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PRINCIPALS' INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' COMPLETION RATES IN SELECTED PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MURANG'A SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of principals' inspirational motivation on students completing their studies, focusing on 13 public secondary schools in Murang'a South Sub-County, Kenya. The study applied the mixed-method approach with the convergent parallel design, targeting form 2, 3 and 4 students, teachers and deputy principals. In data collection, structured questionnaires and interviews, targeting the views of the students as well as drawing out views from the deputy principals and teachers were utilized. Data analysis was conducted using two approaches: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data was analyzed using multiple linear regression, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented through direct quotes and verbatim. The analysis showed that inspirational motivation is a major predictor of students' completion rates, with significant results ($R^2 = .899$, $\beta = .487$, $p = .001$, $F = 549.489$). The results were significant, with high linearity between the independent variable and the dependent variable ($F = 70.444$, $p = .001$). Principals' inspirational motivation was realized through collective purposes, motivational speakers, and counselling. Principals should promote the school vision through assemblies and forums, provide mentoring and individualized plans for at-risk students, while the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should provide training for transformational leadership and inclusive practices to address disabilities, poverty, and learning difficulties to improve completion rates.

KEYWORDS: Inspirational Motivation, Transformational leadership, Completion Rates. Student Secondary School

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership within an organization has a profound impact on its goals, especially in secondary education, where the type of leadership practiced by principals influences students' completion. Leaning on Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), transformational leadership involves idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This research is focused on the impact of motivation and inspiration, the ability of the leader to define a clear, positive,

and unifying vision and commitment to the goals, and to motivate a community (Bass, 1985). Unlike transactional leadership, which is focused on using rewards to gain compliance, motivation and inspiration focus on the internal motivation of others, which is how the positive and resilient culture of the school is formed and the level of persistence and completion of school improves (Leithwood et al., 2022).

There is sustained positive transformational leadership and increased attainment in all regions. Out of a 76% secondary school completion rate as observed by UNESCO (2022) globally, Sub-Saharan Africa is the furthest behind at 41%, with leadership quality being a notable forecasting variable. Inspirational motivation of an average school principal in China, according to Zhang (2023), increased the school completion rate by 2% through the establishment of a sense of shared purpose. Unfortunately, this kind of leadership is limitedly practiced in a developing country like Kenya.

While the introduction of free secondary education (FSE) has increased secondary enrollment in Kenya, the national secondary school completion rate has plateaued at 77% (KNBS, 2019). Among Form 1 entrants in 2020, 175,748 students did not reach Form 4 by 2023, marking a 19% national dropout rate (Muchunguh, 2024). In Murang'a County, the situation is even worse, with a completion rate of 60%, and Murang'a South Sub-County is the most affected area, with 20.9% of the population never having completed their schooling (Murang'a South Sub-County Education Office, 2024). While neighboring counties Kiambu and Kirinyaga have completion rates of 84% and 82%, respectively, attributed to the great leadership of the school principals (Irungu, 2019), schools in Murang'a South have a dismal report of 66.1%, while the completion rate is 60-70% (Ministry of Education, 2012). This is disappointing and attributed to lack of motivation, poverty, and poor leadership in the schools.

The gap indicates a lack of leadership; the absence of sufficient inspirational motivation fails to mitigate dropout causes such as socioeconomic challenges and low morale. Of the Kenya Vision 2030 and Competency-Based Curriculum aspirations, motivated principals will create empowered resilient learners. However, there is still a lack of evidence on the empirical influence of inspirational motivation on completion in Murang'a South public secondary schools. This study seeks to analyze the practice of inspirational motivation among principals and its influence on student completion. This is to solve the problem within the context and enlighten policy on the equitable distribution of education.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The vision, tenacity, and strength of transformational principals using inspiration, vision, and related practices and motivation should improve secondary school completion rates to almost 100% and help students smoothly transition to Form 4 and graduate. In Murang'a South Sub-County, 30-40% of students fail to complete secondary school, despite free education policies. This is even with free secondary education policies. This rate lags behind Kenya's 77% national average (KNBS, 2019) and trails Kiambu (84%) and Kirinyaga (82%). This, in turn, contradicts the goals of equity in Vision 2030. Empirical literature available reveals that 20.9% of residents lack a secondary school, and 66.1% of

