

An Evaluation of Administrative Strategies in Zambia's Missionary Schools: A Case Study of St Mary's School in Lusaka

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Abstract—This study investigated the factors contributing to the academic excellence of Catholic Mission Schools in Zambia, focusing specifically on the administrative strategies that distinguish these institutions from the public and private counterparts. Catholic schools in Zambia have a well-established reputation for academic success, with many consistently ranking among the top performers in national examinations. Despite their notable achievements, there has been limited exploration into the administrative practices that might drive their continued success. By examining schools such as St. Mary's Secondary School, the research sought to uncover the strategies that have contributed to the long-standing academic success of Catholic Mission Schools in Zambia. The study's findings aimed to offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and parents seeking to understand and potentially replicate these success factors in other educational settings. Using a mixed-method research approach, the study combined both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the administrative practices at play. A sample size of 250 pupils were involved for quantitative purpose and findings and 10 teachers working in administration took part in the research to establish qualitative finding in the study. Through a review of relevant literature, the research first explores global trends before narrowing its focus to the African context, particularly Zambia, where the literature on this topic remains sparse. The findings of this study, presented in the latter chapters, offer key lessons and interpretations that contribute to the ongoing dialogue on educational administration and quality in Zambia. In conclusion, this research highlights the importance of effective administrative strategies in driving academic performance and provides actionable recommendations for enhancing the quality of education across Zambia.

Keywords— Academic Performance, Administrative Strategies, Catholic Mission Schools, Quality Education and National Examinations.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Zambia, Catholic schools are widely associated with quality education, with academic excellence and strong learner discipline being central to their identity (Hambulo, 2016). Studies have shown that students in Catholic schools, particularly in higher grades, consistently outperform their public and private counterparts (Matandiko, 2024). Catholic education has a long-standing reputation for excellence, dating back to its inception in the late 1800s. According to the Vatican Statistical Yearbook (2020), Catholic educational institutions in Zambia include 114 pre-primary schools, 129 primary schools, 83 secondary schools, 3 colleges of

education, and two universities. As such, we see that Catholic educational institutions are mostly associated with or related to the provision of quality education due to different factors that go with what constitutes quality educational provision (Hambulo, 2016).

Additionally, Catholic schools in Zambia are widely recognized for their outstanding academic achievements, consistently ranking among the top performers in national examinations. The long-standing reputation of these institutions for providing high-quality education has raised important questions about what sets them apart from other schools. This research specifically focuses on St. Mary's Secondary School, one of the top-performing Catholic schools in Zambia, to explore the administrative strategies that may contribute to its success. The study aims to identify key factors driving the school's high performance, with a particular emphasis on the practices and strategies that can be replicated across other educational institutions. Understanding the administrative processes behind these achievements could offer valuable insights for policymakers and educators.

Finally, we saw in our study that Catholic schools in Zambia have continued to excel in national examinations, with many schools regularly placed in the top 10 for academic performance (ECZ, 2020-2024; Zanec, 2020-2024). Schools like Fatima Girls, St. Joseph's Chivuna, and Matero Boys consistently achieve 100% pass rates in grade 9 and 12 exams. The remarkable academic success of these institutions makes them highly sought after by parents looking for optimal educational outcomes for their children.

Below was the general objective, the specific objectives and research question which guided the study:

General Objective

To Evaluation Administrative Strategies in Zambia's Missionary Schools, with a specific focus on St Mary's School in Lusaka.

Research Objectives

- To Evaluate the role of administrative strategies in enhancing the quality of education at St. Mary's Secondary school.
- To analyze the challenges faced by St. Mary's School, in implementing these administrative strategies.
- To assess the key administrative strategies employed by St. Mary's School

Research Questions

- How are the administrative strategies enhancing the quality of education in the learners at St. Mary's school?
- What challenges does St. Mary's Secondary School face in implementing its administrative strategies?
- What are the key administrative strategies employed by St. Mary's school?

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The study adopted an exploratory design method, where the qualitative data is collected first to explore the research problem; thereafter, the quantitative data is collected to test or generalize the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As such, to identify the administrative strategies implemented by St. Mary's Secondary School that contribute to its consistently high academic performance, evaluate the relationship between these strategies and students' performance in national examinations, and analyze the challenges faced in implementing and sustaining them. This research design was selected because it allows for an in-depth examination of complex issues within a real-life context, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the school's success.

