

Management Controlling Function on Academic Performance of Students in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the role of the management controlling function on students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District, Uganda. The study was motivated by persistent concerns regarding low academic performance despite government investment in education and the existence of school supervision and quality assurance mechanisms. Guided by Systems Theory, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach using a case study research design. Data were collected from 229 respondents comprising head teachers, deputy head teachers, directors of studies, subject teachers, and members of the prefects' body selected from seven government-aided secondary schools. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that management controlling practices were effectively implemented in the selected schools, with an overall mean score of 4.001 (SD = 0.456). Correlation analysis established a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between management controlling and students' academic performance ($r = .492$, $p < .001$). Regression results further showed that management controlling had a positive and significant effect on students' academic performance ($\beta = .443$, $p < .001$), explaining 24.2% of the variation in academic performance ($R^2 = .242$). Qualitative findings confirmed that regular supervision, continuous assessment, monitoring of learners' progress, feedback mechanisms, and corrective interventions contributed to improved academic outcomes. The study concluded that management controlling is a significant predictor of students' academic performance and the strongest management function influencing academic achievement. The study recommends strengthening supervision, performance evaluation, accountability systems, and corrective intervention mechanisms to enhance students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools.

Keywords: Management controlling function, academic performance, school management, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, government-aided secondary schools, Dokolo District, Uganda

INTRODUCTION

The controlling function is one of the fundamental management functions that enables school administrators to monitor activities, evaluate performance, and ensure that educational objectives are achieved effectively. According to Fayol (1949), controlling involves establishing performance standards, measuring actual performance against set standards, identifying deviations, and taking corrective action where necessary. In educational institutions, the controlling function helps school managers to ensure that teachers, students, and other stakeholders perform their responsibilities in accordance with the school's goals and expectations.

In secondary schools, the controlling function is manifested through supervision of teaching and learning activities, monitoring students' attendance, evaluation of teachers' performance, assessment of learners' progress, and enforcement of school rules and regulations (Okumbe, 2001). Effective control mechanisms enable school administrators to identify weaknesses in academic programs early and implement appropriate interventions to improve learning outcomes. Through regular monitoring and evaluation, school management can ensure that

academic plans are implemented as intended and that educational resources are utilized efficiently to support students' achievement.

Students' academic performance remains an important indicator of school effectiveness and educational quality. In Uganda, academic performance is commonly measured by students' results in national examinations administered by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), particularly the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations (MOES, 2016). The quality of academic performance is often influenced by how effectively school administrators monitor teaching practices, enforce academic standards, and provide feedback aimed at improving instruction and learning. Schools with strong control systems are more likely to maintain discipline, enhance teacher accountability, and create a conducive environment for academic success (Chandan, 2009).

The Systems Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between the management controlling function and students' academic performance. The theory views a school as an interconnected system comprising administrators, teachers, students, parents, and support staff working together to achieve educational goals (Von Bertalanffy, 1969). Effective control mechanisms facilitate coordination among these components, ensuring that all school activities remain aligned with established objectives and performance standards. Consequently, proper implementation of the controlling function is expected to contribute positively to students' academic achievement.

Despite government efforts to improve educational standards in Uganda, performance in some government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District continues to raise concerns among stakeholders. Reports of fluctuating and declining academic performance have prompted questions regarding the effectiveness of school management practices, particularly the extent to which school administrators exercise their controlling responsibilities. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the role of the management controlling function on students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The study will examine how supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement of academic standards influence students' academic achievement.

Problem statement

Quality education remains a global development priority under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Achieving quality education requires not only adequate resources and qualified teachers but also effective school management practices that ensure educational objectives are attained. Among the core management functions, controlling plays a vital role in monitoring school activities, evaluating performance against established standards, identifying deviations, and implementing corrective measures to improve educational outcomes (Fayol, 1949; Chandan, 2009). In secondary schools, the controlling function is reflected through supervision of teaching and learning, monitoring students' attendance and discipline, evaluation of teachers' performance, assessment of academic progress, and enforcement of school policies and standards.

In Uganda, improving students' academic performance remains a key priority under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme, Uganda Vision 2040, and the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan. These policy frameworks emphasize continuous monitoring, supervision, accountability, and quality assurance mechanisms as essential strategies for improving learning outcomes (Ministry of Education and Sports [MOES], 2017; National Planning Authority, 2013). Consequently, the government has invested substantial resources in teacher recruitment, inspection services, instructional materials, infrastructure development, and school supervision systems aimed at enhancing academic performance in secondary schools.

