



### **Influence of Infrastructure on Holistic Formation of Learners in Private Boarding Primary Schools in Yatta Sub-County Machakos County, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of boarding private primary school life on holistic formation of learners in Yatta sub county Machakos County Kenya focusing on how infrastructure influence the holistic formation of learners in private boarding primary in Yatta sub County Machakos County and strategies to overcome the challenges mentioned. The study was anchored on Erik Erikson Theory of child development. Under mixed-method research, the study was carried out with a convergent parallel design, notably employing cross-sectional and phenomenological research designs. The researcher sampled individuals using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. For probability the researcher employed systematic random, stratified and simple random techniques, and purposive for non-probability sampling. The study targeted 12 private boarding primary schools, 12 head teachers, 290 learners, and 12 Grade 6 class teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select four (4) schools, four (4) head teachers and (4) grade six class teachers. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample 87 learners as respondents. The research instruments that were utilized to collect data include a questionnaire, in-depth interview guide, and discussion guides for focus groups. The validity and reliability of the instruments were determined before any data is gathered. The researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze quantitative data with the help of SPSS Version 26 while focus group discussion and in-depth interview data were analyzed based on thematic areas. The study found out that classrooms are barely adequate, not spacious and require renovations. In addition, dining facilities were found to be inadequate and learners take meals under trees or in classrooms during the rainy season. Similarly, playgrounds were found inadequate, not leveled and have potholes. The study recommended that immediate efforts should be made to improve the adequacy and condition of school infrastructure, including classrooms, dining facilities, playgrounds, and dormitories. Investment in renovations and expansions is essential to creating a safe, supportive, and conducive environment for learning and development in addition the schools should adhere to laid down policies e.g. national health policy in schools 2018 and the regular assessment from the ministry of education to ensure that the policies are implemented to the letter

**Key Words:** Infrastructure, Holistic, Formation, Boarding, and Private Schools

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Holistic education aims at enhancing the quality of education in schools, with its implementation being strongly connected to the cultural environment established among the school community (Ilmu, 2019). The educational approach emphasizes the integration and harmony of spiritual, intellectual, emotional, creative, artistic, and cultural dimensions (Rianawaty et al., 2021, referencing Oentoro, 2010). According

to Rianawaty et al. (2021), citing Dewey (1950), holistic development is shaped by the ongoing evolution of educational practices. It harmoniously develops and empowers all of the given human potentials (Ushuludin et al., 2019). Holistic education is crucial in today's fast-paced world, as it acknowledges that individuals are more than just vessels for information; they are complex beings with diverse needs. This educational approach nurtures not only academic success but also emotional intelligence, creativity, and social skills. By promoting comprehensive development, holistic formation prepares learners to face life's challenges, embedding values like empathy and ethical decision-making.

Additionally holistic formation fosters a genuine love for learning, turning education into a life long journey rather than a task limited to the classroom. In our increasingly interconnected world, holistic education equips individuals to adapt, innovate, and make meaningful contributions to society, emphasizing personal growth alongside academic success (Lancers Army School, 2022). In contemporary world, lack or inadequate holistic formation, can be taking an upper hand in the rampant reported hiccups in family setups. For instance, in Britain Faulkner, (2020) suggests that sending children away to boarding school amounts to 'emotional neglect and psychological cruelty' (p.184) a crime under the Serious Crime Act of 2015.

A boarding school is a school where children live and study. They have a dormitory where children sleep and classrooms where studies take place. Boarding schools can be public or private, and they may be mixed gender or single-sex. It is a residential school where pupils live and study during the school year (British Council, 2019). Boarding schools globally, dates back to the 19th century they were typically located in rural areas and were designed to provide education to children from low-income families, (Behaghel, de Chaise, Martin, &Gurgand, 2017). Boarding schools then were run by religious organizations or charities, and they often had a strict code of conduct and discipline (Smithsonia, 2020). They were segregated by gender, and they often had separate dormitories for boys and girls. They were closed to the public, and often had a strict security system in place. They were staffed by teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Traditionally, these institutions were designed to provide a disciplined and structured environment, often accommodating students whose families were geographically distant or whose parents were unable to provide adequate supervision (Smith, 2019). Over the years, the landscape of boarding primary schools has evolved, and contemporary discussions revolve around the potential impacts on the holistic development of children. While boarding schools may now have counselors and modern amenities, it is the separation and rejection, fear, anxiety and the increased likelihood of experiencing abuse and other traumas that are shown to have a detrimental effect on the mental health of boarders even into their adulthood (Duffell& Bassett, 2016; Faulkner, 2020). In the absence of evidence to the contrary we are left with the fact that children being separated from their families is not supported by any child development theory (Duffell& Bassett, 2016) and is considered the last resort by the social care system in Britain (Murphy et al., 2020).