schools operate at 60-70% (Murang'a South Sub-County Education Office, 2024; Ministry of Education, 2012). Globally, inspirational motivation boosts completion rates (Zhang, 2023; Rombaut, 2020). Yet, empirical evidence in Kenya, particularly in Murang'a County, is scarce regarding the influence of inspirational motivation on student completion rates. This study aimed to analyse the influence of inspirational motivation on student completion rates in Murang'a South Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya.

3. OBJECTIVE

To determine the influence of principals' inspirational motivation and its influence on students' completion rates in selected public secondary schools in Murang'a South Sub-County, Kenya

4. SIGNIFICANCE

This study contributes new empirical findings by distinguishing principals' inspirational motivation, which is a core practice of transformational leadership, from completion rates in Murang'a South Sub County. Global studies associate transformational leadership with a 2-6% increase; no research has been conducted on this practice in relation to the competency-based curriculum or the gaps posed by free secondary education.

The study combines quantitative and qualitative analyses of the Form 2-4 transition data and interviews with principals, along with teacher surveys. This approach strengthens causal justification and resolves the issues left by all previous correlation studies.

The study's results provide principals with actionable strategies to reduce dropout rates in the range of 30-40% through vision and goal alignment. For evidence-based policymaking, the study justifies leadership training as part of the Vision 2030 framework. Schools are encouraged to implement retention strategies, aligning with the SDG 4 goals on equity. Other researchers are invited to build on this localized baseline to foster advanced studies on leadership.

5. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This theory was pioneered by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and further elaborated by Bass (1985). According to this theory, leaders work to inspire, stimulate intellectually, and foster a vision, so that followers shift their focus from self-interest to collective goals. This theory of leadership is relevant because of its focus on motivation, and goal-directed behavior of followers, particularly, the principal's role in instilling self-belief and developing innovative methods to keep students motivated to pursue their goals. The theory is very subjective and emphasizes charisma (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). It also neglects the role of demographic, and, resource, external factors (Bryman, 1992). Limitations acknowledged, the theory clarifies principals' vision, motivation, and the motivation, and, courage to empower staff and students, to, motivate, and, increase the Form 1-4 transitions in Murang'a South.

Conceptual Framework

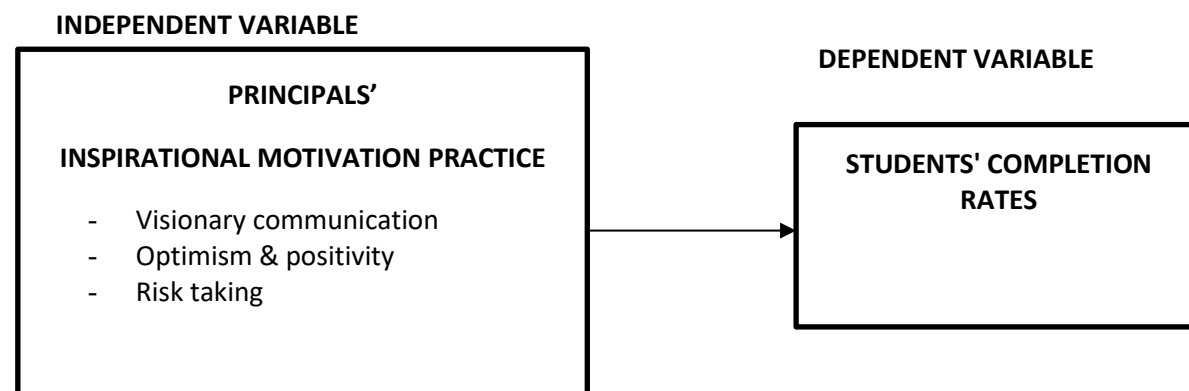


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

6. LITERATURE

Commanding a vision or purpose inspires enthusiasm and emotional involvement from both staff members and students (Bass, 1985). While many studies confirm the ability of this type of motivation to elevate engagement and performance, less studies exist with a focus on completion rates, particularly in Kenya.