Despite these efforts, academic performance in many government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District remains below expectations. Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) reports and district education records indicate that students in government-aided secondary schools continue to register lower academic achievement compared to those in many private secondary schools (UNEB, 2023; Dokolo District Local Government, 2023). This trend persists despite government support and the existence of supervisory and

accountability structures within schools. The continued poor performance raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of management control mechanisms employed by school administrators in ensuring adherence to academic standards and improved learning outcomes.

Effective management control enables school administrators to monitor the implementation of academic programmes, assess teachers' performance, track students' progress, and take timely corrective actions whenever weaknesses are identified (Okumbe, 2001). Conversely, weak control systems may result in inadequate supervision of instruction, poor accountability, ineffective implementation of school programmes, learner indiscipline, and poor utilization of educational resources, all of which may negatively affect students' academic performance. Therefore, the extent to which school administrators effectively exercise the controlling function may significantly influence learners' academic achievement.

Although previous studies have examined factors such as school leadership, teacher competence, availability of resources, parental involvement, and students' socio-economic backgrounds as determinants of academic performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2020), limited empirical evidence exists on the role of the management controlling function in influencing students' academic performance, particularly in government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District. As a result, it remains unclear whether weaknesses in supervision, monitoring, performance evaluation, and enforcement of academic standards contribute to the persistent poor performance observed in these schools.

Therefore, the continued low academic performance of students in government-aided secondary schools in Dokolo District, despite substantial government investment and established quality assurance mechanisms, constitutes a management concern that warrants investigation. Specifically, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the role of the management controlling function in influencing students' academic performance. This study therefore sought to assess the role of the management controlling function on academic performance of students in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District, Uganda.

Objectives

- To assess the role of management controlling function on academic performance of students in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The controlling function is one of the essential management functions that enables school administrators to monitor activities, evaluate performance, and ensure that educational objectives are achieved effectively. According to Fayol (1949), controlling involves measuring actual performance against predetermined standards and taking corrective action whenever deviations occur. In educational institutions, the controlling function provides school administrators with a mechanism for supervising teaching and learning activities, monitoring staff performance, evaluating students' progress, and ensuring adherence to school policies and objectives. Effective control systems promote accountability and help schools maintain educational standards necessary for improved academic performance.

Academic performance is widely recognized as an important indicator of educational effectiveness and quality. In Uganda, students' academic performance is commonly measured through internal assessments and national examinations administered by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB). Scholars have argued that effective management control practices contribute significantly to learners' academic achievement by ensuring that academic programmes are properly implemented and monitored (Bush, 2021; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Consequently, understanding the role of management controlling in improving students' academic performance is critical for enhancing school effectiveness and educational outcomes.

One important aspect of the controlling function is the monitoring of teaching and learning activities. Schermerhorn and Gardner (1990) define controlling as the process of measuring performance and taking action to ensure desired results. In secondary schools, monitoring may involve checking lesson plans, schemes of work,

attendance records, classroom instruction, and students' progress reports. Such supervision enables school administrators to identify weaknesses in instructional delivery and implement timely interventions. Effective monitoring helps ensure that teachers perform their duties as expected and that learners receive quality instruction, thereby improving academic achievement.

Another critical aspect of the controlling function is comparing actual performance with established standards and objectives. Kaplan and Norton (1992) argue that performance standards provide benchmarks against which achievements can be assessed. In schools, this process involves evaluating examination results, continuous assessment records, and attendance levels to determine whether academic targets are being met. Regular assessment and performance review help identify performance gaps and facilitate the development of strategies aimed at improving learning outcomes. Schools that systematically evaluate academic performance are therefore more likely to achieve better results than those with weak evaluation mechanisms.

The literature further indicates that corrective action is an important component of effective control systems. When performance falls below expected standards, school administrators are expected to take appropriate measures to address identified weaknesses. Such interventions may include remedial teaching, guidance and counselling, teacher support programmes, continuous professional development, and closer supervision of academic activities. Bush (2021) notes that timely corrective action promotes continuous improvement and enhances organizational effectiveness. In educational settings, corrective measures help learners overcome academic challenges and improve overall performance.