Education in Singapore for example has evolved from a focus on fulfilling economic needs and supporting students' academic development to an increasing focus on holistic student development, including character formation, societal participation, and self-actualization. The emphasis on holistic education is also to expand educational parameters beyond cognitive abilities and academic performance to other growth areas such as physical, socio-emotional, and artistic achievements. Desired holistic

student outcomes are outlined in the 1997 “Desired Outcomes of Education” and further enhanced in 2010 with the “21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes” framework. The situation seems not to vary much with the area of the current study where the researcher’s opines holistic formation as progressive.

A renowned scholar and South African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela is known for his quotes about education one of them being “education is the most powerful weapon which one can use to change the whole world” (Mandela, 1995), the current researcher opines that the reverse of this is true. In support of Mandela’s sentiments, (Newman, 2017), in “Equipping Africa’s Primary School Learners for the Future”, asserts that education remains a crucial component of economic development and poverty reduction. Primary education, in particular, provides students with the literacy, numeracy, and communication skills necessary to continue with education at a more advanced level and to participate in the local and global economies. To realize full potential in pupils’ development, holistic formation should be top priority to any African pupil and more so to the developing countries.

The said potentiality can be achieved by putting into consideration the implementation of educational strategies which include; involving the community and in this regard parents. As Newman, (2017) puts it, “parental involvement in primary education is a key determinant of the effectiveness of primary education”. He argues that to stress the aspect of pupil’s holistic formation it has to be noted that effective primary education in the schools is assisted by a three-way partnership that is, educators, parents, and the community (Newman, 2016 in Fatt, 1999). In this study the researcher argues that parental and community role in children’s’ holistic formation can be hindered by the aspect of enrolling them to boarding facilities at very young age.

In the Kenyan context, most parents do value their children’s’ academic performance and more especially the well to do parents and families. This kind of parents are inclined and forced to take any risk to realize this. This is because of the mentality that class grades and good marks is a gateway to good secondary school a better job hence a good life. Therefore, one of the strategies many parents have embraced to achieve their child’ admirable class grades and good marks is taking children to boarding schools as early as early childhood education, (ECDE) level. Despite the gains that accrue or are projected from the said endeavor, Mwangi & Mbogo, (2018), came up with a descending opinion by arguing that parenting children in boarding and day schools differs in various ways. Behaviors may change when one changes school from day school to boarding. This implies that boarding school has an impact on behaviors of children. The negative changes in behaviors pose a challenge to parenting, by being away from parents; it is easy to indulge in unbecoming behaviors as a result of environmental influence and lack of close monitoring. Mwangi and Mbogo, (2018) further argues that evidence has it that parenting a child in boarding school is challenging. In the boarding life experience and environment parents risk their children to poor feeding, poor medical attention, irresponsible care takers and bullying by older children. Sending children to boarding school also places financial burden on parents while homesickness is experienced by some children.

On the other hand, boarding environment frustrates the child’s capacity to flourish socially, emotionally and academically. Regarding academic pressure being linked to high parents’ expectation, children taken to boarding school for the first time have been reported to have dipped in their academic performance, yet their parents do expect them to perform highly. Sometimes parents feel that their children are

pressurized to perform better regardless of their weakness. All these issues point to deficit children's holistic formation for parents have very little time to monitor their children's behavior and guide them through in their formative years

### **1.2 Statement to the Problem**

The enrollment of children in boarding primary schools has become a common educational choice, driven by factors such as geographical distance, parental work commitments, and the pursuit of academic excellence. However, this distinctive educational environment raises significant concerns regarding its impact on the holistic formation and development of young learners (Smith, 2020). Many previous scholars and researchers have looked at this matter at a different perspective where they concentrated on few elements and aspects of holistic development. For example, Gregory (2023) investigated only The Psychological Impact of Sending Children away to Boarding Schools in Britain. Tang et al (2023) investigated the impact of boarding schools on the development of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities. Olaka (2014) carried out a study on the effect of the physical development of primary school child Mwangi and Mbogo, (2018) evolved around parenting early age boarding school where they focused on social, economic, spiritual and physical challenges faced by parents with children in boarding schools. There have been concerns amongst education stakeholders that learners in boarding primary private schools suffer from various problems that have a serious long-lasting impact on their lives. These are but not restricted to poor feeding, poor medical attention, and irresponsible care takers bullying by older children and homesickness. The current author is in the opinion that the influence of boarding private primary schools' life on holistic development has not been comprehensively tackled by previous researchers and scholars. All the aspects of holistic development have not been fully addressed. Many scholars and researchers dwelt so much on issues in boarding secondary schools focusing less on boarding private primary schools. This is what has triggered and necessitated the current researcher to embark on investigating the influence of infrastructure on holistic formation of learners in Private boarding Primary schools in Yatta Sub-County Machakos County Kenya.