Serin and Akkaya (2020) noted inspirational leadership as measured through the Transformational Leadership Scale, promotes collaborative settings and completion rates in Turkey. Gyansah et al. (2020) in Ghana also focused on primary motivation in a positive effect ($\beta=1.0$) with no mention of motivation. There was a positive effect on performance, with no mention of the negative effect of motivation on completion ($\beta=1.0$).

Makgato and Mudzanani (2019) studied South African schools and used surveys to document completion rates post motivation training in the vision sharing of principals. Bundled practices, studies and surveys do not isolate the effect of inspirational motivation. Rwigema (2022) studied Rwandan post-genocide reforms and noted completion rates could be improved when principals were held accountable through training, but there were no studies on the mechanisms of those improvements.

Kenyan evidence shows both promise and contradictions. Musyoki (2022) found a significant negative correlation ($r=-0.217$, $p<0.05$) between inspirational motivation and KCSE scores in Makueni County ($n=111$ principals, Cronbach's $\alpha=0.85$); Ngunyi and Ndurumo (2019) reported it accounted for 15.5% of performance variance ($R^2=0.155$, $F=10.411$, $p=0.043$) in Lari Sub-County. Ochieng et al. (2020) found the best results in Homa Bay schools with high motivational democratic styles ($\chi^2=15.67$, $df=5$).

There are clear links to performance, however, gaps remain in the area: the majority of studies focus on the immediate outcome metrics rather than the completion rate, the emotional aspect of retention, and very few attempt to separate the effects of inspirational motivation directly on students. The generalizability of findings in varying socioeconomic contexts is lacking, particularly in Kenyan

counties with low completion rates, such as Murang'a South. This study aimed to fill these gaps by exploring the effects of inspirational motivation on student completion rates.

7. MATERIALS AND METHODS

7.1 Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, where data collection was done simultaneously using quantitative and qualitative approaches, with each set of data being analyzed separately before the findings were combined to form a comprehensive understanding (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Quantitative data analyzed the relationship between inspirational motivation and student completion rate, while the qualitative study examined the mechanisms and challenges involved. This improved the methodology by using data triangulation.

7.2 Study Design and Duration

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was used in the study, analyzing data collected over six weeks between August and October 2025. The study took place in leadership environments, where deputy principals reported to their principals, with the latter having at least five years of tenure.

7.3 Study Setting

The study was conducted in Murang'a South Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. The study was set in Murang'a South Sub-County, Kenya, where completion in secondary education was between 60% and 70%, despite the Free Secondary Education policy (FSE) (Murang'a South Sub-County Education Office, 2024).

7.4 Participants and Eligibility Criteria

The study population consisted of 6,734 students, 13 full-time teachers, and 13 deputy principals in 13 secondary schools in Murang'a South Sub-County. The inclusion criteria for the study were students with a minimum exposure of at least one year, full-time teachers and deputy principals where Principals have served at least five years in the same institution. Excluded were part-time or temporary teachers or staff, as they were not actively engaged in the institution.

7.5 Sampling Methods and Sample Size

The study used a stratified random sampling technique to select students and teachers, reducing bias. Purposive sampling targeted 42 deputy principals, who possess firsthand knowledge of long-tenured principals' leadership dynamics, a selection method Patton (2002) advocates for in qualitative-dominant mixed-methods research. Patton (2002) advocates for selecting experts in qualitative-dominant mixed-methods research.

