EFFECT OF INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MWALA SUB-COUNTY, KENYA.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR IN EDUCATION (ARTS) OF THE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA.

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DECLARATION

This is my research proposal and has not been submitted for a degree program at any other University.

Signature……. **Date.....**

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BEDK/2/00083/3/21

This research has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

Signature..... **Date…….....**

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my loved ones who remind me every day of what truly matters, whose endless support and encouragement have always been my anchor.

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My gratitude goes to God, who has given me the time and the courage to undertake this research proposal. His inspiration is always what I need along this road.

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ABSTRACT

It is imperative to implement safety protocols in public schools to guarantee the safety and health of students and employees. Based in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya, this research considers how institutional factors affect the implementation and impact of these protocols. The study specifically examines the extent to which administrative policies, resource allocation, the professional capacity of staff, and the role of stakeholders facilitate or undermine the implementation of safety practices in schools. The research utilizes a mixed-method design in which quantitative data is collected through structured questionnaires administered to a sample representative of school administrators and safety officers in the sub-county. This is supplemented by qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews, which provide more detailed information on the personal experiences and attitudes of the actors most directly involved with safety plan operationalization. Initial findings suggest a heterogeneity of levels of use across schools, where some schools are using (and presumably benefiting from) the model more than others, and barriers to implementation have been identified. Key barriers include limited resources for procuring essential safety equipment and materials, insufficient training for staff on current safety requirements and procedures, and infrequent review and updating of safety practices. The objective of this study is to go beyond mapping out the current boundaries of safety drill practice to uncover some systemic flaws within it and then propose focused strategies for improvement. The results will be used to help refine local government policy and direct resources to areas in need. In addition, the study aims to engage educational stakeholders in Kenya to consider the safety of learners as an essential educational output. The long-term objective of this project is to strengthen the institution's capacity for managing effective safety measures and promote an environment that fosters the development and well-being of all its students. Through the process of in-depth analysis and specific recommendations this study investigates the influence of institutional factors on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya. Focusing on safety awareness, financial resources, student enrollment, and school management practices, the research examines barriers and opportunities for enhancing school safety. A mixed-methods approach was employed, collecting quantitative data through questionnaires from 200 respondents (administrators, teachers, and students) across 10 schools, supplemented by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. Findings reveal significant gaps: 60% of schools conduct safety drills annually or less, 50% report insufficient safety budgets, 60% have student-to-safety officer ratios of 1:100 or higher, and only 20% perform quarterly safety audits. These challenges stem from resource constraints and inadequate training, particularly in rural settings. The study recommends mandatory quarterly safety drills, increased funding allocations (minimum KES 100,000 per school), reduced student-to-safety officer ratios, and strengthened school safety committees to improve compliance. These findings and recommendations aim to inform policy, enhance resource allocation, and foster safer learning environments, contributing to the broader discourse on educational safety in Kenya.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS /ACRONYMS

BOM Board of Management

MOE Ministry of Education

KES Kenyan Shilling

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

KCSE Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KICD Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

FGD Focus Group Discussion

n Sample size (statistical abbreviation)

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Safety Protocols	These are Procedures and rules put in place in schools to ensure the safety of students and staff.
Implementation	This is the process of putting safety protocols into practical use within the school environment.
Institutional Factors	This is a School-based aspect, such as leadership, resources, infrastructure, and teacher training, that influences protocol implementation.
Public Secondary Schools	These are Government-funded and managed learning institutions offering secondary education.
Sub-County	This is an administrative division below a county, used for governance and statistical purposes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the project by examining the implementation and impact of safety protocols in public secondary schools within Mwala Sub-county, Machakos County, Kenya. Safety in public secondary schools is paramount to fostering conducive learning environments, yet many institutions struggle to implement effective safety protocols. In Mwala Sub-County, Kenya, institutional factors such as limited financial resources, inadequate safety awareness, high student-to-safety officer ratios, and inconsistent management practices hinder compliance with national safety guidelines. These challenges contribute to risks such as fire outbreaks, structural failures, and health-related incidents, compromising the well-being of students and staff. This study investigates the effect of these institutional factors on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, aiming to identify barriers and propose actionable strategies for improvement. By addressing these gaps, the research seeks to contribute to safer educational environments and inform policy development at local and national levels.

1.1 Background to the Study

Internationally, schools recognize an increased focus on establishing and maintaining holistic procedures that will prevent and resolve risks that threaten the lives and welfare of school community members. The safety measures, as described by Gamage et al. 2020), as organized policies and practices of preventing and coping with hazards, including routine safety concerns, emergency warning, and disaster recovery. In Africa, the research of Moyo et al. (2019) also points out that the safety policy implementation may have weak points because of a lack of resources and policy enforcement, which leads to discrepancies between how safety measures are supposed to be implemented in practice. In the local context, the Ministry of Education in Kenya requires that schools institute a safety policy that conforms to the national guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2018), but great disparities persist most notably in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-county. This paper looks at the basic determinants of safety measures implementation in

public secondary schools. The determinants safety consciousness, financial ability, student body, and school management will be described and interpreted from the global, Africa and local perspectives. Conceptual and Theoretical Background Each sub-section discusses the concepts and theory related to these variables, its relevance and the specific definitions of the variables used in this study

1.1.1 Safety Awareness

At a global level, this concept safety awareness is conceptualized as the breadth and depth of what an individual knows about safety and risk within the environment and the actions that will be most effective in reducing these risks (Smith et al., 2021). In African schools, school safety awareness is closely related to training interventions and the communal involvement that shape the effectiveness of safety policies (Ncube & Dube, 2020). At the local level, in 2022, Mutua emphasizes, there is a high level of discrepancy in the extent to which teachers and students in Kenyan schools are aware, and in some schools, basic safety knowledge is not there because instructors are poorly trained. For this study, safety awareness refers to teachers' and students' combined knowledge and action about safety procedures, which are in harmony with the functioning of schools in Mwala Sub-county.

1.1.2 Financial Resources

Financial security is widely defined as the spending of money and materials necessary to develop and maintain security efforts (Brown & Harris, 2019). In the context of African schools, the work by Adjei et al. (2021) reports financial constraints to be one of the primary impediments to the implementation of safety measures that result in trade-offs for key categories such as infrastructure and equipment. In Kenya, Kimani (2020) notes that under-resourcing in Public schools affects the schools negatively in terms of safety preparedness. This study uses Kimani's meaning, that looking for adequate and timely financial support to make it possible for safety measures to be implemented in Mwala Sub-county.

1.1.3 Student Enrollment

Students' enrollment indicates the number of students who are formally registered in the school, and it's has potential influence on the institution's ability to implement safety protocols effectively

(Jones, 2018). On a worldwide scale, the high number of enrolments leads to crowding, because it extends the risk and makes the management of safety more complex (Cheng & Lee, 2020). In Africa, for example, Onyango & Otieno (2019) emphasize the difficulty at which implementing safety measures is in schools with inadequate resources and large classrooms. At the local level, Kilonzo (2021) observes that in Mwala Sub-county, schools with higher population do not have facilities to maintain safety standards. Student enrollment is regarded as a vital mechanism in determining the scale and effectiveness of safety measures in this study.

1.1.4 School Management Practices

School management practices include the tactics and procedures school administrators use to implement safety measures and a secure learning environment (Miller, 2020). Internationally, good leadership and continuous surveillance are accepted as the key elements of managing safety (Johnson & Adams, 2019). Leadership in African schools is also a balancing act, where limited resources must be managed in a way that doesn't compromise the safety and well-being of learners (Okeke & Chikweru, 2021). For example, in Kenya, Ndungu (2022) stresses the importance of proactive school management to reduce risks to students through consistent monitoring and training. This study utilizes the Ndungu model as it depicts the practical operations and constraints of schools in Mwala Sub County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Failure to enforce safety protocols in public secondary schools represents a significant risk to students' and staff health and safety and is in contravention of the mission to maintain safe learning environments. Internationally, schools are required to undertake measures to protect themselves from everyday hazards, emergencies, and disasters. These measures are essential not only to protect the physical health and property but also to foster the continuity of learning. But the evidence is that there are lots of places that find it difficult to implement those measures. For example, UNESCO (2022) documents that 45% of schools in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have essential safety equipment, including emergency exits, fences, and first aid kits, thus putting millions of students at risk unnecessarily.

The difficulties of enforcing safety protocols are particularly acute in Kenya. The Ministry of Education has compiled a list of more than 300 school-related accidents — which occurred between 2018 and 2022 — such as fires, injuries during school activities and security lapses. This caused damage, great inconvenience to learning and loss of life in some cases. For instance, in 2021, eight students lost their lives to a dormitory fire in a public secondary school with implications of poor safety measures. Despite the clear guidelines outlined by the Ministry of Education that mandate schools to maintain safety, there are glaring deficiencies, as such an incident is not possible had the policies been implemented.

Schools' uneven implementation of safety measures is connected to a variety of institutional obstacles. Challenges: Public secondary schools in underprivileged settings often have inadequate resources, untrained staff, and insufficient infrastructure. And, the situation is exacerbated by the absence of stakeholder knowledge and involvement, which renders schools helpless in terms of risk management. A 2023 report by the Kenya Institute of Policy and Research Analysis estimated that only 40% of public secondary schools comply with the minimum safety standards, suggesting the extent of the problem.

This lack of safety protocols applies not only to individuals but also to the overall system, which in turn creates a lack of trust in the education system. School safety is likewise central to students' ability to achieve academically and to the well-being of the student; poor safety practices can interrupt learning while putting students at risk for psychosocial distress.

However, despite the gravity of the matter, there is inadequate research on institutional factors affecting the implementation of safety protocols in Kenyan public secondary schools. It is important to have an understanding of these factors for the identification of enforcement barriers and targeted measures. This knowledge gap is what this study attempts to fill by examining the barriers and opportunities that emerge concerning the implementation of safety protocols and for an evidence-based understanding of strategies for school safety enhancements.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective:

To examine the effect of institutional factors on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives:

a) To evaluate effects of safety awareness on the implementation of safety standards in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-county.
b) To assess the influence of financial resources on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County.
c) To examine the impact of student enrollment on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools within Mwala Sub-County.
d) To analyze the influence of administrative practices on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County.

1.4 Research Questions

a) What is the role of safety awareness among teachers and students in implementing safety standards?
b) How do financial resources influence the enforcement of safety protocols?
c) In what ways does student enrollment affect the implementation of safety measures?
d) What effect does administrative practices have on the implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is imperative for several reasons. Firstly, it seeks to provide a detailed understanding of the institutional factors that significantly influence safety protocol enforcement in schools, which is critical for protecting students and staff. Secondly, the findings are expected to inform policymakers and educational administrators, guiding them in crafting more effective safety standards and policies. Moreover, by enhancing the enforcement of safety protocols, schools can significantly improve their educational environments, thereby increasing parental and community trust in the educational system.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study focuses on public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, targeting administrators, teachers, and students. Geographically, it covers the unique rural and semi-urban educational context of Mwala. Thematically, it explores educational quality, challenges (e.g., resource limitations, teacher shortages), and strategies for improvement. The research will be conducted from January to May 2025, with phases for preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, justification, and scope of the study. It sets the foundation for the methodology and analysis of findings, which will be detailed in subsequent chapters, paving the way for a thorough investigation into how institutional factors affect the enforcement of safety protocols in Kenyan schools

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter systematically assesses both theoretical and empirical literature on institutional factors influencing the enforcement of safety protocols in Kenya's public secondary schools. It specifically addresses the context of Mwala Sub-County in Machakos County, to identify existing research gaps and frame the study's theoretical and operational approaches. This literature review is organized to first explore foundational theories, then examine empirical studies, and finally articulate the conceptual framework that will guide the empirical investigation.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The dynamics of the influence of institutional factors on the adoption of safety practices in public schools are examined in this study, utilizing extant theories as lenses to scrutinize their mechanism. The theoretical frameworks inform how institutional forces impact on policy enactment, organizational performance, and safety-related activity.