### **1.3 Research question**

How does infrastructure influence the holistic formation of learners in private boarding primary school?

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development which proposes that personality development follows a generically pre-programmed sequence. The theory was developed in 1950s by Erik Erikson. He places a considerable emphasis on the role of family, culture, and society in the development of individual's personality. Erickson recognized that the social environment in which children grow, develop, and learn can influence significantly the outcomes of personality development. Orenstein, (2022). Erikson identified a series of eight stages, in which a healthy developing individual should pass through from infancy to late adulthood. Erickson proposed that these critical steps constitute turning points in human personality development in which progress or regression occurs and integration of favorable resolutions of the crises into one's personality led to human strength. These stages determine the types of interactions and guidance that support healthy personality development and social and moral competence

### **1.5 Review of Related Literature**

Munyua et al. (2020) described infrastructure as the physical facilities within a school, which are integral to the school environment. These include buildings like classrooms, school grounds, furniture, and equipment essential for educating students. They emphasized that schools should be situated in an appropriate environment with ample space, trees for shade, and located away from distracting noise, congested towns, and pollution. According to Munyua et al. (2020), for effective learning to occur, a school must provide sufficient space, adequate lighting, comfortable seating, a well-stocked library, playgrounds, classrooms, and proper sanitation facilities. Sopian (2019) also noted that educational infrastructure is a critical resource for maintaining continuous learning activities.

The current researcher argues that many private boarding primary schools face significant challenges regarding infrastructure, inadequate and substandard physical facilities is very common. These deficiencies deprive students of the space and environment needed for holistic growth and development and formation. Some common infrastructural issues and their potential impacts include inadequate classroom facilities, crowded or insufficient classroom and inadequate playground this can impede effective teaching and learning in these particular institutions. Students may find it difficult to concentrate, and teachers may struggle to implement interactive and engaging teaching methods. Additionally, a lack of proper sanitation facilities can lead to health problems among students. This can negatively affect learner's attendance and overall well-being, thus contributing to the spread of diseases, which further disrupts the learning environment.

Insufficient accommodation overcrowded dormitories and inadequate living spaces are very common in boarding school this affect students' rest and sleep, interfering with their ability to concentrate during classes. It may also lead to a lack of personal space, making it challenging for students to focus on their studies, Kanyiri, et al (2023), asserts that inadequate play areas or recreational facilities can affect students' physical and mental well-being. Play is essential for the holistic development of children, and a lack of such spaces may lead to stress and reduced motivation to attend school. Inadequate security measures can lead to safety concerns for both students and staff.

In United state of America according to a study done by Shapiro et al (2021),entitled “USAID Monitoring, Evaluation, And Learning Activity School Infrastructure Multi-Activity Evaluation” The study was designed to examine information from USAID school infrastructure activities in Jordan, employed a mixed method approach involving cross-sectional primary qualitative and quantitative data, including school observations and surveys across 104 USAID-funded schools and surveys of teachers from neighboring schools, along with focus groups and use of secondary data across three activities.

Overall, there were many positive elements among USAID-funded schools including reasonably high standards and all basic building features present plus evidence of progress over time. There were many areas for potential improvement relative to the goals of 21st -century learning, including that most classrooms were designed towards a “delivery of content” rather than active learning model, an absence of specialty learning space, deficiencies in wireless Internet and use of technology for learning, and outdoor areas that were not fully optimized for learning and play.

The surveys revealed a stronger sense of community belonging, use of technology in teaching, better student outcomes and parental and community engagement. Secondary data provided mixed evidence in student outcomes with some evidence of slightly better learning in SKEP and JSP early grades and

modest differentiation in traditional subject outcomes from 2014 assessments, but other international assessment data that did not uniformly favor USAID-funded school students. Twelve recommendations are provided to generate school design-related improvements to create school designs that can facilitate the delivery of a modern curriculum. Recommendations also are provided related to show how the Mission might incentivize improved school utilization and measurement related improvements to consider bettering assessing construction-related results. While the study did not specify the category of the school this study examined boarding private primary schools and how the infrastructure can affect learner's holistic formation in those schools.