Empirical studies have established a positive relationship between management control practices and students' academic performance. Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that schools characterized by effective supervision, accountability systems, and performance monitoring tend to achieve higher academic outcomes. Similarly, Wiyono et al. (2023) reported that schools with strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms registered better learner achievement than schools with weak control systems. These findings suggest that effective implementation of the controlling function contributes significantly to improved educational outcomes by ensuring that academic processes remain aligned with institutional goals and standards.

Despite the recognized importance of controlling, some scholars caution that excessive control may have unintended negative consequences. Bush (2021) argues that highly rigid control systems can reduce teacher autonomy, creativity, and motivation, which may adversely affect instructional effectiveness. Therefore, successful implementation of the controlling function requires a balance between supervision and support. Within the context of Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the influence of management controlling practices on students' academic performance. This contextual gap justifies the need for the current study to assess the role of the management controlling function on students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to assess the role of the management controlling function on students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The mixed-methods approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of both numerical and descriptive data, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The study was guided by the pragmatic paradigm, which combines positivist and interpretivist perspectives. Quantitative data were used to establish the relationship between management controlling and students' academic performance, while qualitative data provided deeper insights into how controlling practices are implemented and perceived within schools.

The study adopted a case study research design focusing on seven Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District, namely Kangai Secondary School, Agwata Secondary School, Kwera Secondary School, Bata Secondary School, St. John Bosco Secondary School, Adeknino Secondary School, and Dokolo Girls Secondary School. The target population consisted of 247 respondents, including 1 District Education Officer, 1 District Inspector of Schools, 7 Head Teachers, 7 Deputy Head Teachers, 7 Directors of Studies, 7 Class Teachers, 140

Subject Teachers, and 105 members of the Prefects' Body. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula, a sample size of 229 respondents was obtained and selected for participation in the study. In addition, 14 Focus Group Discussions and two Key Informant Interviews involving the District Education Officer and District Inspector of Schools were conducted to generate qualitative information on management controlling practices and students' academic performance.

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers and prefects to ensure equal chances of participation and minimize selection bias. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants such as Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, Directors of Studies, the District Education Officer, and the District Inspector of Schools because of their direct involvement in school management and supervision. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview guides, document review checklists, and focus group discussion guides. The questionnaire focused on key dimensions of the management controlling function, including monitoring teaching and learning activities, performance appraisal, supervision of staff and students, attendance monitoring, evaluation of academic progress, and implementation of corrective actions. The validity of the instruments was established using the Content Validity Index (CVI), while reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where the controlling construct attained a reliability coefficient of 0.8117, which was above the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Quantitative data were coded, entered, and analyzed using STATA version 18.5. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' views regarding management controlling and students' academic performance. Inferential statistics, particularly Pearson correlation and regression analysis, were employed to determine the relationship between the management controlling function and students' academic performance. Qualitative data obtained through interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically by organizing responses into categories and themes relating to supervision, monitoring, performance evaluation, accountability mechanisms, and corrective interventions. Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation, were observed throughout the study to ensure the credibility, integrity, and trustworthiness of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The characteristics examined included respondent category, gender, age, and level of education. These characteristics were important in establishing the profile of the respondents and assessing the representativeness of the study sample. The results are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Category of Respondent (N=229)	Deputy Head Teacher	7	3.06
	Director of Studies	7	3.06
	Head Teacher	7	3.06
	Prefect Body	87	37.99
	Subject Teacher	121	52.84
Gender (N=229)	Female	88	38.43
	Male	141	61.57
Age Group (N=142)-None prefects	26–35	49	34.51
	36–45	44	30.99
	45 and above	49	34.51
Highest Level of Education (N=142)-None prefects	Bachelor's Degree	80	56.34
	Diploma	35	24.65
	Master's Degree	15	10.56

	Postgraduate Diploma	12	8.45
Class Level (N=87)-Students	S1	4	4.6
	S2	13	14.94
	S3	17	19.54
	S4	25	28.74
	S5	12	13.79
	S6	16	18.39

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The characteristics examined included respondent category, gender, age, educational qualification, and class level for student respondents. The findings show that the majority of respondents were subject teachers (52.84%), followed by members of the prefects' body (37.99%), while head teachers, deputy head teachers, and directors of studies each constituted 3.06% of the sample. In terms of gender, male respondents accounted for 61.57% of the respondents compared to 38.43% female respondents. The age distribution among teachers and school administrators was relatively balanced, with 34.51% aged between 26 and 35 years, 30.99% aged between 36 and 45 years, and 34.51% aged 45 years and above.

Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of respondents held Bachelor's degrees (56.34%), followed by Diploma holders (24.65%), while 10.56% possessed Master's degrees and 8.45% had Postgraduate Diplomas. Among the student respondents, the largest proportion was in Senior Four (28.74%), followed by Senior Three (19.54%) and Senior Six (18.39%), whereas Senior One had the lowest representation (4.60%). These findings indicate that the study involved respondents with adequate academic qualifications, experience, and knowledge of school management and academic processes, thereby enhancing the reliability and credibility of the information collected regarding the management controlling function and students' academic performance.

Management controlling

This section presents respondents' perceptions of the management controlling function in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The analysis focuses on key control practices, including monitoring students' academic progress, supervision of teaching and learning activities, staff appraisal, performance evaluation, feedback mechanisms, accountability, and implementation of corrective actions. The findings presented in Table 4.2 were measured using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations to determine the effectiveness of management controlling practices and their contribution to students' academic performance.

Table 2: Respondents perception on management controlling function

Management Controlling	N	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean (SD)	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Student progress is regularly monitored.	229	0.00	1.75	3.06	51.97	43.23	4.367	0.632	Very High
Academic results are analyzed.	229	1.75	2.62	6.99	53.71	34.93	4.175	0.808	High
Classroom supervision is conducted regularly.	229	1.31	5.24	9.17	54.15	30.13	4.066	0.848	High

Feedback improves teaching.	229	0.87	5.24	10.92	49.34	33.62	4.096	0.853	High
Staff appraisal is done regularly.	229	0.44	4.37	15.72	48.91	30.57	4.048	0.823	High
School policies are clear.	229	0.44	7.42	16.59	65.50	10.04	3.773	0.744	High
Teachers and students are supervised effectively.	229	0.87	6.11	18.78	62.45	11.79	3.782	0.764	High
Corrective action is taken when needed.	229	0.44	2.18	17.90	70.74	8.73	3.852	0.610	High
Attendance is monitored.	229	0.44	4.37	7.86	73.36	13.97	3.961	0.658	High
Accountability is emphasized.	229	0.87	4.80	10.04	72.49	11.79	3.895	0.693	High
Overall	229						4.001	0.456	High

- Likert Scale :5= Strongly agree (SA) , 4= Agree (A) , 3= Neutral (N) , 2= Disagree (D) and 1= Strongly disagree (SD).
- Likert Mean: less 3- Disagreement and greater than 3- Agreement.
- Legend: Very high (4.24 – 5.00), High (3.43 – 4.23), Moderate (2.62 – 3.42), Low (1.81 – 2.61), Very Low (1.00 – 1.80)

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions of the management controlling function in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The findings focused on key control practices, including monitoring student progress, supervision of teaching and learning activities, staff appraisal, feedback mechanisms, accountability, attendance monitoring, and implementation of corrective actions. Overall, the results indicate that management controlling practices were effectively implemented in the selected schools, as reflected by the high overall mean score (**M = 4.001, SD = 0.456**).

The findings reveal that *"Student progress is regularly monitored"* recorded the highest mean score (**M = 4.367, SD = 0.632**), indicating a very high level of agreement among respondents. Similarly, *"Academic results are analyzed"* (**M = 4.175**), *"Classroom supervision is conducted regularly"* (**M = 4.066**), *"Feedback improves teaching"* (**M = 4.096**), and *"Staff appraisal is done regularly"* (**M = 4.048**) all received high mean scores, suggesting that schools have established effective systems for monitoring performance and supporting continuous improvement. Respondents also agreed that *"Attendance is monitored"* (**M = 3.961**) and *"Accountability is emphasized"* (**M = 3.895**), indicating that school administrators place considerable emphasis on ensuring compliance with established standards and procedures.