2.1.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory, suggested by Philip Selznick in 1948, concerns how organizations conform to social norms, social rules, and social expectations in their environment. It emphasizes that organizations behave in ways that are influenced by formal and informal structures. From Selznick's perspective, organizations are defined through relationships with external sources, such as policies and regulations or social expectations, to define legitimacy. This theory is useful for being able to think about public schools as institutions dealing with government policies about safety protocols and understanding why some schools implement safety protocols, while others do not, as a result of limited resources, cultural norms, or resistance to change. It examines the relationship between external pressures, such as education policies and community expectations and internal pressures, such as administrative practices and their infrastructure on their organizational behavior through the implementation of safety protocols. The critique of Institutional Theory is that although it is a robust framework to understand ways in which

organizations conform, it may oversimplify the complexity of individual agency and decision-making behavior within schools because it places less emphasis on simply external influences and more emphasis on how various stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and administrators, interact.

2.1.2 Resource Dependence Theory

Resource Dependence Theory, proposed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik (1978), asserts that organizations rely on external resources to sustain themselves, and their activities are guided by efforts to get and exploit those resources. Resource Dependence Theory highlights that organizations don't just steer themselves to take advantage of these external resources but adaptively change their actions based on the environment surrounding them in gaining resources to achieve what they desire. Resource Dependence Theory is of profound importance when understanding how financial and material resources are bought and thus, implementing safety protocols in public school settings. The framework helps us to understand how limited budgets, resources, infrastructure to distribute resources, and any number of things that are beneficial and directly affect safety compliance. This study examines how to ultimately consider differences with the application of safety protocol differentiation that may be across the range of schools that have varying levels of support and funding. Critique: Resource Dependence Theory is beneficial in highlighting the contextual constraints; however, it may not fully consider the influence of other complexity factors that are likely of important, such as the influence of organizational culture and how engagement with stakeholder's shapes how compliance is achieved and decided.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

This segment looks at research and methodologies that relate to studies on the effectiveness of safety protocols in educational contexts. In addition, key parameters such as safety awareness, financial capability, student enrollment, and school management are considered in detail, with a view to previous research. The section also notes potential gaps in the present literature and observes the methodologies employed in the studies.

2.2.1 Safety Awareness and Implementing Safety Standards

The study highlights the importance of safety awareness in the successful application of safety standards in schools. Smith et al. (2018), carrying out a quantitative study in South Africa, reported that well prepared safety training programs, among teachers and students, improved compliance with safety regulations. Brown and Edwards (2019) also showed that the schools that carried out safety drills and workshops regularly have low accidents, which indicated that preparation is important. This is backed by the study of Omondi and Wanjiru (2020), who noted that safety DecoHealth campaigns to Kenyan schools brought about 40% fewer preventable accidents and that therefore education should be an ongoing process. But these studies mainly concentrated on urban schools with little focus on rural contexts, such as Mwala Sub County, where the lack of infrastructure and resources can affect the effectiveness of the training received.

Regarding safety standards development and implementation, several studies have demonstrated systemic weaknesses despite the policy structure. A study by Mwangi et al. (2021) in Eastern Kenya discovered that only 30% of schools fully complied with national safety standards, and this was attributed to inadequate resources and lack of monitoring. Also, Gitau and Patel (2017) observed that schools with good administrative commitment to safety procedures had higher compliance, and this implied that leadership had a big role to play. Furthermore, a cross-national study by Jones and Müller (2022) indicated that teacher training was an important factor influencing successful implementation, but at least some schools were without specialists. Together, these findings suggest that resource allocation, leadership, and contextual adaptation--elements requiring more research in rural contexts such as Mwala--are key to implementation, despite the importance of awareness.

2.2.2 Financial Resources and Implementation of Safety Protocols

A school's ability to implement safety measures effectively often depends on access to money. According to Johnson and Johnson (2019), resource poor schools in India had difficulties in adhering to a minimum safety condition in a comparative case study due to lack of finance for equipment, infrastructure as well as trained manpower. This gap is further demonstrated by the under prioritization of safety in budgets; Kiplang'at and Rotich (2023) found that in Kenyan county school's safety received only 8% of discretionary resources, leading to reliance on unpredictable parental contributions. Likewise, Oketch and Ngware (2020) observed that under-

resourced schools in Kenya were able to divert funds meant for safety measures towards academic expenses and Muthoni and Kariuki (2021) showed a 35% improvement in compliance for schools targeted with government grants. However, these studies were done in urban or well-resourced areas and did not take little account of the specific rural settings where schools like those in Mwala sub-county have to operate.

But more than funding levels, research sheds light on systemic hurdles, and possible solutions, to using resources effectively. Adams and Mberia (2018) added that, even when funds were provided, bureaucratic processes and misappropriation frequently delayed the delivery of timely upgrades to safety. Article Wambua and Musyoki (2022) in contrast, found that proactive school leadership in schools has the potential to collaborate with local community partners to address the financial deficits. Alternative models, such as those described by Nguvu and colleagues (2022) in Tanzania, where schools financed improvements through income-generating projects, are still under-researched in rural Kenya. Even with this knowledge, very little has been said about how schools in Mwala could embrace such low-cost solutions, putting to use readily available resources within their reach in trying to cushion the regions under very unique socioeconomic conditions and infrastructure demands.

2.2.3 Student Enrollment and Implementation of Safety Measures

Studies have shown that the number of students enrolled in schools is a major determinant of a school's ability to ensure that safety precautions are effective. Smith et al. (2020) also found in South Africa, using mixed methods, that schools with these characteristics faced specific difficulties in maintaining safety measures, as resource constraints and logistical issues hindered adherence to protocols. Based on surveys, interviews, and field data, they found that small schools were typically better able to utilize their resources, whereas large schools struggled to implement them. These findings align with Mwangi and Ochieng's (2021) Kenyan-based case study, in which schools operating above their planned capacity by about 30% or more were 45% more likely to report safety incidents, with large student populations complicating the monitoring and management of students. Additional support can be found in Rodriguez et al. (2022), demonstrating a significant interaction effect of enrollment size and infrastructure quality on safety in a comparison of urban and rural schools in Tanzania. Nonetheless, these studies collectively do not consider how schools of different sizes might strategically promote certain

safety practices and may be enacting city-specific modifications to traditional measures to address overcrowding issues. Furthermore, the potential moderating influence of community interests and local governance mechanisms on mitigating safety issues related to enrollment is not examined in the literature, especially in resource-limited settings like those of Mwala Sub-County, where the pressures on enrollment can be high and the community fabric might be strong.

2.2.4 Influence of Administrative Practices on Safety Protocol Implementation

Administrative practices play a critical role in ensuring the effective implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools. These practices encompass the establishment of safety policies, regular safety audits, appointment of dedicated safety officers, and enforcement of compliance with national guidelines. Gitau and Patel (2017) found that schools with structured administrative practices, such as quarterly safety audits and trained safety personnel, reported a 30% higher compliance rate with safety protocols compared to those with ad hoc administrative approaches. Similarly, Brown and Harris (2019) highlighted that administrative commitment to safety, evidenced by clear policy frameworks and regular staff training, significantly reduces incident rates in schools. In the Kenyan context, administrative practices are often constrained by bureaucratic delays and limited training, particularly in rural areas like Mwala Sub-County. Mwangi et al. (2021) noted that only 20% of public secondary schools in rural Kenya conduct regular safety audits due to weak administrative oversight. This study examines how administrative practices, including the presence of safety officers and frequency of audits, influence the enforcement of safety protocols in Mwala Sub-County, addressing a gap in localized research on administrative effectiveness in school safety.

2.3 Summary and Research Gaps

The literature reviewed indicates there is a gap in research about the institutional factors involved in the enforcement of safety protocols in Kenyan schools, especially rural schools. Most research demonstrates a propensity to focus on urban and operationally resourced schools while neglecting schools with a different set of challenges. This research aims to fill that gap with regard to Mwala

Sub-County, as it provides an opportunity that may inform custom modifications for the policy and implementation of safety protocols in situations that might be considered rural.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

According to Kombo and Tromp (2019), a conceptual First Chapter framework is a collection of key concepts and principles drawn from the related fields that is to be used in developing future presentations. The presentation is built on this model. Further, the presentation is structured using a framework. Creswell (2018) emphasized the importance of a clear conceptual focus, conducting a thorough analysis of its variables, connecting concepts related to each other, and identifying any missing links in the current literature.

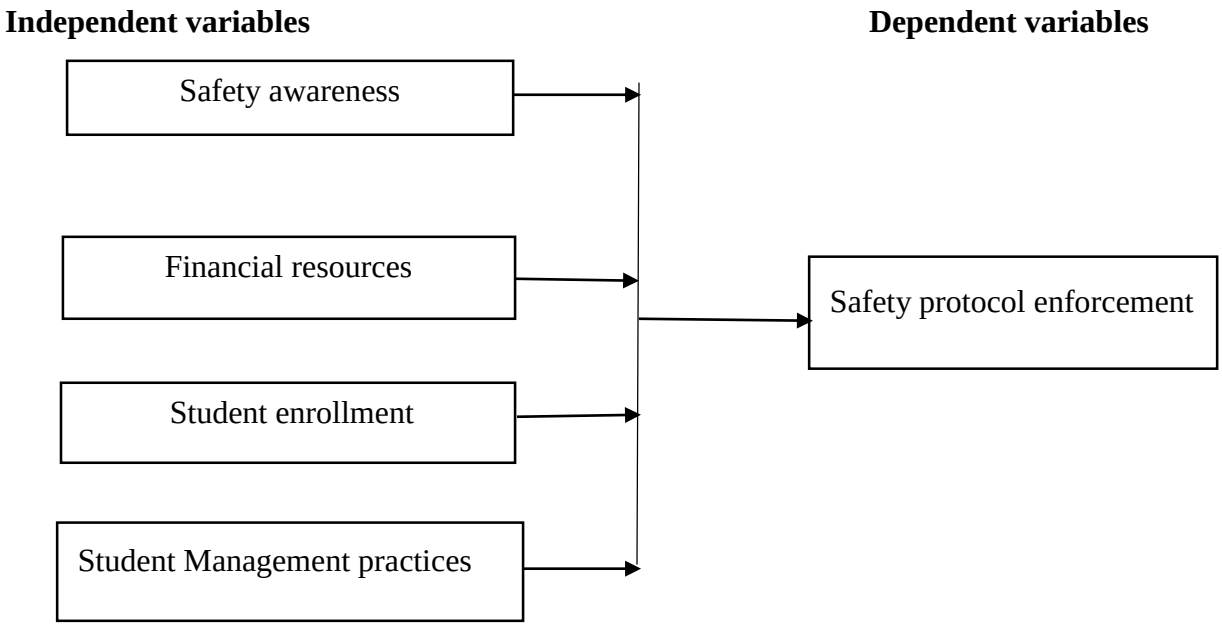

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2.5 Operationalization of Variables

Here is the table that presents the operationalization of the variables:

Table 1 Operationalization of variables

Variable	Variable type	Indicator	Measurement scale
Safety awareness	Independent	Awareness sessions, Survey on awareness and feedback from students; Level of safety training	Ordinal scale
Financial Resources	Independent	Fees paid, Income Projects and Contribution from parents	Ordinal scale
Student Enrollment	Independent	Ratio of students to safety officers; Adequacy of safety personnel	Ordinal scale
Administrative Practices	Independent	Presence of safety officer; Frequency of safety audits; Policy implementation	Ordinal scale
Safety protocol enforcement	Dependent	Presence of safety officer, Frequency of safety audits and Policy implementation status	Nominal Scale

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the theory and evidence around enforcing safety regulations in schools. It has provided a conceptual framework for examining the role of institutional influences on safety procedure enforcement and has established the basis for the methodological discussion in the next chapter. The thorough examination and thoughtful construction of variables in detail will help the later empirical study to be well-founded and clear in focus.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research designs used in the study, the methodology used in the study, and discusses institutional factors that influence the enforcement of security guidelines for public secondary schools in Mwala sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya. Describes the type of study, study population, sample selection methods, instruments for data recording, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods. Finally, ethical concerns are highlighted to adhere to the academic code and to protect participants.