The development agenda for all countries in the world require countries to “build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive, and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. To provide today's formal education instructions in Africa, there has to be a greater level of school infrastructure (Ambasz et al, 2019). Though the study has highlighted the impact of infrastructure on learning it has not specified which aspect of learning and how the effect is experienced. This study examined the role and contribution of infrastructure as critical aspect and factor in holistic formation of learners in private boarding primary schools

The accessible educational infrastructure at a specific school has a significant impact on the academic success of students enrolled there. (Gray et al 2016). Sopian,(2019), attest that educational infrastructure is a valuable resource for ensuring the continuity of learning activities. However, things are different on the ground in that not all boarding primary schools are able to provide adequate infrastructure, or the available infrastructures are not continuously renewed. The role of infrastructure and facility management is to ensure that infrastructure facilities are maintained and always available for use,Hariri et,al,(2018). The optimal continuity of teaching and learning is supported by adequate facilities and competent personnel. (Yulius, 2020, p. 248). Similarly, the efficient use of facilities and infrastructure can also enhance the quality of education. Utilization of school facilities and infrastructure is one of the indicators of the quality of service provided by schools to their human resources, namely students and instructors.

According to Egyir et al (2022) excellent teaching and learning styles should include the provision of well-equipped labs and libraries, as well as effective classroom settings. Also, Glewwe,et al citing Egyir et al (2022), affirmed that to ensure children have the best possible academic performance, the infrastructure of schools should be maintained regularly. To provide today's formal education instructions in Africa, there has to be a greater level of school infrastructure. For example, according to Adarkwah, (2022), inadequate school infrastructures have been proclaimed one of the major reasons for the declined academic performance in Ghana in a study on “Infrastructural Challenges and Student Academic Performance: Evidence from a Developing Nation” in which the study obtained data using interviews and questionnaires. The survey revealed that schools required sports fields, music rooms, church halls, mosques, and theatres. The study found that schools required additional dorms and bathrooms.

As per the finding of the study adequate infrastructure contribute to academic performance however this study looked at other aspects that can enhance academic performance like proper management, self-discipline and moral uprightness among learners. Adarkwah (2022) on the other hand insisted that Education does not take place in a void rather in a setting that is composed of physical infrastructure and

a collection of material resources that are utilized in the process of teaching and learning (Shmis et al,2019).

A study by Nduku et al (2021) on “Status of Physical Facilities under the Public Schools Infrastructure Investment Funds in public primary schools of Nyamira County” The study which used convergent parallel mixed method research design, targeted population that included, head teachers, teachers, parents and education officials. The sample was selected using probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides and an observation guide. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate descriptive statistic like frequencies and percentages, means, tables and pie charts. Qualitative data was analyzed, themed and presented by means of narratives. Null hypothesis was tested using Spearman’s rank correlation. The findings revealed that the state of physical facilities was still inadequate. The absence of computers was evident in most schools visited. Findings also indicated that there was a strong, positive correlation between state of physical facilities and level of funding, which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .394, p = .013$ ).

In Kenya adequate and relevant physical facilities in schools contribute to the achievement of the objectives of education. Nduku et al 2021 further argues that School physical facilities influence the realization of the school goals. This is because; poor, crowded, or uncomfortable school buildings lower the students’ and teachers’ morale resulting to low achievements. Besides physical facilities this study looked at other factors that can promote academic performance like moral uprightness and self-discipline among learners which can translate to solid holistic formation and development.

On the other hand, the author of this study argues that in most of our boarding primary schools in Kenya and most especially the area of study the issue of infrastructure is not well addressed. The government through the ministry of education, quality assurance department, should always make regular supervision and assessment to ascertain that the regulation and policy guidelines for the establishment of these facilities are strictly followed; otherwise, many of the learners shall continue to suffer in silence in boarding private primary schools in Yatta sub-County.

### **1.6 Research Design and Methodology**

A research design is the overall structure or plan that guides the investigation. According to Nick (2023), it is an essential stage in the research process that serves as a manual for the techniques and processes that was applied throughout the investigation, such as data collecting and analysis. Convergent Design under mixed method research approach was used in this study. A convergent parallel design, according to George (2023), gathers both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and analyzes each kind of data separately. The study was conducted in Yatta sub-County Machakos County. Yatta Sub County is located in Lower Eastern Kenya, Machakos County. It shares borders with Thika to the North Masinga sub county to the East and Kangundo and Mwala sub counties to the west. It also borders Kitui County to the southeastern. Yatta is the second largest sub county in Machakos County after Masinga covering an area of 1,062km<sup>2</sup>KNBS (2019).It has a population of 172,583 this is according to KNBS (2019) census.

The sub-county has 4 divisions 8 location and 23 sub-location it also has 5 administrative wards which include Ikombe, Katangi, Kithimani, Matuu, Ndalani, (County Integrated Development Plan (2023-2027). It has 7 zones which include Ikombe,Ndalani, Katangi ,Mavoloni, Matuu ,Kenyatta and Kithimani

zones . According to the data from sub county education office, Yatta Sub County has 143 public primary school and 36 private schools out of which 12 are boarding (Area Education Officer's office, 2024).The researcher opted to carry out the study in Yatta sub county because it has many boarding private primary schools, as per the reviewed literature no study has ever been done concerning holistic formation in boarding primary schools and finally the parental and community concerns over the well beings of learners in boarding private primary schools.