The qualitative findings support the quantitative results by demonstrating that management controlling practices are implemented through systematic supervision, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. Key informants reported that schools are inspected *"termly (three times a year)"* (DEO), while monitoring is strengthened through the use of the *"Teacher Effectiveness and Learner Achievement (TELA) machine"* (DEO). Performance evaluation is also guided by indicators such as *"learner performance reflects teacher commitment"* (DIS). Participants further indicated that schools utilize *"continuous assessment"* (FGD6-01) and *"regular meetings"* (FGD3-01) to monitor academic progress. In addition, inspection activities focus on *"teaching and learning*

activities” (DEO), and the resulting reports “highlight areas that need improvement” (DIS), thereby providing feedback for school improvement.

The findings further show that schools undertake corrective actions to address identified weaknesses. Participants noted that “follow-up inspections are conducted” (DEO) to ensure compliance and monitor progress, while structures such as “academic committees” (FGD14-05) are used to address challenges affecting teaching and learning. These practices demonstrate that schools have adopted effective monitoring and intervention mechanisms aimed at improving students’ academic performance and maintaining educational standards. However, both quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that some challenges still exist within the controlling function. Although most indicators recorded high mean scores, relatively higher neutral responses were observed regarding staff appraisal, supervision effectiveness, and clarity of school policies. Consistent with these findings, respondents identified concerns such as “late accountability in some schools” (DEO), which may affect effective implementation of management control systems. These challenges suggest that while control mechanisms are generally effective, there is a need for greater consistency in accountability and follow-up activities across schools.

Overall, the findings indicate that management controlling practices are well established in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. Effective supervision, performance monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and corrective interventions contribute positively to school effectiveness and academic performance. Nevertheless, strengthening accountability systems, improving policy implementation, and enhancing follow-up mechanisms would further improve the effectiveness of the management controlling function and support sustained improvement in students’ academic performance.

Students Academic performance

This section presents respondents’ perceptions of students’ academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The analysis focuses on key indicators of academic performance, including examination results, class attendance, participation in co-curricular activities, student motivation, pass rates, dropout rates, assignment completion, and overall academic improvement. The findings presented in Table 3 were measured using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. The results provide an assessment of the overall status of students’ academic performance and the extent to which learners are achieving the expected educational outcomes in the selected schools.

Table 3: Respondents perception on academic performance

Students’ Academic Performance	n	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean (SD)	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Students perform well in exams.	229	0.44	0.44	10.92	78.17	10.04	3.969	0.516	High
Students attend classes regularly.	229	0.44	1.75	16.59	72.05	9.17	3.878	0.594	High
Students participate in co-curricular activities.	229	0.44	2.62	20.96	67.69	8.3	3.808	0.634	High
Examination results are improving.	229	0.44	2.18	16.59	73.36	7.42	3.852	0.588	High
Students are motivated to study.	229	1.31	0	12.66	74.67	11.35	3.948	0.597	High
Academic results reflect effective management.	229	0.44	4.37	28.38	58.95	7.86	3.694	0.696	High
Pass rates are high.	229	1.31	10.48	23.14	60.26	4.8	3.568	0.795	High

Dropout rates are low.	229	1.31	0.44	6.55	72.05	19.65	4.083	0.626	High
Students complete assignments on time.	229	0	0.44	8.3	77.29	13.97	4.048	0.489	High
Overall academic performance is improving.	229	0.87	0.44	12.66	74.24	11.79	3.956	0.583	High
Overall	229						3.880	0.410	High

Key:

- Likert Scale :5= Strongly agree (SA) , 4= Agree (A) , 3= Neutral (N) , 2= Disagree (D) and 1= Strongly disagree (SD).
- Likert Mean: less 3- Disagreement and greater than 3- Agreement.
- Legend: Very high (4.24 – 5.00), High (3.43 – 4.23), Moderate (2.62 – 3.42), Low (1.81 – 2.61), Very Low (1.00 – 1.80)

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 3 presents respondents' perceptions regarding students' academic performance in the selected Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The findings were measured using indicators such as examination performance, class attendance, participation in co-curricular activities, academic improvement, student motivation, pass rates, assignment completion, and dropout rates. Overall, the results indicate that respondents perceived students' academic performance to be positive, as reflected by the high overall mean score (**M = 3.880, SD = 0.410**).