Sample sizes were calculated using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula at 95% confidence level ($\chi^2 = 3.841$, $P = 0.5$, $d = 0.05$):

Table 1: Sampling Matrix

Population Group	N	n
Schools	42	13
Deputy Principals	42	13
Teachers	1,134	287
Students	6,734	363

7.6 Data Collection Instruments

The study employed structured questionnaires with 5-point Likert scales to collect student perceptions of inspirational motivation behavior by principals. The questionnaires measured specific aspects of inspirational leadership: vision articulation, optimism promotion, and shared goal commitment. Interviews gathered rich information on leadership experiences, difficulties faced, and influences on completion rates, with each interview taking approximately 20 to 45 minutes. The use of two methods follows the guidelines set by convergent parallel design, allowing for triangulation of both perceptual and experiential information (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

7.7. Pilot Testing

Piloting of the tools was done on a 10% subsample (65 students, 5 teachers, 5 deputy principals in 5 schools) so that the clarity of the questions and the format of the responses to be given could be refined as well as the logistical processes (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2012). The pilot noted unclear wording in three questionnaire items and time concerns in interview guides and changed them respectively. Such pre-testing stage guaranteed the appropriateness of the instruments to be used in the target population and maximized the quality of data to use in the main research, which is in line with the standard educational research procedures.

7.7.1 Reliability and Validity

Instrument reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.85$ between subscales) and validity were also confirmed in pilot testing on the basis of expert content review with three educational leadership experts, and by exploratory factor analysis using factor loadings that matched the transformational leadership framework proposed by Bass (1985), providing the correct measure of inspirational motivation perceptions (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

7.8. Data Collection Procedures

Following ethical approvals from NACOSTI, Kenyatta University, and the Ministry of Education, and after securing written informed consent from all participants, data collection proceeded over six weeks: self-administered student questionnaires with supervised collection occurred during Weeks 1-2, followed by audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with deputy principals ($n=13$) and teachers

(n=13) during Weeks 3-6, with all responses anonymized immediately and stored on password-protected devices to maintain confidentiality.

7.9 Data Processing and Statistical Analysis.

The statistical program SPSS version 26.0 was used to clean, code, and analyze; data. Descriptive Quantitative data were cleaned, coded and analyzed with SPSS version 26.0 and summarized distribution with descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) and evaluated relationship with multiple linear regression:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Transcripts of qualitative interviews were subjected to thematic analysis (NVivo 12 (verbatim transcription, open coding, theme development, and member checking)) and meta-inferences were made via simultaneous display of statistical findings and emerging themes.

7.10. Ethical Issues and Logistics.

NACOSTI, Kenyatta University as well as the Ministry of Education were consulted and gave institutional approvals. All participants had to sign voluntary informed consent and it was ensured that all data and information was kept confidential and anonymous, and that the participant had the right to withdraw without penalty. The data will be stored in five years after publication and safely destroyed.

8. RESULTS

8.1 Principals' Inspirational Motivation and Students' Completion Rates

The study sought to assess the influence of inspirational motivation on student completion rates. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement which represents inspirational motivation constructs. Responses were measured and aggregated as shown in table

Table 2: Principals' Inspirational Motivation and Students' Completion Rates

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
My principal clearly communicates a vision for student success.	12 (4.8%)	56 (22.2%)	62 (24.6%)	66 (26.2%)	56 (22.2%)
My principal inspires us with optimism and positivity about our future.	6 (2.4%)	66 (26.2%)	54 (21.4%)	70 (27.8%)	56 (22.2%)
My principal encourages students to take academic risks and embrace challenges.	7 (2.8%)	65 (25.8%)	57 (22.6%)	64 (25.4%)	59 (23.4%)
My principal motivates students to work towards long-term goals.	5 (2.0%)	65 (25.8%)	60 (23.8%)	63 (25.0%)	59 (23.4%)
My principal consistently reminds students of the importance of education.	9 (3.6%)	62 (24.6%)	57 (22.6%)	67 (26.6%)	57 (22.6%)

My principal celebrates student achievements to boost morale.	6 (2.4%)	66 (26.2%)	55 (21.8%)	65 (25.8%)	60 (23.8%)
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. Source: Field Data (2025)

The results in table 2 indicate that when students were asked if their principal clearly communicates a vision for student success, 12 (48.4%) of students agreed or strongly agreed. In total, 66(26.2%) agreed, and 56(22.2%) strongly agreed which shows that a fairly large number of students hold the conviction that their principal does in fact communicate a clear and compelling vision regarding their success. Such a belief resonates with the transformational leadership theory where the element of vision constitutes a motivational aspect for followers. As suggested by Leithwood et al. (2022), in cases where principals communicate a vision that is clear, they give value in a direction that helps students focus on their academic objectives and fosters encouragement in pursuit of the goals.