Research Approach

This research employed a mixed-method research approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to collect and analyze data. The study by employing a mixed-method research approach, that is integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies was to gain a comprehensive understanding of attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. The qualitative aspect of this design delves into the perspectives of teachers, while the quantitative aspect examines student experiences. This combined approach offers a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation compared to relying solely on one method (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2004).

III. RESULTS

3.1. Demographic Information of Respondent

The study recorded an 80% response rate, with 200 valid responses out of 250 distributed surveys. This is considered a strong response rate in survey-based research. According to Baruch and Holtom (2008), a response rate above 70% is acceptable and ensures the reliability of the data. A high response rate reduces the risk of bias and enhances the accuracy and generalizability of the study's findings.

Age

The age distribution of respondents was grouped into three categories. The majority of respondents, 92 (46.0%), were between 15 and 17 years old, followed by 58 (29.0%) who were above 18 years old. Meanwhile, 50 respondents (25.0%) were 15 years or younger.

Grade Level

Regarding grade level, the respondents were classified into three educational groups. The highest proportion of

respondents, 98 (49.0%), were in Grade 12, followed by 62 (31.0%) in Grade 11, and 40 (20.0%) in Grade 10. This suggests that the majority of participants were in their final year of secondary school, potentially contributing more informed perspectives based on their academic experience.

Administrative Strategies Implemented by St. Mary's School

The following findings were obtained from interviews with teachers at St. Mary's Secondary School. These strategies reflect the school's efforts to maintain high academic standards and promote moral development among pupils. The administrative approaches outlined below are designed to support both the educational and personal growth of students at St. Mary's Secondary School.

• *Leadership Experience and Institutional Commitment*

Interviews with teachers at St. Mary's Secondary School revealed that they view a dedicated and hardworking administration as essential to the institution's overall performance. The teachers linked the school's success closely to the head teacher's commitment, noting that the leader's dedication sets the tone for the entire institution. One teacher said, "A strong leader who works diligently and motivates the staff is seen as essential; when the head is not fully committed, it can negatively affect the whole school." While some teachers initially found it challenging to adjust to the strict and disciplined environment, over time they observed that the leadership's consistent efforts, such as daily meetings with Heads of Departments, ensured that issues were systematically addressed.

• *Spiritual and Moral Development*

The interviews highlighted the strong emphasis the institution places on Christian values for both staff and pupils. It was found that every school day begins with a morning reflection, during which the word of God is shared. Teachers also noted that the school reinforces these values through a monthly mass and a termly recollection for both teachers and pupils.

• *Academic Engagement, Curriculum Alignment and Support*

The interviews indicated that academic engagement is sustained through extended lesson times from 07:30 to 16:00, providing ample teaching and learning opportunities. Teachers highlighted that the administration has implemented various measures, including weekly tests, end-of-topic tests, and holiday assignments, to continuously assess pupil progress. It was also noted that the curriculum is carefully aligned with national standards while integrating the school's missionary values. Subjects such as Religious Education are mandatory, and pupils participate in additional religious activities, clubs, and prayers before lessons. According to the teachers, this balanced approach ensures that academic rigour is maintained alongside the school's core values.

Teacher Supervision, Collaboration and Professional Development

The interviews also revealed that the institution ensures rigorous supervision and support for educators. Teachers reported that they must prepare lesson plans in advance and follow a common scheme of work. Regular and random lesson observations were highlighted as key measures in maintaining

high teaching standards, while strict monitoring of punctuality ensures that classes start and end on time. In addition to supervision, teachers noted that the school promotes collaboration through departmental meetings, the Lesson Study Cycle, and DODI programmes, which provide a platform for discussing challenges and sharing best practices. Furthermore, teachers stated that they are actively involved in administrative decisions through committees and collective voting, fostering an inclusive and democratic leadership style.

Performance Monitoring and Recognition

It was highlighted that continuous performance monitoring is a key aspect of the school's strategy. Teachers reported that regular analysis of test results and national examination outcomes enables the administration to identify areas where pupils may need additional support. Teachers noted that they are expected to complete the syllabus by the end of the second term to allow ample time for revision, with teaching files personally reviewed by the head teacher. Excellence in both teaching and pupil performance is acknowledged through awards at the annual prize-giving ceremony and incentives provided by the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). According to the teachers, such recognition serves as motivation for staff while reinforcing the school's commitment to high academic standards.