**Target Population:** It is also known as research population or universe which entails the entire group ,set individuals, objects or event that posses specific characteristics which are observable and are of great interest to the researcher (Lando, 2024).Yatta sub county has 36 private schools out of which 12 have boarding facilities (Sub county Education Office April 2024).Therefore the study target population was 12 private primary schools 12 head teachers and 12 grade 6 class teachers , 290 grade six pupils, and 290 parents.

**Sample and Sampling Procedures:** A sample size in scientific study is a subset of the population as it is hard to investigate every individual within a certain target group. Therefore, a sample is a subset of research that is chosen to represent the target population (Kinga, 2024). Mugenda&Mugenda (2003) noted that a sample size of 10 to 30 percent of the target population is representative of the population in social science studies. Those took part in the study constituted the sample (McCombes, 2019). According to Tuovila, (2019) a statistical technique called "sampling" involves selecting a random subset of a population. Given the large number of participants, it was to be challenging to choose a representative sample for the study without employing an appropriate selection technique due to the geographical dispersion of the private primary schools in Yatta sub-county. Several sample procedures was used based on the types of data that needed to be collected because the study used both probability (systematic and simple random) and non-probability (purposive) sampling approaches. Since this is a mixed method research approach, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used. Specific sampling techniques used to sample various target groups is explained in the following sub-sections

**Description of Research Instruments:** In this study, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were employed. The qualitative instruments included a focus group discussion guide and an in-depth interview guide. Additionally, quantitative instruments included questionnaires (Kate, 2024). Teachers were key study participants; thus, their views were taken into consideration while creating questionnaires. An in-depth interview guide was another extremely useful qualitative technique that helped participants personalize a social issue and build a genuine picture of their perspective on a specific occurrence (Creswell, 2017). A focus group discussion was similarly fluid in its planning but methodically structured. For the study, in-depth interviews were intended for head teachers and focus group discussions for learners.

**Pilot Testing of the Research Instruments:** According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) piloting is the process of pre-testing research instruments on a sample that is similar to the actual sample that the researcher intends to use in the study before the study is conducted. The interview guides and questionnaires went through pretesting before being utilized to ensure the accuracy and validity of the instruments. The primary objective of the pilot research was to pretest the interview schedules and questionnaires with a representative population. Based on the feedback from the pilot study, the research



instruments was enhanced and changed for the main study. The investigator used two private boarding schools that were included in the final research method to pilot test the study instruments. The researcher chose thirty individuals, or ten percent of the total, from each of the two private boarding schools. In addition to a subset of instructors and students, school head teachers were purposively selected as participants in the pilot study. Creswell (2018) claims that the pilot study helps identify and address any possible defects or shortfalls in the instruments.

### 1.7 Findings and Discussions

**Table 1: Adequacy of School Infrastructure as reported by Class Teachers**

Aspect Evaluated	Very Adequate	Adequate	Barely Adequate	Inadequate	Very Inadequate	Total	Percent
Classrooms	1(25)	1(25%)	1(50%)	-	-	4	100
Dormitories	1(25%)	1(25%)	1(25%)	1(25%)	-	4	100
Dining facilities	-	1(25%)	1(25%)	2(50%)	-	4	100
Play grounds	1(25%)	2	1(25%)	-	-	4	100

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

Table 1 highlights that 50% of the teachers rated the classrooms as barely adequate, while the remaining 50% split evenly between very adequate (25%) and adequate (25%). This distribution suggests that while the classrooms meet the minimum requirements for functionality, they may not provide the optimal environment necessary for high-quality education. The absence of any ratings indicating inadequacy could imply that teachers recognize the basic utility of these classrooms, but the prevalence of "barely adequate" ratings points to a significant need for improvement. This was supported by the headteacher interviewed whereby headteacher said; - *“We have barely adequate classrooms though some are not spacious are in need of renovations e.g. filling of the potholes (Head teacher private school B July 2024)”*

The implications of these findings are profound. The fact that classrooms are barely adequate yet still operational suggests that while they can accommodate the current student population, they do not offer the space or quality required for optimal learning experiences. The need for additional classrooms and renovations is evident, as overcrowded or poorly maintained classrooms can lead to a host of issues, including increased distractions, reduced teacher effectiveness, and lower student engagement. The findings from this study resonate with previous research on the impact of school infrastructure on educational outcomes. Nturibiin (2015) explored the influence of school infrastructure on academic performance in public primary schools and found that inadequate classrooms hinder effective curriculum delivery. This is particularly relevant in the context of this study, where the need for more and better-maintained classrooms is evident. Further supporting this, Earthman (2004) argued that the condition of school facilities is a significant determinant of student achievement. He posited that students in well-maintained and adequately equipped classrooms are more likely to succeed academically compared to those in poorly maintained environments. The current study's finding that classrooms are barely adequate suggests that students may not be receiving the full benefits of a conducive learning environment, which could negatively impact their academic progress.

