my child's school	0.736
I am happy to have my child/children in this school	0.610
I am happy to be a board member in this school	0.543
We ensure that the school compound is clean & well-maintained	0.543
We support head teacher's effort to improve our school's performance	0.531
My being a board member has improved understand of teaching and learning	0.518
The board members promotes positive image of the school	0.509
Our board treats parents respectfully and with dignity	0.417
I help my child in doing school work	0.350
We offer advice and guidance to teachers	0.346
Our board has been accountable to parents & the community	0.343
I take time as board member to counsel pupils on their future lives	0.269
I raise funds for my child's school	0.245
Board's Resource Mobilization & Monitoring ($\alpha = 0.670$, Mean = 82.5%)	
I try to attend all board meetings	0.539
There are community members who support the school	0.537
Our board has contributed in the development of the school	0.486
Our board supports co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc.) activities	0.477
Our board encourages parents to participate actively in school affairs	0.414
The board reports case of indiscipline in school	0.413
The board visits school to monitor teaching	0.362
The board visits school for follow up of school projects	0.264
Board's Relationship and Interaction ($\alpha = 0.782$, Mean = 76.0%)	
Our school is surrounded by very supportive community	0.506
Most decision made by the head teacher reflects the board's views	0.504
Our board works co-operatively with teachers	0.465
Our board is has been effective is seeking support from donors/well-wishers	0.463
Many people in the community are happy to support the school	0.435
The board & head teacher have good relationship	0.420
The school board and teachers have good relationship	0.384
Our board involves many people in making decisions	0.344
The head teacher treats the board as though they are responsible	0.223
Board's support to Teacher and Learning ($\alpha = 0.726$, Mean = 85.3%)	
Our board pays attention to suggestions from parents and teachers	0.559
We support teachers in ensuring that the pupils are well behaved	0.539
Our board has helped improve the school's academic performance	0.484
I am happy with the performance of the school in the national examination	0.358
Board's Decision Making ($\alpha = 0.538$, Mean = 78.3%)	
Many people in the community are happy to support the school	0.389
Most decision made by the head teacher reflects the board's views	0.364
Most decision made in the board reflects the members' opinion	0.308
I feel free & comfortable to make suggestions that can be considered by the board	0.269

Appendix 33: **Summary of Study Participants**

Stage	Participa nts	Schools								Total
		<i>Alpha</i>	<i>Kappa</i>	<i>Mu</i>	<i>Omega</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Sigma</i>	<i>Tau</i>	<i>Upsilon</i>	
Survey	Pupils	166	80	127	199	58	105	53	34	822
	Teachers	0	14	9	37	11	17	15	19	122
	parents	164	80	119	196	58	86	66	34	803
	Board members	-	-	7	9	10	8	5	4	43
Group Interviews	Teachers	-	5	-	8	8	5	5	5	36
	Parents	6	7	6	10	19	5	6	11	70
	Board members	-	-	7	9	10	8	5	5	43

Appendix 34: Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables

Grade 8 Pupils (N =822)		Results
		%
Sex	Male	42
	Female	58
Age	Below 14 years	24
	14 years	63
	More than 14 years	6
Time taken to School	Less than 10 minutes	14
	10 – 30 minutes	63
	More than 30 minutes	23
Person living with pupils	Parents	83
	Grandparents	4
	Guardian	13
Person responsible for pupil's schooling	Parents	69
	Grandparents	2
	Guardian	25
	Sponsor/Well-wisher	3
Parents (N = 803)		
Sex	Male	42
	Female	58
Level of Education	No formal education	3
	Completed primary	53
	Completed secondary	29
	Completed tertiary	15
Person living with pupils	Small scale business	39
	Casual work	38
	Government employee	9
	Housewife	12
	Employed by non-state organisations	0
	Others i.e. priests etc.	2
Month Family Income	Less than Shillings 10000	76
	10000 - 20000 Shillings	17
	More than Shillings 20000	6