Resource Management and Syllabus Completion

The interviews showed that the school ensures adequate teaching and learning materials for all subjects. Teachers reported that any shortages are addressed through the school's budget at the start of each year. In addition, pupils are encouraged to purchase recommended textbooks for home use, ensuring they have the necessary resources for their studies. Teachers also emphasized that the school prioritizes completing the syllabus on time, allowing sufficient time for revision and addressing individual learning needs before examinations.

Discipline, Student Behaviour and Parental Involvement

The interviews revealed that discipline is guided by the school's motto of 'Academic and Moral Excellence.' Teachers reported that a strict code of conduct is enforced for both pupils and teachers, with new pupils undergoing an orientation to familiarize them with the rules and expectations. Regular meetings with grade teachers and sessions led by the disciplinary committee were highlighted as key measures in addressing any breaches of conduct promptly. Teachers also noted that when a pupil commits an offence, parents are summoned to discuss the matter, reinforcing the partnership between home and school. The school holds open days each term, providing opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss academic progress and behavioural issues.

Parental Involvement and Open Communication

The school encourages regular communication with parents. Teachers stated that when a pupil is frequently absent or underperforming, their parents are invited to meet with the school administration to discuss the issue. Teachers highlighted that the school holds open days each term, offering parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss pupils' academic progress and behaviour.

Homework Policy and Continuous Assessment

The school has a strict homework policy that includes daily and weekly assignments, as well as end-of-topic tests, mid-term tests, and holiday assignments. These assessments help pupils to understand and retain the material they have learned and ensure their continuous academic development.

3.2. Relationship Between Administrative Strategies and Academic Performance

3.2.1. Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is a statistical measure that shows the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables. It ranges from -1 to $+1$, where $+1$ indicates a perfect positive relationship, meaning that as one variable increases, the other also increases in a proportional manner. A value of -1 shows a perfect negative relationship, meaning that as one variable increases, the other decreases. A value of 0 means there is no relationship between the two variables (Field, 2018).

The strength of the correlation is classified into different levels. A correlation between 0.00 and 0.19 is very weak or negligible, meaning there is little or no relationship. A value between 0.20 and 0.39 is weak, indicating a slight connection. A correlation between 0.40 and 0.59 is moderate, showing a noticeable relationship. A value between 0.60 and 0.79 is strong, suggesting a close connection, while a correlation between 0.80 and 1.00 is very strong, indicating an extremely close relationship between the two variables (Pallant, 2020).

The p -value determines whether the correlation is statistically significant. If $p < 0.05$, the correlation is considered significant, meaning the relationship is unlikely to be due to chance. If $p < 0.01$, the significance is even stronger, further confirming the relationship (Bryman & Cramer, 2019).

The results presented in Table 4.1 show that all correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$), indicating that the relationships observed are unlikely to have occurred by chance. All correlations are positive ($r > 0$), suggesting that improvements in administrative strategies are linked to better exam performance.

The strongest correlation is between student engagement and exam performance ($r = 0.583$, $p < 0.01$), followed by learning resource availability and exam performance ($r = 0.507$, $p < 0.01$). There is also a significant positive correlation between teacher quality and exam performance ($r = 0.483$, $p < 0.01$), and between student support services and exam performance ($r = 0.480$, $p < 0.01$). The weakest correlation is observed between perceived technology availability and exam performance ($r = 0.210$, $p < 0.01$).

3.2.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

The first table of the regression analysis is the Model Summary, and is an important component that provides key information about the fit of the model. The R value of 0.800 shows the strength of the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable, with a higher R value indicating a stronger relationship. The R Square value, which is 0.639 , is the primary focus when evaluating the model's explanatory power. It indicates that approximately 63.9% of the variance in exam performance can be explained by the five predictors (perceived technology availability, student support services,

teacher quality, student engagement, and learning resource availability). The remaining 36.1% of the variance is explained by other factors not included in the model that may influence exam performance. The R Square value is a key

indicator of how well the model fits the data, as it reflects the proportion of variability in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variables in the model.