The findings show that *"Students perform well in exams"* recorded a high mean score (**M = 3.969, SD = 0.516**), with the majority of respondents expressing agreement. Similarly, *"Students attend classes regularly"* (**M = 3.878**) and *"Students are motivated to study"* (**M = 3.948**) received high ratings, suggesting that student commitment toward learning is generally satisfactory. The statement *"Examination results are improving"* registered a mean score of **3.852**, while *"Overall academic performance is improving"* attained a mean score of **3.956**, indicating a positive perception of academic progress in the schools. Furthermore, *"Students complete assignments on time"* recorded a high mean score (**M = 4.048**) and *"Dropout rates are low"* obtained one of the highest mean scores (**M = 4.083**), implying that student retention and academic discipline are relatively strong across the schools.

The qualitative findings corroborate the quantitative results by revealing a general perception of gradual improvement in students' academic performance. Key informants noted that "there has been steady improvement in academic performance" (DEO), while the District Inspector of Schools observed that "there is slight improvement, especially with the new curriculum" (DIS). Participants further emphasized the importance of discipline in promoting academic success, indicating that "student discipline leads to higher concentration and improved academic performance," whereas "poor discipline reducing learners' concentration and performance." These responses demonstrate that, in addition to instructional practices, student behaviour and commitment significantly influence academic outcomes.

The findings further reveal that schools have established mechanisms for monitoring and improving learners' performance. Respondents reported that academic progress is tracked through *"continuous assessment"* and *"weekly tests and assignments,"* which help identify learning gaps and guide interventions. Where poor performance is identified, schools implement strategies such as *"remedial teaching," "teacher follow-up,"* and *"regular assignments"* to support learners. Participants also highlighted the role of teacher motivation, noting that it *"promotes hard work, leading to higher achievement."* These findings suggest that continuous monitoring and timely interventions contribute positively to the observed improvements in academic performance.

However, some areas require further attention. Although indicators such as pass rates ($M = 3.568$) and the perception that “*academic results reflect effective management*” ($M = 3.694$) were rated highly, they attracted relatively higher neutral responses compared to other indicators. Likewise, “*Students participate in co-curricular activities*” ($M = 3.808$) received positive ratings but showed variations across respondents. These findings imply that improvements in academic performance may not be uniform across all schools and that some aspects of student development require additional emphasis.

Overall, the findings indicate that students’ academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District is generally positive and improving. The quantitative results, supported by qualitative evidence, suggest that effective monitoring systems, student discipline, continuous assessment, and targeted interventions have contributed to this improvement. Nevertheless, strengthening co-curricular participation, improving pass rates, and enhancing the link between management practices and academic outcomes would further promote sustained improvement in students’ academic performance.

Regression and Correlation analysis

Table 4: Correlation analysis showing the association between management controlling and student academic performance.

Variable	Students’ Academic Performance	Management Controlling
Students’ Academic Performance	1.000	
Management Controlling	0.4918 (0.000)	1.000

Source: Primary data, 2026

Table 4 presents the results of the correlation analysis examining the relationship between the management controlling function and students’ academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. The findings revealed a moderate positive relationship between management controlling and students’ academic performance ($r = 0.492$), indicating that schools with effective control systems tend to achieve better academic outcomes. This suggests that management controlling practices, such as monitoring students’ progress, supervising teaching and learning activities, evaluating performance, and enforcing accountability, contribute positively to the achievement of educational objectives and improved learner performance.

Furthermore, the relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), implying that the association between management controlling and students’ academic performance was not due to chance. The findings indicate that schools that consistently monitor academic activities, assess performance against established standards, and implement corrective actions are more likely to register improved academic results. Notably, management controlling demonstrated a stronger relationship with students’ academic performance than management planning and management organizing, highlighting the critical role of supervision, performance evaluation, and accountability mechanisms in enhancing academic achievement. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening management controlling practices as a strategy for improving students’ academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District.

Table 5:Regression analysis showing the relationship between management controlling and student academic performance

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95% CI	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
Management Controlling	0.443	0.052	8.51	< .001	[0.340, 0.545]	.242	.239	72.43***
Constant	2.109	0.209	10.07	< .001	[1.697, 2.522]			

N = 229. Dependent variable: Students’ Academic Performance. ** $p < .001$.

Source: Primary Data (2026).