In the same way when students were asked if their principal inspires optimism and positivity about their future, 50% of students agreed or strongly agreed with 70(27.8%) agreeing and 56(22.2%) strongly agreeing. This response indicates that most students perceived their principal's attitude and disposition positively and even inspirational. This positivity and optimism constitute the minimal foundational requirements for the inspirational motivation subset. Such an assertion resonates with Zhang's (2023) who describes principals as individuals who assist students with maintaining their engagement and motivation during difficult periods by offering a vibrant, encouraging atmosphere. Principals help foster a prevailing attitude of encouragement that is pivotal in the encouragement of steadfastness and persistence.

In reference to the third statement, it was noted that 48.8% of students either agreed or strongly agreed that their principal encouraged them to take academic risks and face challenges. This was further broken down by 64 students (25.4%) agreeing and 59 students (23.4%) strongly agreeing. This resonates with the concept of intellectual stimulation, an essential element of transformational leadership. In their research, Stronge & Xu (2021) and Thorpe et al. (2020) noted that when principals motivate students to take academic risks, it creates an environment that fosters critical thinking and creative problem-solving, both of which are essential for students' academic success and completion. This also shows that when students face challenges and remain within their comfort zones, it creates an environment for building resilience, creativity, and confidence, all of which are essential for completing tasks.

Additionally, 48.4% of students affirmed or strongly affirmed whether their principal inspired them to strive for long-term goals, with 64(25.4%) agreeing and 59(23.4%) strongly agreeing. This supports the notion that competent leadership does not concentrate only on the immediate responsibilities at hand, but also attends to the preparation of a long-lasting vision for the success of students. The focus on motivating the followers to attend to long-term goals, as mentioned by Leithwood et al. (2022), helps sustain the motivation over extended periods of time. The dominant perception of principals as

positively influencing academic motivation aims at the students' commitment to education and, consequently, the completion rate for students.

Respondents were also positive about whether their principal often reminds students of the importance of education. Overall, students were supportive of the principal educational reminders, where 49.2% agreed or strongly agreed, with 67(26.6%) agreeing and 57(22.6%) strongly agreeing. This shows the importance of reinforcing the value of education, as reiterated in transformational leadership principles. Elevated focus by principals on the importance of education, as noted by Zhang (2023) and Leithwood et al. (2021, 2022), keeps students engaged and consequently improves completion rates. These reminders also help to cultivate a positive school culture around the value of education and encourage students.

Almost half, 49.6% of students, noted their principal helps morale by celebrating student achievements. Almost 66(26.2%) of students agreed, while 60(23.8%) strongly agreed. Involving students, celebrating their achievements, and recognizing their hard work helps student leaders gain motivation. These are also approaches suggested in transformational leadership and advancing student work. Fostering a positive school climate improves student and staff morale and helps students feel appreciated, suggesting their work is valuable. Students having positive responses, as noted in this study, helps principals build pride and a positive climate. This promotes activation and work completion, as noted in student engagement and school completion rates.

The evidence in this case aligns emotionally with the principles of transformational leadership theory. Most of the students in this study report that their principals articulate a vision, galvanize hope, advocate for academic risks, and praise accomplishments, characteristics of the vision inspirational motivator. The empirical research on transformational leadership corroborates these findings, noting the impact of inspirational motivation on student involvement, achievement, and completion. When principals advocate for a success vision and use positive motivational techniques, they create a student-centered environment that encourages educational persistence and ultimate completion of their education.