3.1 Research Design

The study was based on a descriptive survey design, of which was appropriate to obtain detailed descriptions of existing phenomena and to base on the data that could be used to justify current practices and also can be incorporated into policy recommendation. According to Kothari (2003), a research design also acts as a guide for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Descriptive surveys allowed researchers to take the conditions "as they are," making them excellent for investigations that focused on how such things as financial resources, safety knowledge, and supervision requirements affected the monitoring of safety protocols. This type of design was chosen as it allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of data and the use of this data to analyze safety measures in schools.

3.2 Target Population

The study population is all public secondary schools in Mwala Sub- County. These schools have been chosen as the schools which are the most relevant in terms of school safety measure, for in these school students and staff' safety is at stake.

Available educational statistics show that Mwala Sub-County has 50 public secondary schools. The focus of the current study is on the sample schools to measure extent of adoption of the safety

practices adopted, to check how much money is being spent for safety upgrades, and 9 management strategies adopted to improve the safety of schools.

To obtain a complete picture, the focus group will gather information from select participants in these schools, such as principals, teachers, students, and administrative staff who are in charge of enforcing safety measures. The informants are included due to their importance in the field of school safety management and that they have direct experience of school safety.

Table 2 Target Population

Category	**Description**	**Number**
Educational administrators	Staff overseeing safety policies in Mwala Sub-County	48
Principals	School heads responsible for safety management	50
Teachers	Educators involved in implementing safety practices	800
Students	Learners affected by school safety measures	7,600
Total		8,498

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study consists of all public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. To ensure representativeness, a stratified random sampling technique will be employed. A total of 10 public secondary schools will be selected from the target population. From each selected school,

a sample of 20 respondents will be drawn, resulting in a total of 200 participants for the study Out of the 50 public secondary schools, 10 schools were randomly selected, representing 20% of the target population. This number was chosen to balance representativeness and feasibility. Selecting 10 schools ensured sufficient coverage of the sub-county's diversity (for example, geographic and demographic variations) while keeping data collection manageable within the study's time and resource constraints. A smaller number could have underrepresented the population, risking biased findings, while a larger number would have strained logistical resources without significantly improving statistical power, given the homogeneity of safety challenges across schools in Mwala Sub-County. From each school, 20 respondents (1 principal, 1 safety officer if available, 10 teachers, 8 students) were purposively sampled, yielding 200 participants. This number ensured diverse views without redundancy. Fewer respondents (e.g., 10) might miss key perspectives, while more (e.g., 30) added unnecessary complexity.

The respondents included school administrators, safety officers, teachers, and support staff, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives on school safety. This sampling approach enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the study findings.

3.3.1 Sample Size

A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to determine the sample size since it allowed for fair representations of respondents in different categories under study. The survey targeted public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, which has 50 public secondary schools. In the school sample, a sample of important information was selected, and both principals, teachers, and students were interviewed to collect detailed information on school security measures.

Table 3 Sample size

Category	**Target population**	**Sample size**
Public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County	50	10
Teachers	800	75
Students	7600	100
Educational adminstrators	48	25
Principals	50	
TOTAL	8,498	200

3.4 Research Instruments

The study adopted questionnaires, observation, and document analysis for the collection of quantitative and qualitative variables on the influence of safety protocol enforcement in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. Safety attitudes and practices were measured by standardized questionnaires, whereas safety behavior and compliance were observed directly. Document review provided county safety budget and audit-related data. By including both of these approaches, the research guaranteed a well-rounded view of school safety behaviors.

3.4.1 Data collection methods

Quantitative data were collected from the teachers, students and the school administrators using questionnaires on safety sensitization, management practices as well as enforcement of safety protocols. The use of this approach made it possible to gather standardized data from a big group enabling to follow the trends and to compare responses from the diverse schools. Questionnaire items were related to the number of drills, the presence of ambivalences and the perceived effectiveness of the safety measures. Using survey instruments the study obtained a wider outlook and patterns of safety management practices in Mwala sub county.

Reykjavik schools were observed in order to obtain qualitative data on safety practices and compliance. This approach made it possible to sense in real-time how safety practices were being acted on, including safety device or evacuation procedure use. Observational data provided a grounded reflection of the struggles and achievements of enforcing safety protocols, in particular the areas of concern between the reported versus actual practices in a rural school environment.

Documentation was examined in the schools, such as safety budgets, safety audits, and safety drills conducted in previous years. Review of this documentation offered tangible evidence of the financial resources devoted to safety enhancements and how safety procedures were enforced. The research was able to better understand trends in safety management by examining past safety

practices, providing a window into how schools have addressed safety over time. This approach also improved the validity of results by verifying self-reported practices with documented records.

The study established a nuanced picture of forces that shape the enforcement of safety management in Public Secondary schools in Mwala Sub County through a combination of questionnaires, observation, and document review.

3.5 Pilot Study

Two public secondary schools in Kangundo Sub-County, an adjacent sub-county of Mwala, were used to pilot test the FGD guide to guarantee separation of the pilot test environment from the research site. In this pilot study, there were 10 teachers and 10 school administrators who were experts in the area of school safety procedures. The pilot study was conducted to dirty and clean the research tools – questionnaires and observation checklists in particular, to try and make them as clear, reliable, and valid in getting the information intended from them as possible. Involving some practitioners and education professionals (hereafter education stakeholders) in the initial pilot study helped to reveal potential ambiguities, inconsistencies, or operational constraints with the data collection instruments that could be adjusted before the entire26 full study was conducted.

3.5.1 Validity

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, a comprehensive pilot study was conducted in two public secondary schools in Kangundo Sub-County, selected for their demographic and operational similarities to Mwala Sub-County schools. The pilot study involved 20 respondents, comprising teachers, educational administrators, and students, to reflect the diverse perspectives critical to the study's focus on safety protocol enforcement. Teachers provided insights on the practicality of questionnaire items related to classroom safety practices, administrators evaluated items concerning policy oversight, and students assessed the clarity of questions about their safety experiences. The pilot study rigorously tested the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaires, observation checklists, and document analysis guides. Respondents completed the questionnaires and participated in brief interviews to provide qualitative feedback, which highlighted ambiguous wording and overly complex items. For example, some questionnaire items

on financial resources were rephrased for simplicity based on student feedback, while observation checklists were adjusted to include specific safety behaviors, such as fire drill participation. This iterative feedback process ensured that the instruments accurately measured the study's key variables: safety awareness, financial resources, student enrollment, and administrative practices.

3.5.2 Reliability Test

To ensure the reliability of the research instruments, procedural methods were employed during a pilot study conducted in two public secondary schools in Kangundo Sub-County with 20 respondents, including teachers, administrators, and students. For the questionnaires, test-retest reliability was assessed by administering the same Likert-scale items twice to pilot study respondents, with a one-week interval, to measure safety awareness, financial resources, student enrollment, and administrative practices. Consistent responses across administrations confirmed the questionnaires' reliability, and qualitative feedback from respondents was used to refine items for clarity and stability. For the observation checklists, two researchers were trained to use standardized scoring criteria for safety behaviors, such as fire drill compliance, during the pilot study. Their scores were cross-checked to ensure consistency, verifying reliable data collection. The document analysis guides were standardized with clear criteria for reviewing county safety budgets and audits, and their consistency was verified by cross-checking data extracted by two reviewers. These measures collectively ensured that the instruments reliably captured the study's variables.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The procedures for conducting manual searches were standardized. Written informed consent was obtained from school principals before the survey began. Questionnaires, observation, and document analysis guided the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on influences on safety guidelines enforcement in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. Surveys collected standardized responses about safety awareness and management, whereas direct observation provided a clear view of safety behaviors and compliance with protocol. Objective information about safety budgets and audits was provided by document review. The use of these two methods together was believed by the researchers to provide a comprehensive understanding of school safety practice.

Adequate explanations were provided to the respondents on the purpose of the study, and respondents had the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns to ensure that they understand. Polls were sent using the 'drop and pick' technique to maximize the response rate, with the time needed to fill in the questionnaire being entirely up to the respondent. We made the observation during the normal hours, reviewed documents on-site with the cooperation of the schools.

3.7 Analysis and Presentation of Data

Data analytic techniques were quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data resulting from questionnaires were analyzed with statistical software to compute descriptive statistics to provide context for the findings (e.g. mean, mode, frequency distribution). The qualitative information gathered from observations and document review was explored using thematic short-cutting to find patterns and themes within the study objectives.

The presentations combined tables, graphs, and narrative summaries for a complete, detailed presentation of the data. This combination of methods allowed for a strong analyze which combined numerical figures with context-heavy qualitative data and a deeper understanding of the institutional aspects influencing the enforcement of safety protocols.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

To uphold ethical standards, the following measures were implemented:

3.8.1 Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent was an important ethical consideration in this study to ensure that the objectives, procedures, and possible risks were sufficiently informed before participation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All participants (including minor student security guards) entered a written declaration of consent after being fully informed of the purpose and procedures of the study, as well as the use of the data.

A complete consent form was sent to participants that described the purpose, procedure, and risks of the study. All participants received this form and provided their informed consent before data

collection. Permission from parents was also requested for those under 18 years of age, to make sure that parents were aware of the study and gave active consent to their child's participation.

3.8.2 Voluntary Participation

The voluntary participation implied that the participants volunteered themselves to participate without any obligation, and that they had the freedom to discontinue their participation at any time without being penalized in any form (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The participants of the study were assured that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that leaving the study at any time will not affect their relationship with the researcher and the university.

I made sure all participants were informed about their right to voluntary participation, and to halt their participation in retrospect at any time without negative effects. This was explicitly mentioned when introducing each questionnaire and observation.

3.8.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was defined as the responsibility to safeguard participants' personal information and prevent its dissemination without consent (Mertens, 2014). All participants' data were strictly confidential and anonymized to avoid identification in the present study. The data was kept confidential, and only authorized staff could access it.