Teachers (N = 122)		Results
		%
Sex	Male	32
	Female	66
Age	Below 30 years	21
	30-44 years	42
	45 years and more	34
Professional Qualification	Certificate	39
	Diploma	11
	Bachelors	17
	Masters	3
	Others	12
Employment Status	Government	68
	Parents	7
	Volunteer	13
Teaching Experience	Below 10 years	29
	10-19 years	19
	20 – 29 years	34
	More than 29 years	6
Parents (N = 803)		
Sex	Male	70
	Female	30
Age	Below 35 years	16
	35-44 years	56
	45 years and more	28
Level of Education	No formal education	0
	Completed primary	14
	Completed secondary	67
	Completed tertiary	18
Occupation	Small scale business	49
	Casual work	23
	Government employee	7
	Housewife	2
	Employed by non-state organisations	9
	Others i.e. priests etc.	10
Month Family Income	Less than Shillings 10000	40
	10000 - 30000 Shillings	47
	More than Shillings 30000	13
Duration of board membership	Less than one year	23
	1-3 years	47
	4-6 years	26
	More than 6 years	4

Appendix 35: **Table on Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) on Grade 8 pupils and Teachers' Perception on School Climate**

Test of Between-Subject Effects									
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameters	Observed Power ^a
Corrected Model	People	7935.133 [*]	32	247.973	2.264	.000	.074	72.434	1.000
	Place	34041.516 [*]	32	1063.797	5.768	.000	.168	184.592	1.000
	Process	12863.367 [*]	32	401.980	2.740	.000	.088	87.693	1.000
	Policy	11045.613 [*]	32	345.175	2.407	.000	.078	77.035	1.000
	Programs	10965.357 [*]	32	342.667	2.063	.001	.068	66.011	1.000
Intercept	People	154311.657	1	154311.657	1408.644	.000	.607	1408.644	1.000
	Place	90688.625	1	90688.625	491.763	.000	.351	491.763	1.000
	Process	144139.103	1	144139.103	982.635	.000	.519	982.635	1.000
	Policy	155598.614	1	155598.614	1085.182	.000	.544	1085.182	1.000
	Programs	118576.161	1	118576.161	713.826	.000	.439	713.826	1.000
School	People	4803.956	7	686.279	6.265	.000	.046	43.833	1.000
	Place	16952.310	7	2421.759	13.132	.000	.092	91.925	1.000
	Process	6739.641	7	962.806	6.564	.000	.048	45.946	1.000
	Policy	5900.746	7	842.964	5.879	.000	.043	41.153	.999
	Programs	4291.757	7	613.108	3.691	.001	.028	25.836	.978
RESPONDENT	People	23.391	1	23.391	.214	.644	.000	.214	.075
	Place	3029.458	1	3029.458	16.427	.000	.018	16.427	.982
	Process	747.054	1	747.054	5.093	.024	.006	5.093	.616
	Policy	243.219	1	243.219	1.696	.193	.002	1.696	.256
	Programs	5.566	1	5.566	.034	.855	.000	.034	.054
School RESPONDENT	People	3335.250	6	555.875	5.074	.000	.032	30.446	.994
	Place	5681.296	6	946.883	5.135	.000	.033	30.807	.995
	Process	2407.334	6	401.222	2.735	.012	.018	16.411	.876
	Policy	2564.522	6	427.420	2.981	.007	.019	17.886	.906
	Programs	3400.363	6	566.727	3.412	.002	.022	20.470	.944
Error	People	99796.647	911	109.546					
	Place	168002.409	911	184.415					
	Process	133631.198	911	146.686					
	Policy	130623.550	911	143.385					
	Programs	151329.371	911	166.113					
Total	People	6017715.692	944						
	Place	4888373.238	944						
	Process	5790243.610	944						
	Policy	6111704.074	944						
	Programs	5496198.957	944						
Corrected Total	People	107731.780	943						
	Place	202043.925	943						