These findings directly aligns with the critical role of physical learning environments in shaping educational outcomes. For example, research by Buckley, Schneider, and Shang (2004) emphasized that the physical condition of classrooms influences both student and teacher morale. When classrooms are inadequate, students may struggle to concentrate, and teachers may find it challenging to deliver the curriculum effectively. This situation can exacerbate existing educational inequalities, particularly in under-resourced areas. Therefore, bringing together the quantitative data, qualitative insights, and related literature, it becomes clear that the current state of classrooms in the schools studied is a critical issue that needs to be addressed.

While the existing infrastructure may suffice for basic educational activities, it does not meet the standards necessary for fostering an environment where students can thrive. The need for renovations and additional classrooms is not merely about providing more space; it is about ensuring that the educational environment supports effective teaching and learning, as well as the overall well-being of both students and teachers. In addition, majority of the teachers 2(50 %) indicated that the dining hall was in adequate and this was affirmed by what one pupils said; *“We usually take our meals under trees and during the rainy season we take it from classrooms”* (female grade six learner, Private boarding schools C, July 28, 2024). Another one lamented *“During dry seasons it’s always very dusty our food always get dust it pains us being in such a pathetic environment”* (Male grade six learner private boarding school C JULY 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

The findings implies that, lack of proper dining facilities may expose the learners to healthy issues emanating from untidy eating environment since under trees is very dusty especially during the dry seasons. Contaminated food threatens their health as well. On whether the school follows the National Healthy Policy of (2018) one headteacher said:- *“Am not aware of such policy”* (Headteacher private school C 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024)

Similarly the implications of these findings are profound, touching on both physical health and psychological well-being. The lack of proper dining facilities exposes students to health risks, particularly from eating in unsanitary conditions. Dusty environments can lead to food contamination, increasing the risk of gastrointestinal issues among students. The psychological impact of such conditions cannot be overlooked either. The stress and discomfort of eating in inadequate facilities, coupled with the indignity of having to eat under trees or in dusty areas, can cause significant psychological distress, leading to a negative impact on students' overall school experience.

Moreover, during cold or rainy seasons, the lack of a dining hall means that students are exposed to harsh weather conditions, which could predispose them to respiratory illnesses. The statement from a headteacher who was unaware of the National Healthy Policy (2018) further underscores the negligence and lack of adherence to standards that are meant to safeguard students' health and well-being. This lack of awareness or implementation of national health policies in schools reflects a systemic issue that needs urgent attention.

The inadequacies observed in this study align with findings from related research. For instance, Magaki, Ntabo, and Nduku (2021) highlighted similar issues in primary schools in Nyamira County, where dining halls were found to be insufficient. Their study revealed that the lack of proper dining facilities not only hampers students' ability to enjoy their meals in a clean and safe environment but also leads to adverse

health outcomes. The connection between inadequate infrastructure and poor health is well-documented. For example, Adedoyin (2016) emphasized that substandard school facilities, including dining halls, can exacerbate health problems among students, particularly in environments where food is prepared or consumed under unhygienic conditions. In addition, Buckley, Schneider, and Shang (2004) discussed the broader impacts of inadequate school infrastructure on students' health, highlighting that such conditions often lead to higher rates of absenteeism due to illness. This is particularly relevant to the current study, where the lack of proper dining facilities could lead to frequent health issues, thereby disrupting students' education.

Given these findings, it is clear that urgent action is needed to address the inadequacies in dining facilities in these schools. The voice of the researcher emphasizes the critical importance of providing students with safe, clean, and adequate spaces for eating. The failure to do so not only risks their physical health but also their psychological well-being, as students are subjected to stressful and undignified eating conditions. This situation reflects broader systemic issues within the educational infrastructure that must be addressed to ensure that all students have access to basic necessities that support their overall development. The lack of awareness or implementation of national health policies, as indicated by the headteacher response, is particularly alarming. Schools must be held accountable for adhering to health and safety standards to protect students' well-being. This requires not only proper infrastructure but also an informed and proactive school administration that prioritizes student health and adheres to national guidelines

The Table 1 also shows that majority of the teachers indicated there inadequacy of playgrounds this was supported by what one pupil who said that;- *“Whenever we want to play football we are usually accompanied by our teacher to the nearby secondary school since we have no well leveled playgroup”* (grade six pupils). Another pupil lamented;- *“Our playground has many potholes therefore we fear to play there”* (grade six pupils).