Interviews with school deputy principals support the findings from students. Most interviewees pointed to the practice of inspirational motivation as the motivational strategy most frequently utilized by principals to foster student achievement. One deputy principal said:

"While addressing students during assemblies, barazas, and open forums, she communicates the vision. The principal ensures the students launch the targets of the school: mean, subject, and individual grades. This inspires students to complete learning."

This statement illustrates how important communication of vision is in motivating students and helping them remain focused on goals. Shin, and Bolkan, (2021) advocates the need for transformative leaders to communicate a motivating vision, and the vision must be clear and detailed. With the principal's

alignment of the school mission through the communication of targets and goals to students, success becomes highly visualized to the students, motivating them to work on their vision.

The teachers' perspectives reveal how principals utilize innovative strategies to maintain optimism in students even when situations are difficult. One teacher commented:

"The principal ensures that the students undergo Guidance and Counseling to motivate them to complete learning."

Emotional and academic obstacles are mitigated through the integration of emotional guidance and academic counseling practices. The basic principle of balance the positive reinforcement which the principals "reward those who achieve the highest and those who show great improvement" goes in accordance to Bass (1995) idealized influence and the motivation to actively engage students. As in the work of Shin & Bolkan (2021) the positive reinforcement systems and motivation as abiding structures in a school culture. Furthermore, the value of reinforcement in motivational support systems increases the matriculation persistence and the attributor patterns to goal attainment.

The interviews further indicated that motivational speakers are incorporated and as one such speaker is invited, the principal is seen as a motivator to keep students aligned to their academic focus.

"The Principal invites motivational speakers to address students." Another teacher noted

Empirical research consistently supports motivating speakers and such external focus motivational strategies to enhance student completion. Improvement in students' completion rate is, in part, due to the speakers' influence on students' beliefs and the overall atmosphere of hope. The result of such motivational strategies result to completion rate improvement.

8.2 Test for Linearity for Principals' Inspirational Motivation and Students' Completion Rates

A linearity test was used to investigate the linear relationship between inspirational motivation of principals and the completion rates of students.

Table 3: Test for Linearity between Inspirational Motivation and Students Completion Rates

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Completion rates * Inspirational motivation	Between Groups	(Combined) Linearity	21.856	17	1.286	5.372	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	16.860	1	16.860	70.444	.000
			4.996	16	.312	1.305	.195
	Within Groups		56.005	234	.239		
	Total		77.861	251			

The results also suggest that there is a statistically significant correlation between the inspirational motivation of principals and the completion rates of students, $F=5.372$, $p=0.001$, which indicates that the variables have a significant relationship. Linearity component is also quite substantial, $F=70.444$, $p=0.001$, which implies that there is a great presence of linearity relationship where the greater the inspirational motivation levels are, the greater the completion rates

8.3 Regression Analysis of the Correlation between Inspirational Motivation and Student Completion Rates.

This section focuses on the analysis of the relation of the leadership motivation variables and the rate of completion among students using multiple regression analysis. The reason why the analysis is done is to ascertain whether leadership motivation strongly predicts the rate of student completion and to evaluate the extent of influence on student completion exerted by various aspects of leadership motivation.

8.4 Analysis of Variance in Regression Analysis.

The statistical method of analyzing the variance to determine the statistical significance of the differences in variance is called Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Conventionally, ANOVA can be used to examine the existence of any mean differences across two or more independent groups. Nevertheless, ANOVA is an essential element of regression analysis, and it performs another analytical similar role there.

ANOVA in regression analysis is utilized in determining whether the overall regression model is significant or not. In particular, it compares the variance in the dependent variable that has been explained by the predictors, also known as regression or model variance, to the variance that could not be explained by the model, also known as residual or error variance. The F statistic based on the resulting tests whether the set of predictors as a collection offers a superior predictive of the dependent variable compared to a model which has no predictors.

ANOVA was not employed in determining differences across the groups in this study. Instead, it was applied to the regression model to discriminate on whether the leadership motivation variables can account a meaningful percentage of the variance in the completion rates of the students. The context of analysis is more focused on the existing versus unexplained variance, as opposed to differences between the groups of means.