Note. Yellow shading show significant difference

Appendix 36: Results of Post Hoc Tests ^a on School Climate

	People		Place		Processes		Policies		Programs	
	MD	Sig	MD	Sig	MD	Sig	MD	Sig	MD	Sig
Pupils										
<i>Alpha</i>	-1.05	.347	-0.88	.544	3.06*	.018	2.50	.055	-0.97	.483
<i>Kappa</i>	-0.60	.966	8.74*	.000	1.70	.296	-0.01	.995	-0.18	.918
<i>Mu</i>	0.54	.657	-2.87	.066	1.40	.286	3.95*	.004	-3.07*	.039
<i>Rho</i>	-0.15	.922	3.27	.110	1.84	.145	0.140	.939	-3.75	.056
<i>Sigma</i>	0.61	.635	8.01*	.000	1.46	.324	2.354	.115	3.20*	.043
<i>Tau</i>	3.62*	.028	7.90*	.000	6.59*	.001	4.37*	.022	5.21*	.010
<i>Upsilon</i>	0.24	.903	5.61*	.027	4.34	.058	2.36	.304	-1.16	.635
Teachers										
<i>Alpha</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Kappa</i>	9.09*	.002	20.06*	.000	10.21*	.002	12.25*	.000	13.91*	.000
<i>Mu</i>	8.74*	.012	4.15	.388	11.39*	.004	10.10*	.003	2.62	.519
<i>Rho</i>	13.80*	.000	28.66*	.000	11.19*	.002	7.29*	.021	10.94*	.004
<i>Sigma</i>	10.49*	.000	17.46*	.000	9.93*	.001	12.29*	.000	6.60*	.042
<i>Tau</i>	14.54*	.000	5.26	.185	13.61*	.000	13.68*	.000	11.08*	.001
<i>Upsilon</i>	16.52*	.000	10.01*	.007	17.68*	.000	16.16*	.000	14.34*	.000
Parents										
<i>Alpha</i>	1.25	.284	-2.15	.145	1.21	.308	3.93*	.004	2.20	.231
<i>Kappa</i>	0.93	.524	4.39*	.018	1.37	.354	3.47*	.044	3.65	.114
<i>Mu</i>	2.55*	.046	-2.35	.148	2.57*	.048	7.08*	.000	6.39*	.002
<i>Rho</i>	-1.38	.400	7.16*	.001	-0.487	.771	-0.99	.610	5.03	.053
<i>Sigma</i>	2.65	.062	1.44	.423	1.42	.324	3.68*	.028	4.71*	.036
<i>Tau</i>	4.76*	.002	3.73	.059	2.12	.180	6.44*	.000	7.98*	.001
<i>Upsilon</i>	3.18	.120	6.58*	.011	0.56	.787	9.61*	.000	6.11	.059

^a Post Hoc Tests were reported by comparing the mean deviation (MD) relative to *Omega*

Note. Shading shows significant difference in the mean deviation relative to *Omega*

Appendix 37: **Results of Post Hoc Tests ^a on Parental Involvement**

	<i>Parent-to-school Communication</i>		<i>school-to-parent communication</i>		<i>support to school</i>		<i>Supporting Learning</i>	
	MD	Sig.	MD	Sig.	MD	Sig.	MD	Sig.
<i>Alpha</i>	7.17*	.000	-1.17	.470	3.90	.081	1.54	.379
<i>Kappa</i>	7.13*	.001	0.24	.908	5.12	.068	6.49*	.003
<i>Mu</i>	7.68*	.000	-2.83	.113	5.81*	.018	4.47*	.020
<i>Rho</i>	-1.26	.603	-1.54	.502	4.79	.129	1.43	.564
<i>Sigma</i>	6.02*	.004	-0.90	.650	2.93	.281	2.00	.348
<i>Tau</i>	5.01*	.029	0.72	.741	2.43	.415	3.96	.091
<i>Upsilon</i>	3.95	.188	-4.12	.149	3.08	.432	-2.00	.515

^a Post Hoc Tests were reported by comparing the mean deviation (MD) relative to Omega

Note. Yellow shading shows significant difference in the mean deviation relative to Omega