This indicates that while playgrounds are in adequate hence the students are not adequately exposed to physical healthy development, social interaction and talents are not nurtured. Therefore there is a need to prioritize improvements in playgrounds in order to ensure holistic development of the child is not compromised. Similarly the findings also shows that 1(25%) dormitories are inadequate. This statement was supported by one headteacher who argued that;- *“We have dormitories but they are not spacious for the current population we had to convert some classes to be a temporary dormitory to ease the congestion in the dorms”* (Male headteacher 003 private school B). This was also affirmed by one learner, who lamented that;- *“Our dormitory has potholes, unworking bulbs, some windows have no window panes and broken doors in the bathrooms hence our privacy and safety is compromised”* (Male grade six learner, private school B July 27, 2024).

The above findings shows the pathetic conditions of the private school boarding facilities this may imply this conditions may affect the holistic aspect of child growth and development this finding concurs with Bogosi et al (2021) that congestion in boarding primary schools exposes learners to healthy threat. Similarly the Koech Report (1999) noted that congestion within classrooms affect the teaching /learning environment. The findings from this study are consistent with existing research on the impact of inadequate school infrastructure on student development. For example, Bogosi et al. (2021) found that congestion in boarding primary schools poses significant health threats to students. Overcrowded

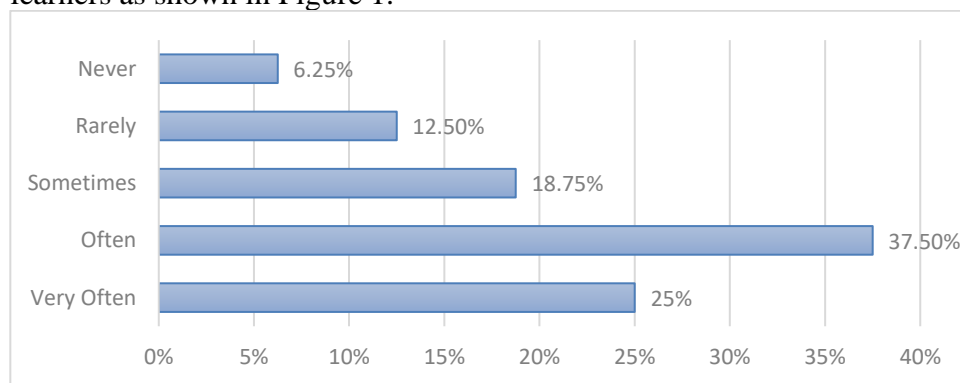
dormitories can lead to the spread of infectious diseases, increased stress levels, and diminished academic performance due to poor living conditions. The need for adequate living space in dormitories is crucial not only for physical health but also for providing a conducive environment for rest and study, both of which are essential for academic success.

Additionally, the Koech Report (1999) highlighted that congestion in classrooms and by extension, other school facilities like dormitories, negatively impacts the teaching and learning environment. Therefore, the inadequacies identified in both playgrounds and dormitories underscore a pressing need for intervention. From a research perspective, it is evident that the current state of these facilities is not only insufficient but also detrimental to the holistic development of students. The voice of the researcher emphasizes that addressing these inadequacies should be a top priority for school administrators and policymakers. Improving playgrounds would not only enhance physical activity and social interaction among students but would also contribute to the development of teamwork and leadership skills, which are vital for their future success.

Similarly, the conditions of the dormitories require urgent attention. Ensuring that students have safe, clean, and spacious living environments are essential for their well-being and academic success. The current situation, where dormitories are overcrowded and in disrepair, compromise the safety and privacy of students, which can have long-term negative effects on their development. There is a clear need for investment in the renovation and expansion of dormitory facilities to accommodate the growing student population and to provide a living environment that supports their academic and personal growth.

When students are housed in overcrowded and poorly maintained dormitories, it is likely to affect their concentration and ability to engage fully in their academic work. The report’s findings emphasize the importance of adequate space and facilities in ensuring a positive learning environment, a principle that is clearly not being met in the schools surveyed.

The study also sought to know parents’ response on influence of infrastructure on holistic formation of learners as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Parents Response on Influence of Infrastructure on Holistic Formation of Learners in Private Boarding Schools**

Source: Field data, 2024

Figure 1 indicates that majority of parents (37.5%) often communicate with the school regarding infrastructure issues, indicating a significant level of engagement among stakeholders in addressing and discussing these concerns. This active communication demonstrates a proactive approach towards improving school facilities. This was supported by one pupil who noted

*“We always tell our parents when we don’t have enough desks or when the classrooms are too crowded. They then talk to the headteacher, and sometimes we see changes being made.”* Another added, *“I remember when the school fence was broken, our parents were informed, and within a few weeks, it was repaired.”*