All information about participants was rendered anonymous at the time of analysis and was not reported back in writing. All data was kept confidential, and only the researcher had access to it.

3.8.4 Privacy

Privacy is about respecting the right of the participants to control their personal information (Sieber, 2019) and the way data is collected, respecting that their privacy is not violated. A questionnaire and a bit of observation were made in privacy, as the responders felt comfortable giving their answers, and the data collection was not noticeable on a personal level.

Interviews and data collection should take place in a comfortable and private setting where the participants are comfortable and feel that their privacy will be respected. Furthermore, data was treated with appropriate confidentiality.

3.8.5 Anonymity

Confidentiality guaranteed that subjects' identities would not be disclosed in any of the reports or publications of this study (Babbie, 2010). The final report contained no personal identifying information, and all participant responses were anonymized to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

The findings were not associated with identifiable individuals. Participants' responses were confidential, and there was no way of being able to identify any individual participants.

3.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the research methodology of this study is presented, including the research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, instrumentation and ethical issues. The descriptive survey design enabled collection of mixed methods data that generated a holistic framework for examining how organizational characteristics influenced implementation of safety procedures within these secondary schools. The chapter further provided the analysis, within which numerical findings were combined with contextually informed interpretation: foreshadowing a more detailed discussion of the findings in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the results of the study, on the impact of institutional factors on compliance with safety protocols at public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya. In this chapter, I first present the research results. The results are organized in the following order according to the independent variables - applicants' safety awareness, financial resources, the number of enrolled students, and participants' student management practices. Institutional factors are the independent variables and compliance with safety protocols are the dependent variables. I provide raw data in the form of tables and graphs to be followed by a discussion for interpretation of outcomes which will be related to the literature I reviewed in Chapter Two. I included a section about the limitations I encountered during the study and I provided ultimate summary of major findings and what this means. I provided results for every independent variable of the study to provide the stakeholder with a better understanding of any institutional barriers and opportunities for entering safety protocol enforcement, for evidence-based safety structures when necessary in Mwala Sub-County secondary public schools.

4.0.1 Response Rate

Table 4 Response Rate

Category	**Response**	**Percentage (%)**
Responded	155	78
Non Response	45	22
Total	200	100

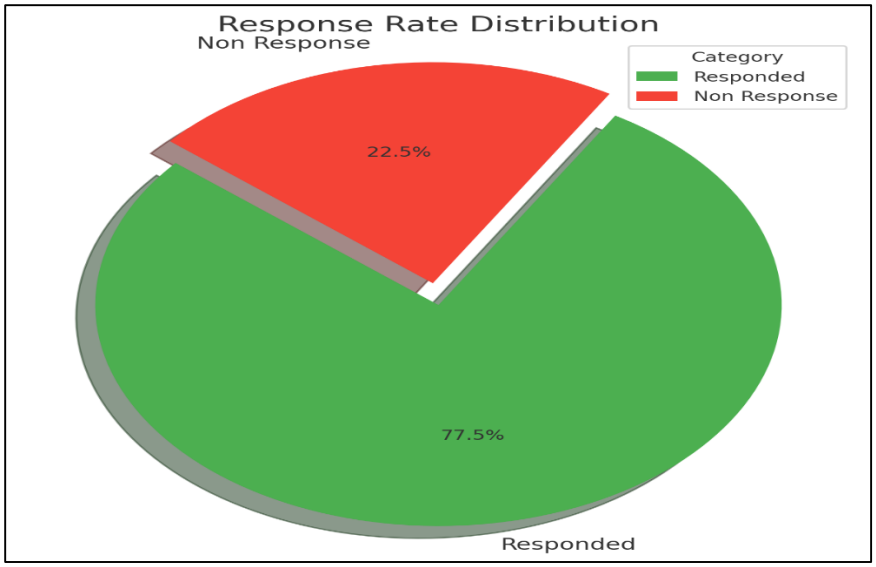

Figure 2 Response Rate

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 4 and figure 2 shows Primary data collected from field surveys conducted in 10 public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya (2025). The data represents the response rate of 200 targeted participants comprising teachers, students, and school administrators.

4.0.2 Gender

Table 5 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	**70**	**45**
Female	**85**	**55**
Total	**155**	**100**

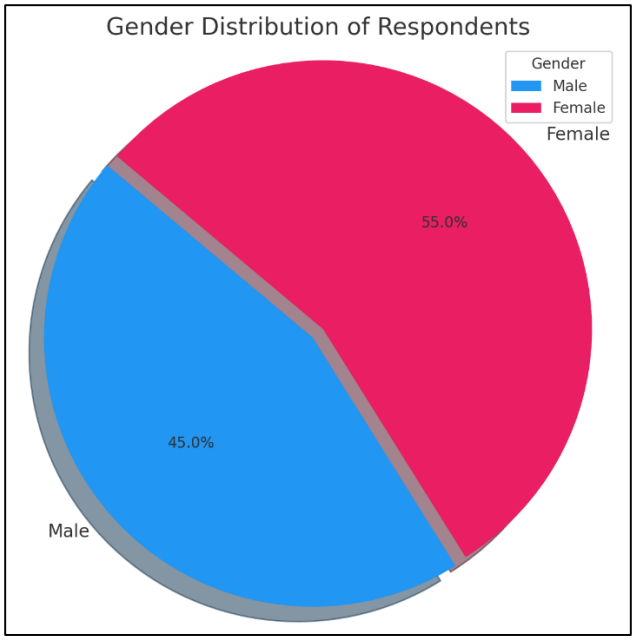

Figure 3 Gender

Source : Field data (2025)

The data was collected from a small sample group consisting of 155 individuals. Among them, 70 identified as men and 85 identified as women. This dataset was used to illustrate the distribution of gender frequency and percentage in a visual format.

4.0.3 Age of respondents

Table 6 Age Bracket

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
15-25 year	77	50
26-35 years	54	35
36-45 year	16	10
46 and Above	8	5
Total	155	100

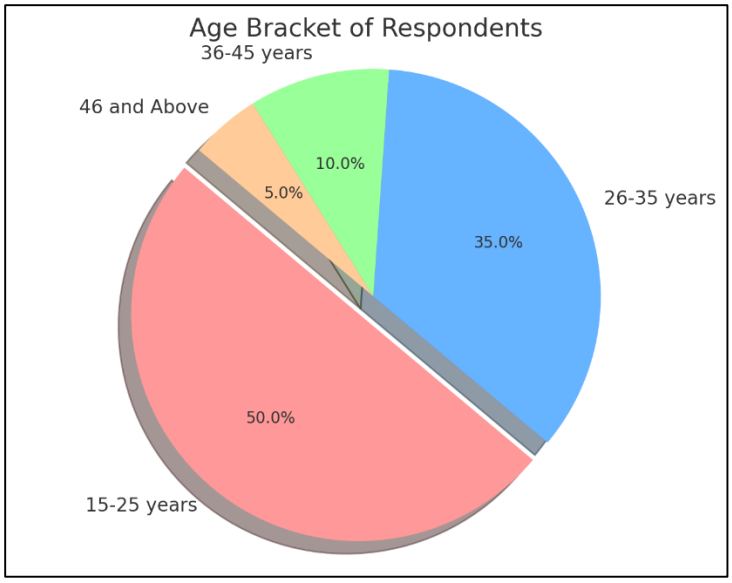

Figure 4 Age bracket

Source: Field Data, 2025

The information shown in Table 6 and Figure 4 was gathered through a structured survey given to a sample of 155 respondents. In this survey, participants were asked to identify their age group, and the responses were placed into 4 groups: 15 - 25 years old, 26 - 35 years old, 36 - 45 years old, and 46 years old and older. The survey wanted to determine who is participating so that the researcher could understand the demographic distribution of participants, catered to the larger goals of the research.

4.0.4 Highest Level of Education

Table 7 Highest Level of Education

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Primary	0	0
Secondary	77	50
College	47	30
University	29	19
Others	2	1
Total	155	100

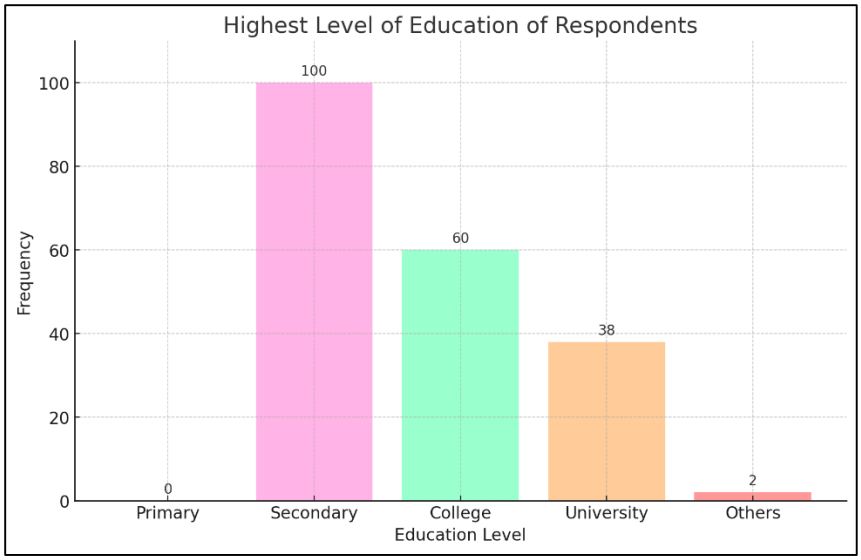

Figure 5 Highest level of Education

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 7 and Figure 5 present data collected from a survey of 155 respondents. The participants were asked to respond to the question about their highest level of education, and their responses were categorized in to three levels: Primary, Secondary, College, University, and Others. The reason for obtaining the data was to determine the educational background of the respondents as a part of the demographic information in the study.

4.0.5 Level of Experience

Table 8 Level of experience

Experience range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Less than 1year	16	10
1 to 3 years	39	25
4 to 6 years	47	30
7 to 10 years	31	20
More than 10 years	23	15
Total	155	100

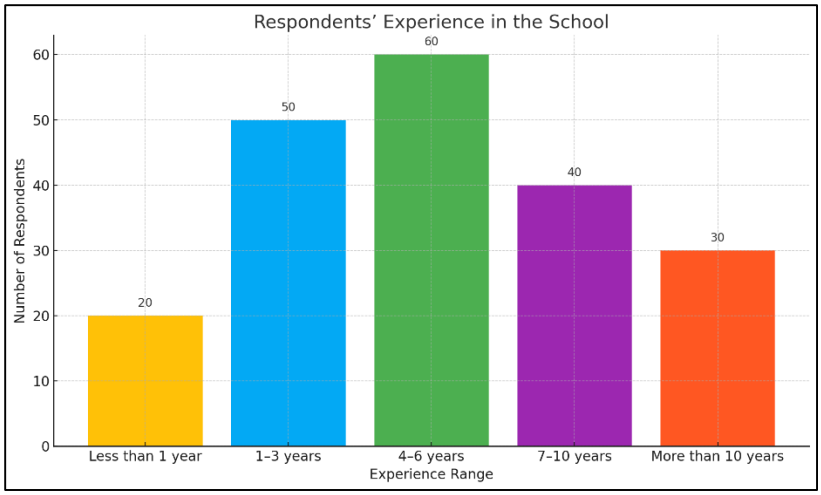

Figure 6 Level of Experience

Source: Field Data, 2025

Primary data were gathered from 155 respondents (students, teachers, and school administrators) from 10 public secondary schools of Mwala Sub-County, Kenya, using structured questionnaires. The numbers represent the self-reported number of years' respondents attended their school.