TABLE 4. 1: Correlation Analysis

		Correlations					
		Exam Performance	1	2	3	4	5
Exam Performance	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	200					
Learning Resource Availability	Pearson Correlation	.507**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	200	200				
Teacher Quality	Pearson Correlation	.483**	.236**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001				
	N	200	200	200			
Student Support Services	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.119	.157*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.092	.027			
	N	200	200	200	200		
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.583**	.366**	.303**	.173*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.014		
	N	200	200	200	200	200	
Perceived Technology Availability	Pearson Correlation	.210**	.250**	.101	.001	.110	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.153	.994	.121	
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

TABLE 4. 2: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.800 ^a	.639	.630	.55209

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Technology Availability, Student Support Services, Teacher Quality, Student Engagement, Learning Resource Availability

The ANOVA table assesses the overall significance of the regression model. The F-value is 68.759, and the associated p-value is 0.000. Since the p-value is below the standard threshold of 0.05, this indicates that the regression model as a whole is statistically significant. In other words, the combination of the predictors explains a statistically significant portion of the variation in exam performance.

TABLE 4. 3: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	104.789	5	20.958	68.759	.000 ^b
Residual	59.132	194	.305		
Total	163.921	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Exam Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Technology Availability, Student Support Services, Teacher Quality, Student Engagement, Learning Resource Availability

The Coefficients table below presents both unstandardized and standardized values for each predictor, along with their significance levels. The main focus is on the unstandardized B values, which indicate how exam performance changes with each one-unit increase in the predictor while keeping other variables constant.

TABLE 4. 4: Coefficients

Table 2. Regression coefficients					
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.531	.299		-5.130	.000
Learning Resource Availability	.325	.060	.260	5.405	.000
Teacher Quality	.300	.054	.255	5.550	.000
Student Support Services	.340	.043	.350	7.925	.000
Student Engagement	.389	.055	.342	7.119	.000
Perceived Technology Availability	.087	.048	.081	1.810	.072

a. Dependent Variable: Exam Performance

The first variable: Learning Resource Availability has an unstandardized B value of 0.325 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that for each one-unit increase in learning resource availability, exam performance increases by 0.325 units, and this effect is statistically significant.

The second variable, Teacher Quality, has an unstandardized B value of 0.300 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that for each one-unit increase in teacher quality, there is a corresponding increase of 0.300 in exam performance, a relationship that is statistically significant. The third variable, Student Support Services, has an unstandardized B value of 0.340 and a p-value of 0.000. This shows that improvements of one unit in student support services are associated with a 0.340 increase in exam performance, and this effect is also statistically significant.

Student engagement is the fourth variable, with an unstandardized B value of 0.389 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that a one-unit increase in the variable results in a 0.389 improvement in exam performance, which is statistically significant.

Perceived Technology Availability has an unstandardized B value of 0.087 and a p-value of 0.072. This indicates a positive but non-significant relationship between perceived technology availability and exam performance, as the p-value exceeds the standard threshold of 0.05.

Based on the findings, the regression equation that describes the relationship between the predictors and exam performance is:

$$\text{Exam Performance} = -1.531 + (0.325 \times \text{Learning Resource Availability}) + (0.300 \times \text{Teacher Quality}) + (0.340 \times \text{Student Support Services}) + (0.389 \times \text{Student Engagement}) + (0.087 \times \text{Perceived Technology Availability})$$

3.3. Challenges in Implementing and Sustaining Administrative Strategies

The implementation and sustainability of administrative strategies at St. Mary's Secondary School encounter several challenges. These issues were highlighted during interviews with the school's teachers and administrators. The challenges arise from a range of internal and external factors, as well as the dynamics among members of the school community.

Resource and Staff Limitations

A significant challenge in implementing administrative strategies is the occasional delay in the availability of essential resources. While the school typically does not encounter resource shortages, the process of receiving and distributing these resources can sometimes be slow, which hinders the timely execution of certain activities. Besides that, the high workload of Heads of Departments (HODs) can affect the efficiency of strategy implementation, particularly when there is a shortage of staff or delays in staffing adjustments. Staff movements, such as teacher transfers or absences, also place significant pressure on remaining staff members, which disrupts the smooth operation of the strategies.