The pupil’s sentiments were also supported by headteacher whereby a headteacher shared;

*“We’ve noticed that parents are particularly concerned about the infrastructure. They often bring up issues like classroom repairs, availability of learning materials, and the general environment of the school during meetings. Their feedback has been instrumental in prioritizing our projects.”* Another headteacher mentioned, *“Parental involvement in infrastructure matters is crucial. We’ve seen that when parents are vocal about these concerns, it drives the school administration to act faster.”*

Grade six teachers affirmed these observations, with one stating, *“Our class teacher’s WhatsApp group is always active, especially when it comes to infrastructure issues. Parents frequently discuss the state of the classrooms, the need for new desks, and even the condition of the playground.”* Another teacher highlighted, *“Parents’ concerns about infrastructure are often the first topic of discussion during our meetings. They take it very seriously, and we see the impact of their involvement in the improvements around the school.”*

The active communication from 37.5% of parents concerning infrastructure issues underscores a strong sense of ownership and responsibility among stakeholders towards the school’s physical environment. This engagement aligns with findings from Muindi, Kirimi, & Nyambura (2022), who emphasize that such proactive communication can lead to tangible improvements in school facilities, thereby creating a more conducive learning environment. Moreover, the feedback from pupils and head teachers confirms that parents’ involvement is not just frequent but also effective in bringing about change. The affirmation from grade six teachers further supports the notion that this communication is not isolated but rather a widespread and deeply rooted practice among the parent community. This active participation suggests a school culture where infrastructure is prioritized, driven by the collective efforts of parents, teachers, and administrators. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining and enhancing these communication channels to ensure that infrastructure issues are continuously addressed, contributing to the overall quality of education and student wellbeing. 18.75%. A smaller group communicates with the school about infrastructure issues occasionally. This group may address concerns as they arise or based on specific instances rather than as a regular practice. Rarely" (12.5%) Some respondents rarely communicate with the school about infrastructure issues. This may indicate either satisfaction with the current state of infrastructure or a lack of awareness or need to raise issues.

"Never" (6.25%) A small fraction of respondents have never communicated with the school about infrastructure issues. This minimal percentage suggests that very few stakeholders are entirely disengaged from discussing these matters. The distribution of responses highlights a varied level of engagement among stakeholders regarding infrastructure issues. The presence of respondents who

"Sometimes", "Rarely," or "Never" communicate might point to gaps in communication channels or varying levels of concern among stakeholders. Schools may need to explore why some respondents are less engaged and identify barriers to communication or areas where improvement is needed. Studies such as those by Epstein (2011) have shown that higher levels of parental involvement often correlate with better school outcomes and more effective problem resolution. If communication about infrastructure is frequent, it may reflect an engaged stakeholder base concerned about their child's environment, which is consistent with Epstein's findings on the impact of parental involvement.

According to *Harris and Goodall (2008)*, regular communication between parents and schools can lead to more responsive and adaptive school management practices. The data showing a substantial portion of "Very Often" and "Often" communicators aligns with literature suggesting that active dialogue can help identify and address infrastructure issues more effectively. *Mapp (2003)* emphasizes that effective stakeholder engagement is crucial for successful school improvement initiatives. The varied levels of communication observed in this data suggest that while many are actively engaged, there may be opportunities to enhance engagement among those who communicate less frequently. This observation points to a critical area for development within the school's communication strategy. The disparity in engagement levels may indicate underlying barriers such as a lack of awareness, perceived inefficacy in raising concerns, or satisfaction with the status quo that prevent some parents from participating more actively. Addressing these barriers is essential for fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to school improvement. By creating more accessible and inviting communication channels, the school can encourage broader participation, ensuring that all parents, regardless of their current level of involvement, feel empowered to contribute to discussions about infrastructure and other critical issues. This increased engagement would not only align with the findings of *Mapp (2003)* but also enhance the collective efforts toward creating a better learning environment, ultimately benefiting both students and the school community as a whole.

### **1.8 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the inadequacy of school infrastructure, including classrooms, dining facilities, playgrounds, and dormitories, poses significant challenges to the holistic development of students. These infrastructural shortcomings impact the learning environment, physical development, and overall well-being of the students

### **1.9 Recommendations**

Immediate efforts should be made by the owners of boarding private primary schools to improve the adequacy and condition of school infrastructure, including classrooms, dining facilities, playgrounds, and dormitories. Investment in renovations and expansions is essential to creating a safe, supportive, and conducive environment for learning and development. In addition, the private boarding primary school's proprietors and managers should adhere to laid down policies e.g. National Healthy Policy in Schools 2018. On the other hand, the government through the ministry of education should always make regular supervision assessment and monitoring in these schools to ensure that the policies and guidelines put in place are implemented to the letter.

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