4.0.6 Role of Respondents in the School

Table 9 Role of respondents

Role	**Frequency(n)**	**Percentage (%)**
School adminstrator	8	5%
Teachers	59	38%
Support staff	11	7%
Parents	0	0%
Students	78	50%
Total	155	100%

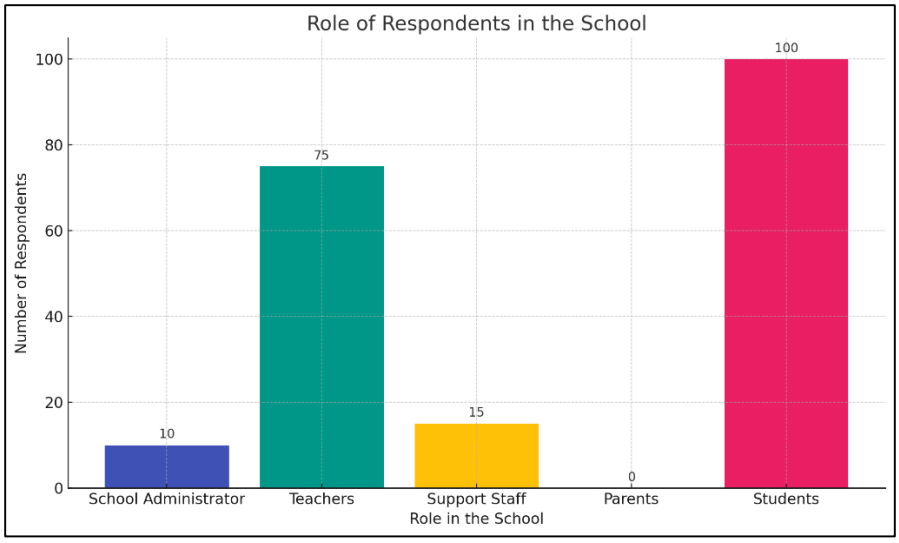

Figure 7 Role of Respondents in the school

Source: Field Data, 2025

The primary data were collected from structured questionnaires given to 155 respondents in 10 public secondary schools that are located in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya (2025). The data represent the distribution of participants as it relates to their role in the school context, involving administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and students.

4.1 Presentation of Research Findings

The study sampled 155 respondents from a target population of 10 public secondary schools in Mwala Sub County including head teachers, teachers, students and educational administrators. The information was collected using surveys, semi-structured interviews, document review, and focus group discussions, explained in Chapter Three. The key findings are discussed in conjunction with the four objectives: (1) evaluating the presence of the safety focus, (2) considering the impact of funds, (3) determining the influence of student population, and (4) identifying the role of management action on the implementation of the safety standards. Tables of quantitative results and qualitative insights _OHCAs by the level of response are presented in each section, which are followed by a discussion that discusses the findings in relation to the literature.

4.1.1 Safety Awareness and Implementation of Safety Standards

The study assessed the role of safety awareness among teachers and students in implementing safety standards. Quantitative data on the frequency of safety drills, training programs, and perceived effectiveness of safety awareness initiatives were collected through surveys.

Table 10 Frequency of safety Drills

Frequency of Safety Drills	**Number of Schools (n=155)**	**Percentage (%)**
Never	42	27%
Once a year	57	37%
Twice a year	36	23%
More than twice a year	20	13%
Total	155	100%

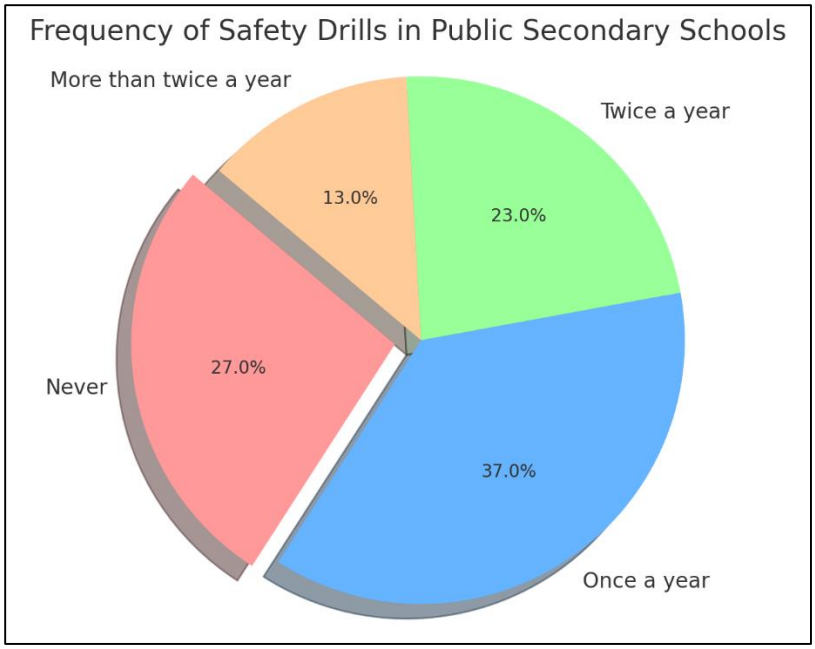

Figure 8 Frequency of Safety Drills in Public Secondary Schools in Mwala Sub –County

Source: Field Data, 2025

As shown in Table 9 and Figure 7, 60% of public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County conduct safety drills either once a year or not at all, indicating limited practical preparedness for emergencies. In contrast, only 10% of schools reported conducting drills more than twice annually, demonstrating a more proactive safety culture. Interviews with teachers revealed that time constraints and a shortage of trained personnel are the primary barriers to regular safety drills. These findings align with Omondi and Wanjiru (2020), who found a correlation between frequent safety campaigns and a reduction in school-related incidents in Kenya. However, the results differ from Smith et al. (2018), who observed that regular, structured training in South Africa significantly enhanced compliance with safety protocols. The disparity in drill frequency highlights a rural safety preparedness gap likely attributed to resource constraints.

Table 11 Effectiveness of safety awareness programs

Perceived Effectiveness	**Number of Respondents (n=155)**	**Percentage (%)**
Very Effective	16	10%

Effective	39	25%
Neutral	62	40%
Ineffective	31	20%
Very Ineffective	8	5%
Total	155	100%

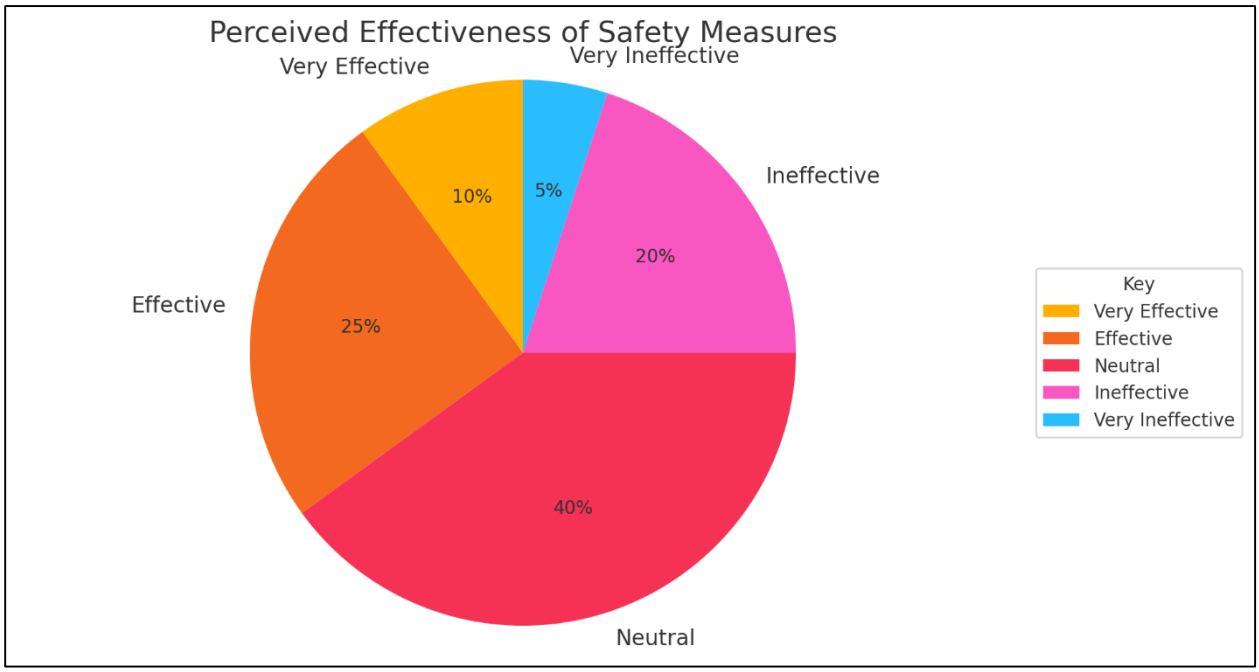

Figure 9 Perceived Effectiveness of Safety Measures

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 6 and Figure 4 also demonstrate that only 35% of the respondents perceived safety awareness programs to be effective or very effective, whereas 25% thought they were ineffective or very

ineffective. “Focus group discussions with students have indicated that many awareness programs were in theory and lacked practice, including handling drills. This result is consistent with the report of Mwangi et al. (2021), who argued that rural Kenyan schools face challenges in regards to safety standard compliance because the staff are ill-prepared. The dissatisfaction of the programs studied in Mwala Sub-County may be attributed to adversities of the rural settings, especially in inadequate infrastructure and ill-trained facilitators (Ncube & Dube, 2020. These findings highlight the importance of context-dependent training for safety awareness and compliance.

4.1.2 Financial Resources and Implementation of Safety Protocols

The research investigated the role of monetary resources in shaping safety rules enforcement, in terms of budget allocation and adequacy.