8.5 Model Summary

Table 4 is a model summary applied to multivariate regression analysis to determine the relationship between the variables of leadership motivation and the rate of completion by the students.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.948	.899	.897	.17845

The findings show the relationship between the independent variables and completion rates of students is quite strong with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .948. The value of R SQ of .899 indicates that inspirational motivation explain about 89.9% of a variation in the completion rates of students.

The value of the adjusted R Square is 0.897 indicating that the model has an ability to explain a lot despite the number of predictors included in the model. This implies that there are no superfluous variables that are inflating the model. The level of the standard error of the estimate (.17845) implies that the average difference between the measured and the theoretical completion rates is rather low, and this indicates that the model fits very well.

8.8.3 ANOVA Results for the Regression Model

The ANOVA results for the regression model are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	69.995	4	17.499	549.489	.000
Residual	7.866	247	.032		
Total	77.861	251			

In the ANOVA results, the regression model was found to be statistically significant, $F(4, 247) = 549.489$, $p = .001$. This shows that the difference between the unexplained and the explained variances is very low as compared to the variance represented by the regression model.

This observation validates the fact that the motivational variable of transformational leadership is significant predictor of student completion rate. The outcome warrants the application of regression analysis and shows that the model makes a significant contribution to explain variation in rates of completion.

8.8.4 Regression Coefficients and Strength of Influence

Table 6 gives the regression coefficients of the model. Such coefficients show how much each of these predictors makes each student complete despite the other variables being taken into consideration.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	.088	.072	—	1.226	.221
Inspirational motivation	.236	.010	.487	24.071	.000

Inspirational motivation is positively and statistically significantly related to student completion rates, $B = .236$, $b = .487$, $t = 24.071$, $p = .001$. This implies that the higher the inspirational motivation, the higher the completion rates of the students.

The regression analysis proves that inspirational motivation variable of transformational leadership contributes respectively to the completion rates among students and significantly as well. The results of ANOVA indicate that the overall regression equation is used to explain a considerable percentage of variation in the rates of completions, and the regression coefficients tend to give a more in-depth account of how strong and in which direction each leadership motivation dimension can highly impact the completion rates.

9. CONCLUSION

The study corroborates the theory of transformational leadership that suggests inspirational motivation plays a crucial role in student commitment through the formulation of a vision and maintenance of hope (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). While global studies report modest improvements, in dropout-prone contexts such as Murang'a South Sub County in Kenya, dropout rates hinder student progression. The study combines practice and mixed methods to examine essential staff-mediated mechanisms that are not always addressed in correlational studies.

The study found that principals motivate grade goals through assemblies with motivational speeches, promoting a sense of shared purpose despite socioeconomic challenges. The middle school student sample agrees with the school vision and motivational statements, suggesting implementation gaps that could be caused by resource constraints. The study used a convergent parallel mixed research design to ensure validity through triangulation.

The study is consistent with Bass's (1985) leadership theory and presents a quantitative evaluation of the relative effectiveness of Kenya's competency-based curriculum. While Kenya's studies aggregate leadership styles (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019), this study identifies specific leadership styles linked with Kenya's Vision 2030 equity goals, providing a plausible explanation for increased student completion rates in neighboring countries due to visionary leadership.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. The Ministry of Education should be involved in annual workshops, with emphasis on the setting of clear targets in assemblies and programs with motivational speakers to ensure that vision-sharing practices are in place and completion rates are improved.
- ii. Schools should be encouraged to hold weekly counseling sessions with the principals to emphasize the importance of guidance, raise student awareness of the principal's reminders, and enhance morale and perseverance.
- iii. Surveys on inspirational motivation practices in the sub-county education offices should be conducted, focusing on the need to address the gaps in the leadership vision in schools with low completion rates.
- iv. Longitudinal studies on inspirational motivation in the counties of Kenya should be conducted to validate the findings, as they are dependent on the context, in order to standardize the development of leadership in line with the equity focus of SDG 4.

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