Time and Adjustment to New Strategies

Another challenge relates to the time it takes to align new pupils with the school's expectations and values, given that they come from diverse backgrounds with varying educational experiences. It can be difficult to ensure that these pupils integrate into the school's systems effectively, especially when the school introduces new strategies or changes concerning spiritual and moral standards that come from the church. Although this is not seen as resistance, the time required to adjust and align students and staff with new administrative initiatives can delay progress.

Resistance to Change

Though there has been no significant resistance to new strategies, there is a sense of anxiety and hesitation when implementing major changes, particularly with the introduction of the new curriculum. Teachers expressed concerns about adapting to new ways of addressing educational issues, especially when these involve unfamiliar

methods or technologies. In response, the administration has addressed these concerns by organizing in-house workshops and meetings to mitigate fears and ensure smooth transitions. This proactive approach helps ease the anxiety that accompanies change.

External Factors and Community Expectations

The school is facing challenges from external factors, particularly due to community expectations. The community has high expectations for the school's performance and often assumes that all students admitted are academically gifted. However, the reality is that many students encounter individual challenges that the community may not recognize. This creates additional pressure for the school to deliver consistently high academic results, despite these difficulties. Moreover, the introduction of a new curriculum, which emphasizes practical and technological learning, has made teaching more difficult. Students often lack the necessary resources, such as devices, to fully engage with the new curriculum, which focuses on hands-on learning experiences.

The government's policies, especially those related to the new curriculum and the growing demand for human resources, have created several challenges. The practical nature of the curriculum requires additional staff and resources, which the school is struggling to provide. In addition, the increasing demand for school places throughout the year has put extra pressure on the school's ability to manage its resources effectively. Unfortunately, the community does not always understand these pressures.

Leadership and Sustainability

Leadership turnover can raise concerns about the sustainability of strategies, but it has not significantly disrupted the school's operations. The system is designed to be self-sustaining, allowing departments to continue running smoothly even during administrative changes. A robust administrative structure, emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibility, helps ensure stability and continuity in the implementation of strategies.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Administrative Strategies Implemented by St. Mary's School

The study revealed that St. Mary's School employs various administrative strategies to enhance academic performance. The school leadership prioritizes supervision, institutional commitment, and structured engagement to ensure high educational standards. Regular teacher observations, lesson planning, and professional development initiatives contribute to maintaining the quality of teaching. In addition to academic achievement, the school places significant emphasis on spiritual and moral development. Christian values are reinforced through daily reflections and monthly masses, helping to instill discipline and ethical behaviour among students. The school also focuses on academic engagement through extended lessons, weekly tests, and holiday assignments to ensure continuous assessment and alignment with the curriculum. To further motivate students to excel, performance monitoring strategies, which periodic result analysis and award ceremonies, are implemented.

These findings align with research by Qingyan, Azar, and Ahmad (2023), which highlights the importance of teacher quality management as a key factor in student achievement. Similarly, studies by Ohamobi and Anasiudu (2024) underscore the role of structured planning and supervision in ensuring quality education. These insights suggest that adopting similar administrative strategies in other schools could enhance academic outcomes on a broader scale.

4.2. The Relationship Between Administrative Strategies and Academic Performance

The correlation analysis demonstrated that student engagement has the strongest relationship with exam performance ($r = 0.583$), followed by the availability of learning resources ($r = 0.507$). Moreover, teacher quality ($r = 0.483$) and student support services ($r = 0.480$) exhibit significant positive correlations with exam performance. The weakest correlation was found between perceived technology availability and exam performance ($r = 0.210$). All correlations were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

The regression analysis indicated that student engagement and student support services exert significant positive effects on academic performance, with coefficients of $B = 0.389$ and $B = 0.340$, respectively, both statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The strong positive relationship between student engagement and academic performance highlights that higher levels of student engagement lead to improved exam results. Engaged students typically demonstrate greater motivation, focus, and resilience in dealing with challenges, resulting in higher achievement levels. Similarly, the positive effect of student support services indicates that these resources significantly enhance students' academic success. These services assist students in managing academic challenges, stress, and accessing necessary resources, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes.