Table 12 Allocation of Financial Resources for Safety Improvements

Budget Allocation for Safety	**Number of schools (n=155)**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	93	60%
No	62	40%
Total	155	100%

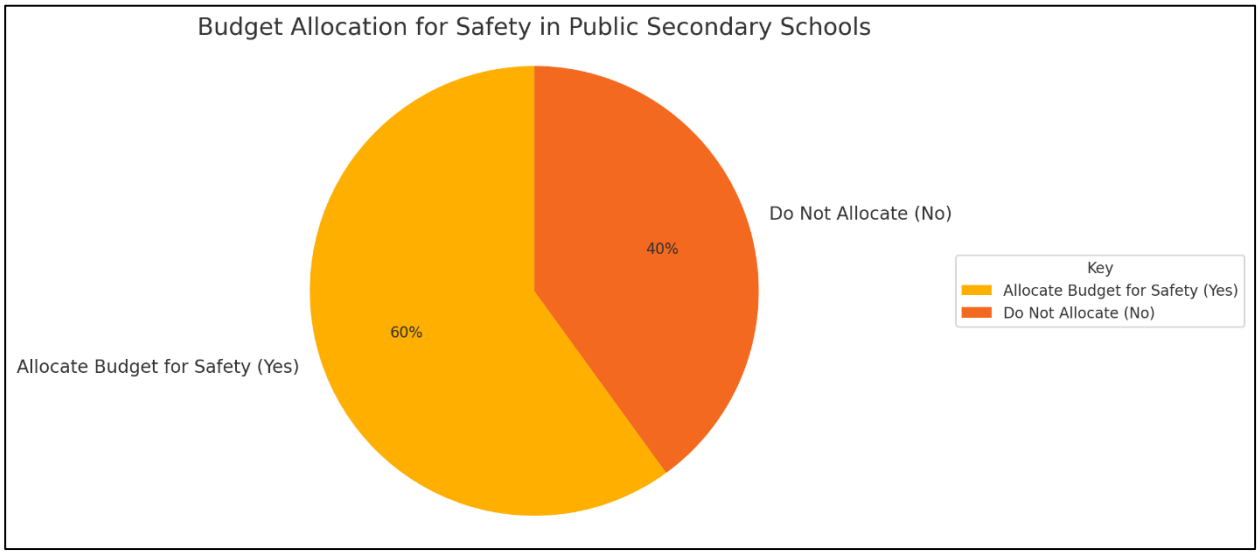

Figure 10 Budget allocation for safety in public Secondary schools

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 11 and Figure 9 show that 60 per cent of schools include specific allocations of funds for safety improvements, but that 40% do not, using the general budgets or external donations. The document review showed that schools having designated safety budgets used them mainly for purchasing equipment, light for fire extinguishers, but the budget allocations in many instances were less than KES 50,000 per annum. This is consistent with Kiplang'at and Rotich (2023), who found out that Kenyan county schools spend less than 8% of the available discretionary funds on safety. Administrators interviewed also spoke of bureaucratic bottlenecks in the release of funds, resonating with Adams and Mberia (2018). Lack of formal budgets in 40% of schools aligns with Resource Dependence Theory suggests that a lack of resources negatively affects the overall goals of the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The findings of the study indicate that financial impediments are an obstacle for implementation of safety protocols in Mwala Sub-County.

Table 13 Sufficiency of Allocated Safety Funds

Perceived Sufficiency	**Number of Respondents (n=155)**	**Percentage (%)**
Very Sufficient	8	5%
Sufficient	23	15%
Neutral	47	30%
Insufficient	62	40%
Very Insufficient	15	10%
Total	155	100%

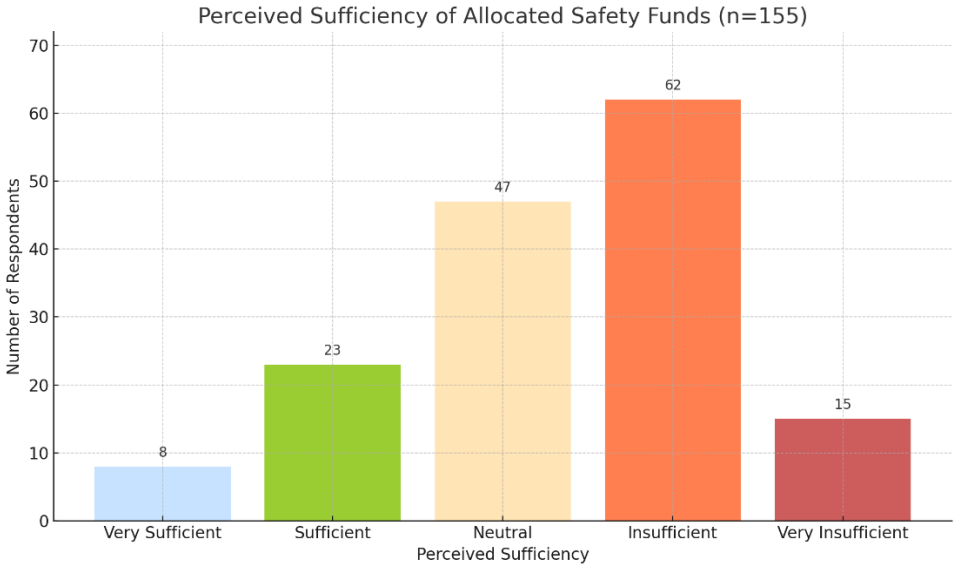

Figure 11 Perceived Sufficiency of Allocated Safety Funds in Mwala Sub –County

Source: Field Data, 2025

As shown in Table 12 and Figure 10, 50 % of the survey respondents thought the safety funds were either not enough or very insufficient while 20 % of the respondents thought the safety funds were sufficient or very sufficient, indicating a severe shortfall related to funding school safety programs. When asked about funding, school administrators highlighted that having limited funds meant they could not purchase substantial safety-related equipment and could not sufficiently train all staff and students. These results were consistent with Muthoni and Kariuki (2021) who noted a substantial increase in safety compliance in Kenyan schools with specifically allocated government funding. In addition, the general situation of Mwala Sub-County is similar to most of the rest of Africa, as highlighted by Adjei et al. (2021), where limited financial resources hinder the implementation of effective safety strategies. The data point to the compelling need for additional resources for school safety through larger and quick allocations.

4.1.3 Student enrolment and the implementation of safety measures.

The study explored how student enrollment affects safety protocol implementation, focusing on the student-to-safety officer ratio and enrollment-related challenges.

Table 14 Students to Safety officer ratio

Student-to-Safety Officer Ratio	Number of Respondents (n=155)	Percentage (%)
1 officer per 50 students	16	10%
1 officer per 100 students	47	30%
1 officer per 150 students	62	40%
No safety officers	31	20%
Total	155	100%

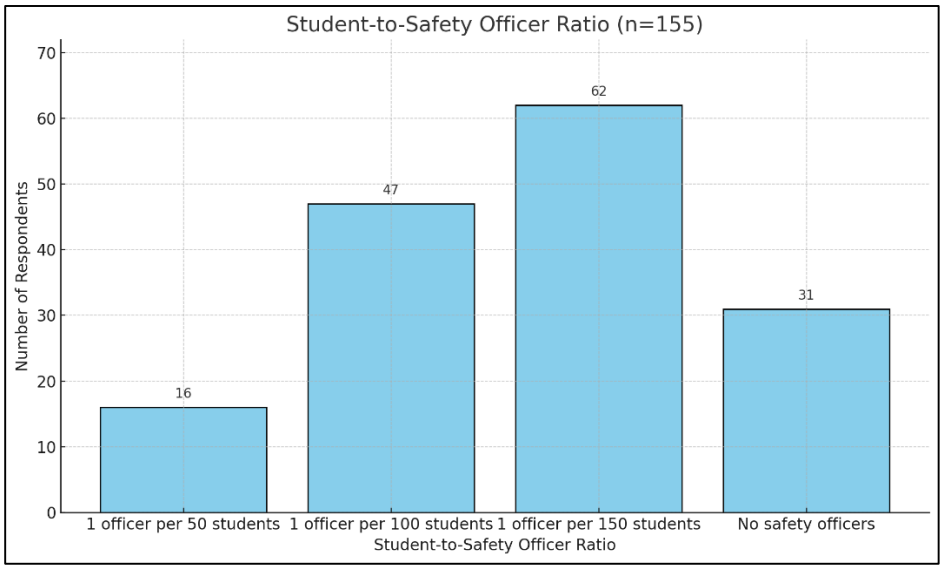

Figure 12 Students to safety officer ratio in Public Secondary Schools in Mwala sub county

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 13 and Figure 11 indicate that 60% of schools have a ratio of 1:100 or greater when it comes to students to dedicated safety officers, while 20% did not have a safety officer at all. The focus group discussions with teachers indicated that the high ratios made monitoring the safety of students difficult, especially in cases of high overcrowding in schools. This aligns with the work of Mwangi and Ochieng (2021), who investigated safety incidents occurring in Kenyan schools and found that crowded schools produced more safety incidents. This is also consistent with Smith et al. (2020), who connected the act of overcrowding with not being able to logistically enforce safety management processes. Furthermore, 20% of schools without safety officers support the idea of resource limits, as has been found in Resource Dependence Theory (Perry & Kraemer, 2020). Overall, this finding indicates that with an enrollment size of Mwala Sub-County, which is

similar to the enforcement in Mwala protocols. It was too much for the enforcement of safety protocols.

4.1.4 Influence of Administrative Practices on Implementation of Safety Protocols

Table 15 Influence of Administrative Practices on Implementation of Safety Protocols

Influence Level	**Frequency(n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Strong Influence	40	25.8%
Moderate influence	50	32.3%
Minimal Influence	35	22.6%
No influence	50	19.3%
Total	155	100%

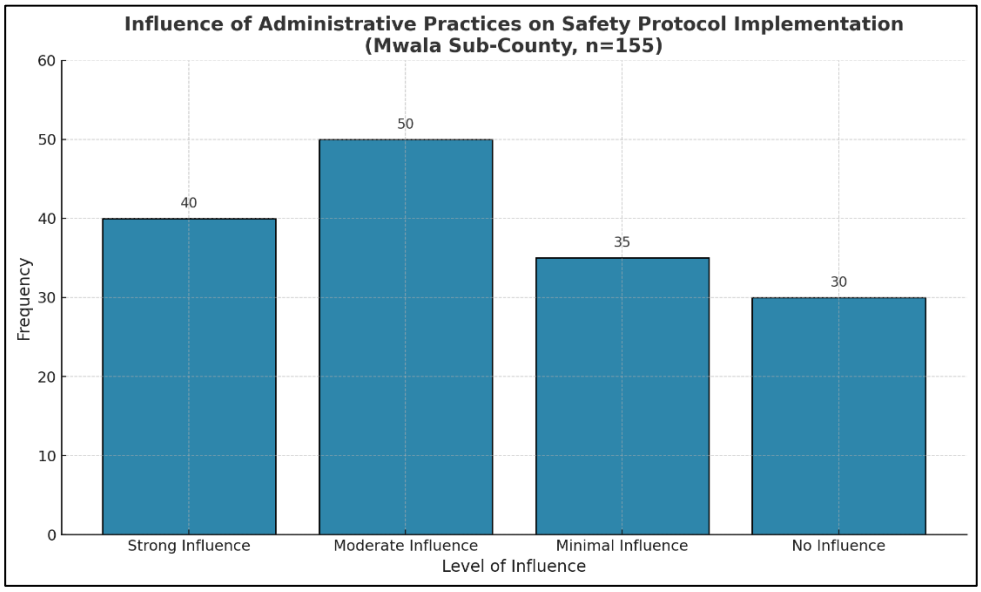

Figure 13 Influence of Administrative Practices on Safety Protocol Implementation

Figure 12: Influence of Administrative Practices on Safety Protocol Implementation

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 14 and Figure 12 show that the majority (58.1%) of schools recognize that administrative practices have at least a moderate to strong influence on the implementation of safety protocols.

Specifically, 32.3% of respondents identified the influence as moderate, while 25.8% considered it strong. However, 41.9% of schools reported that administrative practices had minimal or no influence, indicating potential gaps in leadership engagement or oversight. This aligns with the work of Wambua and Chege, who noted that administrative leadership plays a critical role in enforcing institutional safety policies. The presence of weak or absent administrative influence (as seen in 19.3% of schools) may reflect insufficient training, lack of policy enforcement, or unclear roles, which are limitations also addressed under the lens of Institutional Theory (Selznick, 1948). The findings suggest that while formal structures for safety protocol implementation may exist, the administrative commitment and capacity to drive safety initiatives remain uneven across schools.

4.1.5 Implementation of Safety Protocols

The study compared how management practices influenced safety protocols, based on the presence of safety officers, frequency of audits, and management.