Appendix 38: **Results of Post Hoc Tests ^a on school board practice**

School board practice		Schools						
		Alpha	Kappa	Mu	Rho	Sigma	Tau	Upsilon
paying attention to parents' suggestions	MD	-0.95	1.20	-0.36	-6.92*	0.90	3.93	4.62
	Sig	.679	.679	.885	.032	.749	.201	.248
involving parents in school affairs	MD	0.05	0.72	-1.21	0.17	-1.38	-0.80	4.59
	Sig	.821	.793	.614	.957	.607	.785	.227
inviting them for meetings	MD	-0.22	-4.10	-3.11	-6.48*	-2.15	-0.58	-7.25*
	Sig	.903	.066	.114	.010	.326	.805	.020
facilitate their participation	MD	1.99	2.39	0.73	-0.81	0.29	2.73	4.73
	Sig	.407	.424	.781	.810	.920	.390	.256
helped the school's performance	MD	4.61*	2.51	1.91	0.15	3.67	-1.71	14.59*
	Sig	.030	.346	.412	.960	.161	0.544	.000
activeness of the school board	MD	0.61	-1.48	-2.00	-4.07	3.30	2.23	12.52*
	Sig	.767	.563	.374	.155	.185	.411	.001
helped in development of the school	MD	2.97	0.81	-0.13	-4.70	1.78	3.71	7.55*
	Sig	.161	.759	.956	.112	.488	.186	.040

^a Post Hoc Tests were reported by comparing the mean deviation (MD) relative to Omega

Note. Yellow shading shows significant difference in the mean deviation relative to Omega

Appendix 39: Comparative Analysis —People

	Omega		Tau		F	Sig
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD		
Pupils						
The head teacher involves everyone in the decision-making process	66	28	80	21	1.77	.091
Teachers in this school show respect for pupils	78	25	77	24	2.17	.034*
Teachers are easy to talk with	79	23	75	25	3.66	.001*
Teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives	82	23	79	25	1.17	.319
Teachers are generally prepared for class	89	14	85	18	5.96	.000*
Teachers show a sense of humor	80	18	73	23	2.46	.017*
People in this school are polite to one another	66	26	60	28	1.03	.410
Teachers work to encourage pupil's self-confidence	86	17	85	17	2.14	.019*
The head teacher treats people as though they are responsible	80	23	79	23	2.16	.036*
Pupils work cooperative with each other	84	18	77	21	1.87	.071
People in this school are happy and want to be here	81	20	76	21	4.11	.000*
People in this school will try to stop destruction of school property	77	22	77	22	0.87	.530
Teachers are happy and enjoy their work	84	19	82	20	4.63	.000*
Pupils are proud of their school	83	20	82	17	96.77	.000*
Teachers share out-of-class experience with pupils	76	24	78	25	0.70	.672
Teachers offer remedial lessons to their pupils free of charge	75	30	42	30	12.85	.000*
Teachers						
The head teacher involves everyone in the decision-making process	90	13	73	15	0.15	.700
Teachers in this school show respect for pupils	92	11	80	19	0.07	.799
Teachers are easy to talk with	92	11	75	18	0.39	.538
Teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives	91	11	75	18	1.78	.188
Teachers are generally prepared for class	93	10	77	10	2.66	.110
Teachers show a sense of humor	92	15	74	20	2.16	.148
People in this school are polite to one another	88	11	73	18	4.53	.038*
Teachers work to encourage pupil's self-confidence	93	11	79	16	0.08	.785
The head teacher treats people as though they are responsible	90	13	80	13	1.64	.207
Pupils work cooperative with each other	89	11	79	17	0.28	.598
People in this school are happy and want to be here	90	19	76	14	1.64	.206
People in this school will try to stop destruction of school property	84	14	71	23	10.39	.002*
Teachers are happy and enjoy their work	91	13	73	20	4.39	.042*
Pupils are proud of their school	97	8	77	17	8.35	.006*
Teachers share out-of-class experience with pupils	82	16	73	21	3.33	.074
Teachers offer remedial lessons to their pupils free of charge	83	19	64	24	2.51	.119
Parents						
I enjoy talking with my child's teachers	89	16	83	20	0.76	.385
Teachers take time to counsel pupils on their future lives	85	18	81	23	1.02	.314
Adults who work in my child's school treat children with respect	82	19	76	23	2.37	.125
Teachers work to encourage pupil's self-confidence	86	16	88	15	0.14	.704
The head teacher treats people as though they are responsible	80	22	82	18	0.85	.358
People in this school are happy and want to be here	84	19	77	22	1.17	.280
Our teachers appear to be happy and enjoy their work	86	15	79	22	2.76	.098
My child is proud of his/her School	89	16	87	19	1.68	.196
Teachers share out-of-class experience with pupils	77	22.7	76	24	0.16	.689
Teachers offer remedial lessons (extra) to their pupils free of charge	68.0	31.3	44	29	5.68	.018*
The school board and teachers have good relationship	85.6	17.3	83	19	0.33	.566
Parents and teachers in this school have good relationship	83.7	20.1	81	21	0.10	.754