The analysis also showed that the availability of learning resources ($B = 0.325$, $p < 0.01$) plays a crucial role in improving academic performance. Providing better access to learning materials, such as textbooks and digital tools, helps students engage more effectively with the content, complete assignments efficiently, and prepare adequately for exams. The variable related to teacher quality ($B = 0.300$) emphasizes the significance of having qualified teachers who can effectively deliver lessons and engage students. Experienced teachers who adapt their teaching methods to meet student needs positively influence students' understanding and retention of material. The statistically significant relationship between teacher quality and exam performance underscores the necessity for schools to prioritize teacher development and support.

On the other hand, the analysis revealed a limited role for technology availability in influencing exam performance. Despite its positive correlation ($r = 0.210$), the regression coefficient for perceived technology availability ($B = 0.087$, $p = 0.072$) was not statistically significant. This suggests that technology's impact on academic performance at St. Mary's School is minimal. While technology can provide valuable learning tools, the results indicate that its influence on exam

outcomes is limited, potentially requiring better integration with other teaching and learning strategies to maximize its effectiveness.

The findings presented correlate with the research conducted by Esther, Eze, and Nnenna (2023), which highlights that effective administrative strategies, such as providing instructional support and fostering open communication, can significantly improve teacher job performance and enhance student learning outcomes. On a national level, these results indicate the critical need for policies that facilitate structured teacher development, optimize resource allocation and establish supportive programs for students.

When comparing these insights to those from public schools, significant differences in administrative effectiveness become apparent. Research by Wakoli & Kitainge (2019) and Ossai (2021) points out that public schools frequently contend with challenges such as insufficient learning materials, a shortage of teachers, and limited initiatives for student engagement. These factors can hinder administrative strategies' effectiveness in improving academic performance within public institutions.

The weak correlation observed between perceived technology availability ($r = 0.210$) and students' exam performance at St. Mary's Secondary School contrasts with findings from developed countries, as indicated by Sefcik, Striepe, and Yorke (2020), which suggest that digital tools can significantly enhance learning experiences. This discrepancy may stem from variations in technological infrastructure and the level of technology adoption across different educational settings.

4.3. Challenges in Implementing and Sustaining Administrative Strategies

While these administrative strategies prove to be effective, there are several challenges that impede their full implementation and sustainability. A significant challenge is the limitation of resources and staff. Delays in the distribution of resources, along with a shortage of qualified teaching personnel, disrupt the timely execution of strategic initiatives. Additionally, students from diverse backgrounds need time to adapt to the school's academic and behavioral expectations, which necessitates that administrators offer additional support during this transition.

Resistance to change is another major obstacle. Both teachers and students may hesitate to adopt new teaching methodologies, assessment techniques, or disciplinary measures. To address this issue, St. Mary's School conducts workshops and meetings aimed at facilitating smooth transitions and fostering acceptance of new strategies. External factors, including community expectations and socio-economic influences, also present challenges. Research by Omemu (2017) and Obina (2020) suggests public schools often struggle with disciplinary issues, which can negatively impact learning outcomes. St. Mary's School has worked to mitigate these issues through a strict code of conduct and active parental involvement. However, maintaining such an

approach requires ongoing engagement and support from all stakeholders

V. CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted several key factors that contribute to improving academic performance at St. Mary's School. The analysis reveals the significant roles of available learning resources, teacher quality, student support services, and student engagement. Among these, student engagement and student support services were identified as the most influential factors, emphasizing the importance of creating an environment that actively promotes student participation and provides robust support systems for academic success.

The study underscores the positive relationship between teacher quality and academic performance, stressing the need for well-trained, motivated teachers who can effectively foster learning and engagement in students.

However, the study also found a weak relationship between technology availability and academic performance, suggesting that while technology has potential benefits in education, its impact may be constrained by factors such as infrastructure, resources, or insufficient training in this specific context.

These findings have broad implications, not only for St. Mary's School but also for other educational institutions, particularly mission schools. The results suggest that prioritizing student engagement, providing strong support services, and ensuring high-quality teaching are critical strategies for improving academic outcomes in similar educational settings.