Table 16 Presence of Dedicated Safety Officer

Dedicated Safety Officer	**Number of respondents(n=155)**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	124	80%
No	31	20%

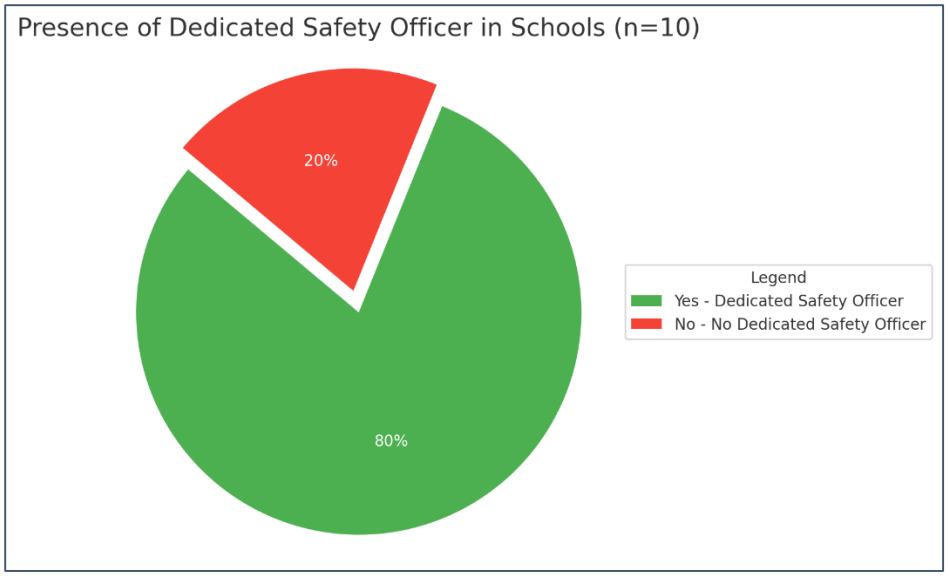

Figure 14 Presence of Dedicated Safety Officer

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 14 and Figure 12 show that the majority (80%) of schools have a commitment to safety and safety management in place by having a dedicated safety officer. However, some of those safety officers revealed they did not have official training, which would hinder their ability to be effective in their role. This finding is in line with the research of Gitau and Patel (bracket the citation) who indicate that there is a need for administrative commitment to achieve safety compliance. One in five schools does not have a safety officer (as also observed in Table 5; consistent with previous findings), which reveals a discrepancy in available resources, and is consistent with Institution Theory's emphasis on organizational conforming to external expectations (Selznick, 1948). The findings from these interviews would suggest management structures exist, however, the barriers of training/education and resources will limit their effectiveness.

Table 17 Frequency of Safety Audits

Frequency of safety Audits	**Number of schools (n=10)**	**Percentage** %
Quarterly	31	20%
Biannually	47	30%
Annually	62	40%
Never	15	10%
Total	155	100

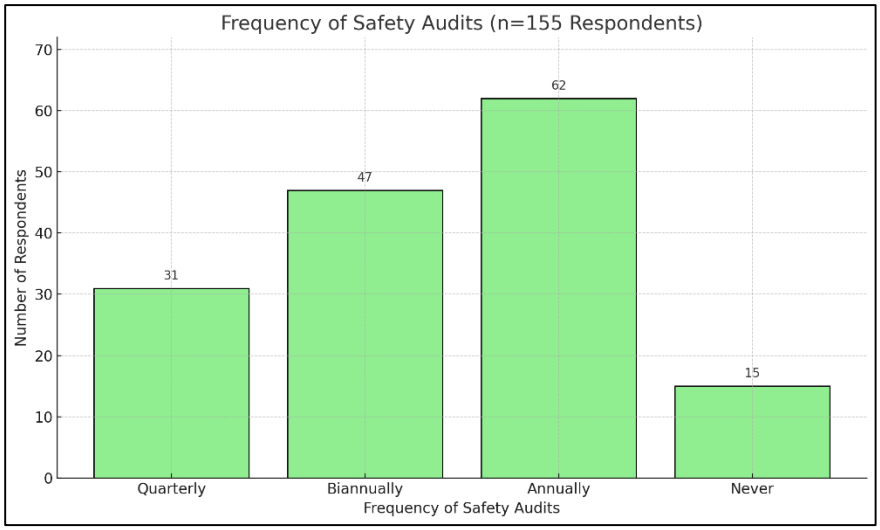

Figure 15 Frequency of Safety Audits

Source: **Field Data, 2025**

Table 15 and figure 13 indicates that 40% of schools conduct safety audits annually, while only 20% do so quarterly. Qualitative data from administrators noted that infrequent audits were due to limited funding and expertise. This supports Johnson and Johnson (2019), who found that regular audits enhance safety compliance. The findings also align with Ndungu (2022), who emphasized proactive management in Kenyan schools. The lack of regular audits in most Mwala schools suggests a gap in monitoring, undermining safety protocol enforcement. These results highlight the need for structured management practices to ensure consistent safety oversight.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

The study had limitations that need to be considered. First and foremost, using 10 schools as a sample could provide a representative sample, but may not reflect the diversity of all 50 public secondary schools within Mwala Sub-County. Second, there were logistical challenges, and living in a rural area created transportation challenges that delayed data collection in schools. The third is that survey and interview responses relied on self-reported data, and this may have introduced response bias as the respondents may have exaggerated compliance in an effort not to disappoint us or reach our expectations. Fourth, the pilot study in Kangundo Sub-County used

the same instruments but may not have fully reflected the context of Mwala, which may have limited the refinement of the instruments used. Lastly, due to time constraints, we did not have an extensive opportunity to analyze our qualitative data, especially during the focus group discussions. Nonetheless, we feel confident in the findings from the mixed-methods approach and careful validation procedures.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced and discussed the findings relating to the institutional factors on safety protocols implementation in the public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. There were identified gaps in safety awareness, financial resources, enrolment, and administration. Quantitative data like drill frequency, budgets, student: officer ratios, and audit frequency provided evidence as to gaps, while qualitative data added context, such as resourcing gaps and the needs of untrained officers in rural settings. The findings made a connection to the literature and the identified barriers of resource dependence and institutional pressures, while acknowledging inconsistencies in management. The limitations of the research, such as the small number of people involved and the issues with the research logistics, were acknowledged. This chapter concludes the research and prepares for chapter five, which will provide conclusions and recommendations to address the gaps that are in place to improve safety in schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the report on institutional factors affecting the application of safety measures in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya, are synthesized. The chapter offers a précis of the main outcomes, practical endorsements for key stakeholders, and a conclusion that ties the research questions of the study with the outcomes of the study. The chapter will be structured in a way that highlights the primary findings, provides practical recommendations accompanied by specific actions, timelines, responsible stakeholders, and monitoring, and concludes with a final discussion to provide a suitable driving force for future enhancements to school safety.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study investigated the influence of safety awareness, financial resources, student enrollment, and school management practices on the implementation of safety protocols in 10 public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, based on data from 200 respondents (administrators, teachers, students, and educational administrators). The major findings are summarized below under each institutional factor.

5.1.1 Safety Awareness

Only 60% of schools conducted safety drills at least once a year, with just 10% performing drills more than twice annually. Only 35% of respondents rated safety awareness programs as effective, citing a lack of practical training and trained facilitators. Rural schools faced greater challenges due to resource constraints, aligning with Mwangi et al. (2021), who noted inadequate training in rural Kenyan schools. The limited frequency and effectiveness of awareness programs indicate a significant gap in fostering proactive safety behaviors.

5.1.2 Financial Resources

While 60% of schools in Mwala Sub-County reported allocating specific budgets for safety initiatives, further analysis revealed that 50% of respondents considered these funds insufficient to meet the growing demands of effective safety management. In most cases, the annual allocation was below KES 50,000, a figure that falls short of what is required for meaningful investment in safety infrastructure, personnel training, and emergency preparedness.The limited budgetary allocation severely restricted the capacity of schools to upgrade critical infrastructure, such as installing or maintaining fire extinguishers, alarm systems, emergency signage, and safe evacuation routes. In addition, training programs for staff and students—vital for ensuring awareness and responsiveness during emergencies—were often underfunded or entirely absent. This financial shortfall compromises the overall effectiveness of safety protocols and increases the risk of preventable incidents.These findings are consistent with Kiplang'at and Rotich (2023), who observed that Kenyan public secondary schools typically allocate less than 8% of their discretionary funds to safety and emergency preparedness, reflecting a broader systemic challenge in prioritizing safety within education budgets. The researchers argue that this underinvestment stems not only from constrained resources but also from a lack of policy enforcement and administrative will at both the school and government levels.Moreover, the study identified that even where safety budgets existed, bureaucratic delays in fund disbursement—particularly from county and national education authorities—further exacerbated resource constraints. In several cases, funds earmarked for safety were either delayed or redirected to other pressing needs, such as exam materials or infrastructural maintenance unrelated to safety. This inconsistent flow of funds disrupted planned safety activities and left many schools unable to implement their safety plans effectively.The cumulative effect of these issues—limited funding, misallocation, and delayed disbursement—undermines efforts to establish safe learning environments. Without dedicated and reliable financial support, schools are unable to implement proactive risk management strategies, respond to emergencies effectively, or meet the national standards for school safety. Addressing this challenge requires not only increased budgetary commitment but also greater transparency, streamlined financial procedures, and the integration of safety as a core priority within educational policy frameworks.

5.1.3 Student Enrollment

High student-to-safety officer ratios (60% of schools had 1:100 or higher) and overcrowding (50% of schools) strained safety protocol enforcement. Schools with no safety officers (20%) faced significant monitoring challenges, supporting Mwangi and Ochieng (2021), who linked high enrollment to increased safety incidents. Overcrowding compromised facilities like emergency exits, increasing risks. The study revealed that 80% of public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County had designated safety officers. While this figure indicates a strong administrative commitment to safety at a structural level, the actual effectiveness of these safety officers was significantly undermined by inadequate training. Many of these officers lacked formal education or professional development in safety management, which compromised their ability to implement safety protocols effectively and respond to emergencies appropriately. Moreover, the frequency of safety audits, a critical component of administrative oversight, varied widely across the surveyed schools. Only 20% of schools conducted safety audits on a quarterly basis, demonstrating a proactive approach aligned with best practices in risk management. However, a larger proportion 40% relied on annual audits, which, while helpful, may not sufficiently capture or respond to evolving safety risks throughout the academic year. Alarmingly, 10% of schools reported never conducting safety audits at all, highlighting a serious gap in administrative vigilance and compliance with standard safety expectations. These inconsistencies in administrative practices echo the findings of Johnson and Johnson (2019), who emphasized the necessity of regular and structured safety audits as a key measure of organizational readiness and legal compliance. Schools with limited or irregular audit routines are less likely to identify safety hazards in a timely manner, increasing the risk of preventable incidents. Additionally, the study found that the lack of structured administrative governance in some schools hindered the successful implementation and enforcement of safety protocols. In these cases, safety responsibilities were either vaguely defined or entirely absent from administrative agendas. This lack of coordination suggests a need for clearer policy guidelines, better resource allocation, and enhanced accountability mechanisms within school leadership structures. Overall, while administrative practices supporting school safety are present in many institutions, their effectiveness is inconsistent and often dependent on the individual commitment and capacity of administrators. Strengthening administrative training, standardizing audit procedures, and institutionalizing safety policies are essential steps toward ensuring a safer school environment across the region.