Note. Yellow shading shows significant differences while Turquoise shows *most inviting*

Appendix 40: Comparative Analysis —Place

	Omega		Tau		F	Sig
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD		
Pupils						
The furniture (for pupils' or teacher's) is pleasant and comfortable	68	27	69	28	0.23	.631
The air smells fresh in this school	73	25	70	28	2.74	.099
The school compound is clean and well-maintained	79	22	72	28	11.39	.001*
Toilets and urinals in this school are clean and properly maintained	65	28	59	28	0.00	.993
The head teacher's office is attractive	90	18	82	22	0.32	.569
Notice boards are attractive and up-to-date	76	23	73	27	4.06	.045*
Extra room is available for pupils independent or individual study	72	28	66	28	0.56	.457
Safety measures are well posted and seem reasonable	55	29	52	31	0.63	.428
Classrooms offer a variety of furniture (desk) arrangements	80	23	75	26	2.14	.145
Toilets and water taps are well maintained	71	25	63	31	9.44	.002*
There are comfortable chairs or seats for visitors	81	24	69	30	13.26	.000*
The lighting in this school is more than adequate	73	26	37	22	3.34	.069
Teachers						
The furniture (for pupils' or teacher's) is pleasant and comfortable	66	21	80	20	3.96	.052
The air smells fresh in this school	68	24	68	17	2.53	.118
The school compound is clean and well-maintained	82	14	72	18	3.46	.069
Toilets and urinals in this school are clean and properly maintained	71	17	73	16	0.30	.584
The head teacher's office is attractive	95	9	79	16	1.49	.228
Notice boards are attractive and up-to-date	87	12	60	19	1.49	.228
Extra room is available for pupils independent or individual study	69	23	73	18	3.19	.080
Safety measures are well posted and seem reasonable	53	22	57	17	2.05	.159
Classrooms offer a variety of furniture (desk) arrangements	74	22	73	22	0.01	.919
Toilets and water taps are well maintained	77	17	63	21	1.87	.178
There are comfortable chairs or seats for visitors	77	21	83	17	0.25	.618
The lighting in this school is more than adequate	76	21	49	20	0.01	.910
Parents						
The school compound is clean and well-maintained	80	22	78	22	0.06	.811
The head teacher's office is attractive	87	15	81	17	1.68	.196
The school notice boards are attractive and up-to-date	79	21	71	24	3.72	.055
Extra room is available for pupils independent or individual study	72	26	72	26	0.00	.963
There are comfortable chairs or seats for visitors	70	27	68	26	0.11	.743

Note. Yellow shading shows significant differences while Turquoise shows *most inviting*