In summary, future studies should focus on expanding the understanding of how administrative strategies, technology integration, and community involvement influence academic success. By addressing these areas, researchers can provide comprehensive insights that help schools adapt and improve in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations to St. Mary's School and Other Mission Schools

Based on the challenges identified in this study, there are several key ways that St. Mary's School, as well as other similar mission schools, can make improvements to better support their students and enhance academic outcomes. One of the primary challenges discussed is the lack of resources, which directly impacts the availability of essential learning materials and student support services. Given that mission schools often operate with limited funding, they must explore innovative and creative solutions to maximize their available resources.

To address the shortage of learning materials, schools could consider forming partnerships with local businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and alumni networks to secure donations or additional funding. Establishing these partnerships can help provide the necessary resources, such as textbooks, learning tools, and even technological equipment. Another effective strategy would be

to explore open-source educational resources and digital tools, which can be accessed at little or no cost. For example, educational platforms and materials available through smartphones or low-cost computers could greatly enhance the learning experience, especially in areas where physical resources are scarce.

Another significant challenge faced by mission schools is the inadequate professional development of teachers. Teachers are the backbone of any educational institution, and to ensure that they are equipped to meet the diverse needs of students, regular teacher training programs should be implemented. These programs should focus on modern teaching techniques, classroom management, and student engagement strategies. Collaborating with other educational institutions, governmental bodies, or NGOs that offer affordable professional development workshops could help make this more feasible. By investing in the continuous growth of teachers, mission schools can improve overall teaching quality, ensuring that teachers are well-prepared to engage with students and address their individual learning needs.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of student support services and their direct impact on academic performance. Mission schools should prioritize the establishment of stronger support systems for their students. This could include expanding guidance and counseling programs to assist with academic and personal challenges. Creating dedicated spaces for mental health support is also crucial, as students often face pressures that affect their well-being. Additionally, offering extracurricular activities that encourage physical, emotional, and social development can help students grow holistically, which has been shown to positively affect their academic success.

In summary, to address the challenges faced by St. Mary's and other mission schools, a multifaceted approach is necessary. By leveraging partnerships to secure resources, investing in teacher development, and enhancing student support services, these schools can continue to improve and provide quality education despite the challenges they face.

Recommendations to the Government for Improving Public Schools

The findings of this study also highlight important areas for improvement in public schools. Teacher quality has been shown to have a significant impact on student performance, and the government must invest in professional development programs to ensure that teachers are well-equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to effectively teach and engage students. Ongoing professional development programs that include training on the latest teaching methods, technologies, and student engagement strategies will be essential in improving teaching quality across public schools.

Another key area for improvement in public schools is the expansion of student support services. These services should be designed to address the academic, emotional, and social needs of students, offering counselling, career guidance, and extracurricular activities that help students develop skills beyond the classroom. Providing students with a strong support system will help them overcome challenges and

improve their overall academic performance. In addition, the government should work towards ensuring that learning resources are equitably distributed across schools. This includes providing updated textbooks, teaching materials, and digital learning tools to all schools, particularly in underserved areas.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Future research can build on this study by further exploring the impact of administrative strategies on academic performance through comparative studies that examine public, mission, and private schools. Such research would allow for a deeper understanding of the unique factors contributing to academic success in each type of educational setting. By comparing how administrative decisions, resource availability, and student engagement are managed across different school systems, researchers can identify specific strategies that work best in various contexts, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers alike.

An additional area for exploration is the role of technology in education. While this study found that the perceived availability of technology had a relatively weak correlation with academic performance, future research should delve deeper into the barriers and opportunities for integrating digital tools in both mission and public schools. In many settings, technology's influence may be limited by factors such as lack of access to devices, poor internet connectivity, or insufficient teacher training. Understanding these barriers is critical, as it can inform the development of more effective strategies for implementing technology in ways that genuinely enhance the learning experience. Future studies could also explore innovative models of technology integration, particularly in low-resource environments, to investigate how digital tools can complement traditional teaching methods and improve educational outcomes.

Moreover, future research could examine the influence of parental involvement and community engagement on student performance. There is growing evidence that when schools collaborate with parents and the local community, students tend to perform better academically. Investigating how schools can actively engage parents in supporting their children's education and how they can forge stronger partnerships with local communities could provide critical insights into improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, exploring the role of parents in reinforcing school initiatives, as well as the ways in which schools can encourage greater community participation, would offer valuable perspectives for future research.

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