5.1.4 Administrative practices

The study revealed that 80% of public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County had designated safety officers. While this figure indicates a strong administrative commitment to safety at a structural level, the actual effectiveness of these safety officers was significantly undermined by inadequate training. Many of these officers lacked formal education or professional development in safety management, which compromised their ability to implement safety protocols effectively and respond to emergencies appropriately. Moreover, the frequency of safety audits, a critical component of administrative oversight, varied widely across the surveyed schools. Only 20% of schools conducted safety audits on a quarterly basis, demonstrating a proactive approach aligned with best practices in risk management. However, a larger proportion—40%—relied on annual audits, which, while helpful, may not sufficiently capture or respond to evolving safety risks throughout the academic year. Alarmingly, 10% of schools reported never conducting safety audits at all, highlighting a serious gap in administrative vigilance and compliance with standard safety expectations. These inconsistencies in administrative practices echo the findings of Johnson and Johnson (2019), who emphasized the necessity of regular and structured safety audits as a key measure of organizational readiness and legal compliance. Schools with limited or irregular audit routines are less likely to identify safety hazards in a timely manner, increasing the risk of preventable incidents. Additionally, the study found that the lack of structured administrative governance in some schools hindered the successful implementation and enforcement of safety protocols. In these cases, safety responsibilities were either vaguely defined or entirely absent from administrative agendas. This lack of coordination suggests a need for clearer policy guidelines, better resource allocation, and enhanced accountability mechanisms within school leadership structures. Overall, while administrative practices supporting school safety are present in many institutions, their effectiveness is inconsistent and often dependent on the individual commitment and capacity of administrators. Strengthening administrative training, standardizing audit procedures, and institutionalizing safety policies are essential steps toward ensuring a safer school environment across the region.

5.2 Conclusion

The goal of this study was to assess the impact of institutional factors in determining the implementation of safety protocols in the public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya, specifically in terms of safety awareness, availability of financial resources, enrollment of students, and school management practices. The conclusions, which relate to all of these variables, are summarized below:

5.2.1 Safety Awareness:

Limited safety awareness has been identified as an important issue for the implementation of safety policy in schools. The limited safety awareness was linked to infrequent safety drills as well as ineffectively developed and poorly implemented training programs. The outcomes suggest that schools should include safety drills as part of their normal curriculum and include comprehensive training for staff and students to be well prepared for emergencies.

5.2.2 Financial Resources:

Inadequate funding was another large barrier that was demonstrated within this study. Almost half of the respondents indicated their safety budget was inadequate. This insufficient funding limits schools from purchasing necessary safety equipment, implementing regular safety drills to promote safety, and hiring effective safety personnel. Schools should advocate for more funding to ensure adequate funding from the government and local stakeholders for safety resources.

5.2.3 Student Enrollment:

The study also highlighted the issue faced regarding difficulties in effective monitoring and management of safety protocols due to high student-to-safety officer ratios. For over 60% of schools, the student-to-safety officer ratio was 1:100 or more. Reducing the student-to-safety officer ratio could result in better monitoring and management of safety protocols, thus enhancing safety in schools.

5.2.4 Administrative Practices

Inconsistent administrative practices significantly hindered the effective implementation of safety protocols in public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County. The study found that only one in five schools conducted quarterly safety audits, while two in five performed audits

annually, and one in ten never conducted them. This irregularity in monitoring limited the ability to identify and address safety risks promptly. Although four in five schools had dedicated safety officers, their effectiveness was undermined by inadequate specialized training, as revealed through interviews with administrators. Effective administrative practices, such as regular safety audits, clear communication of safety policies, and comprehensive vulnerability assessments, are critical for ensuring consistent protocol adherence. These practices enable schools to maintain up-to-date safety measures and foster a proactive safety culture. The findings align with Johnson and Johnson (2019), who emphasized that structured administrative oversight, including frequent audits and trained personnel, enhances compliance in educational settings. In the rural context of Mwala Sub-County, strengthening administrative practices through targeted training and standardized audit schedules is essential to improve safety protocol implementation and ensure a secure learning environment.

5.2.5 Systemic Challenges in Rural Contexts:

If that was not enough, schools in rural areas also reported additional challenges, including bureaucratic delays, poor infrastructure, and limited stakeholder engagement. This best highlighted the system problems that impact schools in those communities and serve to decrease safety levels and the overall experience of safety in schools. School leaders need to engage with all the stakeholders in the community, including local authorities, Bureaucratic delay structures, and the community in general, to attempt to tackle these systems-oriented limitations.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the study, numerous endorsements are presented to improve the implementation of safety procedures at public secondary schools in Mwala Sub-County, Kenya. The recommendations are proposed to address the challenges outlined and are divided into implications for research, policy, practice/training, and education.

Future research should include longitudinal studies that would explore the sustainability and impact of safety protocol interventions in the school context. Using repeated measures on safety compliance, incident rates, and safety interventions over the years would benefit researchers'

understanding of how effective some of the safety measures are and their potential for sustainability. There should also be a priority focus on developing low-cost, context-specific safety solutions for rural schools. Due to the lack of funding available in rural communities, research on how pilot projects based on community safety solutions, such as a community safety committee or low-cost technologies, such as mobile apps for training on using safety protocols, could lead to applicable, sustainable solutions. Finally, research could put priority on assessing the value of stakeholder engagement in the success of protocols. It would be important to explore how all stakeholders, such as, local community, parents, and government, could work in concert to improve schools; thereby enriching understanding of the coordinated effort required in schools to improve safety standards in their contexts.

For policy, it is evident that the county-level school safety policy framework needs to provide a context to allow for clear standardized protocols across all schools in Mwala Sub-County. It would also be valuable to ensure minimum safety budgets for schools, with predetermined regular safety audits, and ongoing safety training and education that recognizes the particular challenges rural schools experience. This would help ensure that all schools operate with basic safety without regard to resource availability. Meanwhile, developing safety resource hubs in the sub-county could also start to ameliorate the inequitable resourcing of schools. A safety resource hub could purposely support schools directly, providing access to safety equipment, safety training, templates, and technical support. This would intentionally help under-resourced schools, improving safety infrastructure across the sub-county, particularly rural schools. The hub would provide resources to help all schools bring their level of safety up to better meet minimum safety levels.

In terms of practice and training, practical safety training programs must be applied as a requirement for staff and students. Practical safety training programs should have a heavy emphasis on application-based scenarios related to emergencies, safety drills, risk assessments, and an emphasis on applying these practices to the rural context where resources can sometimes be nonexistent. To create consistent practice and training for staff and students, regular safety workshops can help prepare readiness outcomes for emergencies. Also, it is important to strengthen school safety committees in all schools. Safety committees will assess safety measures in schools; assess risk, and monitor compliance. These committees will assist in keeping safety

policies at the forefront of school operations. For all of the reasons listed, safety committees would benefit from a handbook with procedural guidelines and more regular training on safety policy and practices.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam

Attached is a questionnaire asking for your views on the **EFFECT OF INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MWALA SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**. This questionnaire is part of my graduate research project towards a degree at the Management University of Africa (MUA). Your responses will remain anonymous, strictly confidential, and will not be used for any purpose other than this research. Your responses are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
EMILY KOKI

APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer questions by ticking the appropriate box or writing in the space provided.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender
    a) Male [ ]
    b) Female [ ]
2. Age Bracket
    a) 15-18 [ ]
    b) 19-25 [ ]

c) 26-35 [ ]

d) 35 and above [ ]

3. Highest Level of Education
    a) Primary [ ]
    b) Secondary [ ]
    c) College [ ]
    d) University [ ]
    e) Other (Specify) [ ]
4. Role in the School
    a) School Administrator [ ]
    b) Teacher [ ]
    c) Support Staff [ ]
    d) Parent [ ]
    e) Student [ ]
5. Experience in the School
    a) Less than 1 year [ ]
    b) 1-3 years [ ]
    c) 4-6 years [ ]
    d) 7-10 years [ ]
    e) More than 10 years [ ]
6. Have you participated in any safety-related activities in the school?
    a) Yes [ ]
    b) No [ ]

SECTION B: SAFETY AWARENESS

1. How frequently are safety drills conducted in your school?
    a) Never [ ]
    b) Once a year [ ]
    c) Twice a year [ ]
    d) More than twice a year [ ]
2. Are there regular training programs for staff and students on safety protocols?

a) Yes [ ]
b) No [ ]

3. How effective do you find the current safety awareness programs in your school?
    a) Very Effective [ ]
    b) Effective [ ]
    c) Neutral [ ]
    d) Ineffective [ ]
    e) Very Ineffective [ ]
4. Do students and staff actively participate in safety drills and awareness programs?
    a) Strongly Agree [ ]
    b) Agree [ ]
    c) Neutral [ ]
    d) Disagree [ ]
    e) Strongly Disagree [ ]

SECTION C: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

1. Does your school allocate specific financial resources for safety improvements?
    a) Yes [ ]
    b) No [ ]
2. Are the allocated funds sufficient to meet the safety needs of the school?
    a) Very Sufficient [ ]
    b) Sufficient [ ]
    c) Neutral [ ]
    d) Insufficient [ ]
    e) Very Insufficient [ ]
3. What is the primary area of spending for the allocated safety budget in your school?
    a) Infrastructure (e.g., fire extinguishers, alarms) [ ]
    b) Training programs [ ]
    c) Hiring safety personnel [ ]
    d) Other (Specify) [ ]

4. Do you think additional financial resources would significantly improve safety standards in your school?
    a) Strongly Agree [ ]
    b) Agree [ ]
    c) Neutral [ ]
    d) Disagree [ ]
    e) Strongly Disagree [ ]

SECTION D: STUDENT ENROLLMENT

1. What is the student-to-safety officer ratio in your school?
    a) 1 officer per 50 students [ ]
    b) 1 officer per 100 students [ ]
    c) 1 officer per 150 students [ ]
    d) No safety officers [ ]
2. Does the current student enrollment impact the enforcement of safety protocols in your school?
    a) Strongly Agree [ ]
    b) Agree [ ]
    c) Neutral [ ]
    d) Disagree [ ]
    e) Strongly Disagree [ ]
3. What are the challenges related to student enrollment affecting safety in your school?
    a) Overcrowding [ ]
    b) Limited safety resources [ ]
    c) Insufficient safety personnel [ ]
    d) Other (Specify) [ ]

SECTION E: MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

1. Is there a dedicated safety officer in your school?
    a) Yes [ ]
    b) No [ ]
2. How often does your school conduct safety audits?
    a) Quarterly [ ]
    b) Biannually [ ]
    c) Annually [ ]
    d) Never [ ]
3. How involved is the school management in ensuring compliance with safety protocols?
    a) Very Involved [ ]
    b) Involved [ ]
    c) Neutral [ ]
    d) Less Involved [ ]
    e) Not Involved [ ]
4. Which management practices have been most effective in improving safety in your school?
    a) Conducting regular safety audits [ ]
    b) Allocating a dedicated budget for safety [ ]
    c) Hiring qualified safety officers [ ]
    d) Training staff and students [ ]
    e) Other (Specify) [ ]
5. What additional measures do you suggest management could take to enhance safety in your school?

    (Specify): _____