Appendix 41: Comparative Analysis —Processes

	Omega		Tau		F	Sig
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD		
Pupils						
Marks for tests and exams are fairly are assigned	84	20	76	25	3.78	.053
All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely	69	24	57	30	9.22	.003*
Everyone arrives on time for school	63	26	50	27	0.13	.717
People often feel welcome when they enter the school	82	21	81	23	0.10	.747
Many people in this school are involved in making decisions	67	26	78	23	6.92	.009*
Daily attendance by pupils is high	86	17	77	25	7.62	.006*
Daily attendance by staff is high	88	15	76	24	13.5	.000*
Lessons start on time	89	17	80	25	10.2	.002*
Teachers						
Marks for tests and exams are fairly are assigned	94	13	80	11	2.12	.152
All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely	82	18	64	24	2.33	.134
Everyone arrives on time for school	89	17	76	16	0.51	.480
People often feel welcome when they enter the school	88	15	80	11	4.53	.038*
Many people in this school are involved in making decisions	85	18	67	22	1.79	.188
Daily attendance by pupils is high	96	8	77	17	5.46	.023*
Daily attendance by staff is high	97	14	86	9	0.36	.552
Lessons start on time	94	13	84	17	1.04	.314
Parents						
All telephone calls to this school are answered fast and politely	76	21	74	25	7.63	.006*
The school is preparing my child for a prosperous future	92	14	86	19	2.76	.098
I feel welcome in my child’s school	89	14	85	19	1.62	.204
People often feel welcome when they enter the school	85	17	82	23	5.83	.016*
Many people in this school are involved in making decisions	75	24	78	21	3.99	.047*
Parents are happy to have their children in this school	89	15	85	17	0.36	.550
My child attend school daily	90	19	92	16	1.00	.320

Note. Yellow shading shows significant differences while Turquoise shows *most inviting*

Appendix 42: Comparative Analysis —Policies

	Omega		Tau			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	Sig
	%		%			
Pupils						
Teachers are willing to help pupils who have special problems	87	18	85	23	3.96	.048*
Pupils can to talk to each another during class activities	79	27	73	31	4.94	.027*
School policy permits and encourages freedom of expression	78	22	80	19	4.79	.030*
The messages and notes sent home are positive	80	21	74	24	1.89	.171
A great percentage of pupils pass examinations in this school	84	17	76	23	4.15	.043*
The grading practices in this school are fair	77	20	73	21	2.13	.146
Teachers						
Teachers are willing to help pupils who have special problems	91	10	80	15	0.18	.672
Pupils can to talk to each another during class activities	89	16	81	14	1.12	.295
School policy permits and encourages freedom of expression	93	10	79	15	0.21	.648
The messages and notes sent home are positive	89	16	74	18	0.10	.749
A great percentage of pupils pass examinations in this school	96	8	69	20	25.9	.000*
The grading practices in this school are fair	91	11	83	10	4.88	.032*
Parents						
Teachers care about my child	90	14	84	21	10.5	.001*
School policy permits and encourages freedom of expression	83	17	80	19	0.10	.757
The messages and notes sent home are positive	81	20	70	24	2.30	.003*
I am happy with the performance of the school in the national examination	81	20	75	23	4.22	.041*

Note. Yellow shading shows significant differences while Turquoise shows *most inviting*

Appendix 43: **Comparative Analysis —Programs**

	Omega		Tau		F	Sig
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD		
Pupils						
Everyone is encouraged to participate in games programs	77	22	75	28	4.41	.037*
There is a health and wellness program in this school	59	29	62	28	0.01	.927
School organises educational tours and excursions	92	14	71	26	56.9	.000*
Good health practices are encouraged in this school	81	21	77	22	0.17	.682
There are minimum interruptions to classroom	77	21	71	24	1.88	.171
The school sponsor co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc)	74	26	64	30	5.66	.018*
There are other courses (First Aids, peer counselling etc)	64	28	66	30	1.23	.267
Teachers						
Everyone is encouraged to participate in games programs	88	15	80	13	2.16	.148
There is a health and wellness program in this school	73	22	67	26	1.40	.243
School organises educational tours and excursions	96	9	64	19	12.3	.001*
Good health practices are encouraged in this school	92	10	73	18	6.59	.013*
There are minimum interruptions to classroom	89	13	77	13	0.35	.559
The school sponsor co-curricular (wildlife, scouting etc.)	83	16	69	24	2.64	.110
There are other courses (First Aids, peer counselling etc.)	66	23	80	16	6.32	.015*
Parents						
School organises educational tours and excursions	90	17	75	22	6.04	.015*
There are minimum interruptions to classroom	81	19	74	22	1.82	.179
The school board has helped me participate in school affairs	76	23	76	23	1.72	.191
Teachers offer free extra lessons or ‘tuition’ to their pupils	57	29	60	30	0.13	.718

Note. Yellow shading shows significant differences while Turquoise shows *most inviting*