Source: Primary data, 2026

The regression results indicate that management controlling has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance. The coefficient value of 0.4426 shows that a one-unit increase in management controlling leads to an increase of 0.4426 units in academic performance. This implies that effective controlling practices such as monitoring student progress, supervision, feedback, and accountability play a crucial role in improving students' academic outcomes. The relationship is statistically significant as indicated by the p-value of 0.000 and the t-value of 8.51, confirming that the effect is not due to chance.

The model summary shows an R-squared value of 0.2419, meaning that management controlling explains 24.19% of the variation in students' academic performance. This is higher compared to planning and organizing, indicating that controlling has a stronger explanatory power. The overall model is statistically significant ($F = 72.43$, $p = 0.0000$), demonstrating that the regression model is appropriate for explaining the relationship. The constant value (2.1093) represents the baseline level of academic performance when management controlling is zero. Overall, the findings show that management controlling has the strongest influence on students' academic performance among the management functions examined. This highlights the importance of strengthening monitoring, supervision, and evaluation mechanisms in schools as a strategy for improving academic performance.

Hypothesis testing

The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that *the management controlling function has no significant effect on students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District*. However, the regression results revealed that management controlling had a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic performance ($\beta = 0.443$, $t = 8.51$, $p < .001$). Since the p-value was less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings indicate that effective management controlling practices, including monitoring students' academic progress, supervision of teaching and learning activities, performance evaluation, feedback provision, and enforcement of accountability mechanisms, significantly contribute to improved students' academic performance. The positive regression coefficient suggests that an increase in the effectiveness of controlling practices leads to a corresponding improvement in academic outcomes. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, confirming that the management controlling function significantly influences students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. Furthermore, management controlling emerged as the strongest predictor of academic performance among the management functions examined, highlighting the importance of strengthening monitoring, supervision, evaluation, and accountability systems as strategies for enhancing students' academic achievement.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are supported by recent empirical evidence which emphasizes the importance of management controlling practices such as monitoring, supervision, feedback, and accountability in improving students' academic performance. Contemporary research highlights that instructional leadership, which incorporates strong controlling mechanisms, plays a critical role in enhancing learning outcomes by ensuring continuous assessment and timely corrective action. For example, Akomodi (2025) found that instructional leadership practices, including supervision and feedback, significantly improve student achievement by fostering accountability and a culture of continuous improvement. Similarly, Ahmed and Du Plessis (2024) established that effective classroom management, which includes monitoring and regulation of learning activities, is essential in maintaining a conducive learning environment that enhances student performance. These findings are consistent with the current study, which established a strong and statistically significant relationship between management controlling and academic performance.

Furthermore, the relatively higher explanatory power of management controlling ($R^2 = 24.19\%$) compared to other management functions aligns with recent studies emphasizing the outcome-oriented nature of controlling practices. Ozdogru et al. (2025) found through meta-analysis that leadership practices focusing on evaluation, supervision, and school climate have a significant effect on student achievement, highlighting the central role of

controlling mechanisms in translating strategic goals into measurable outcomes. In addition, Halima et al. (2025) reported that managerial competencies such as academic supervision, data-driven decision-making, and performance evaluation significantly enhance teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. These findings reinforce the present study's conclusion that management controlling is the most influential management function, as it ensures that planned activities are properly implemented and continuously monitored for effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concluded that the management controlling function has a positive and significant influence on students' academic performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District. Effective controlling practices, including monitoring students' academic progress, supervision of teaching and learning activities, performance evaluation, provision of feedback, and enforcement of accountability mechanisms, contribute substantially to improved academic outcomes. Schools that effectively implement control systems are better able to identify performance gaps, maintain educational standards, and take timely corrective actions to enhance teaching and learning.

The study further concludes that management controlling is a critical management function in promoting school effectiveness and improving students' academic achievement. Through continuous supervision, monitoring, and evaluation, school administrators are able to ensure that academic programmes are implemented as planned and that both teachers and students remain focused on achieving educational goals. Therefore, strengthening management controlling practices is essential for sustaining high academic performance and improving the quality of education in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Dokolo District.

Recommendations

1. Based on the finding that the management controlling function has a positive and significant influence on students' academic performance, the study recommends that school administrators strengthen supervision, monitoring, and evaluation systems to ensure effective implementation of teaching and learning activities. Regular classroom observations, monitoring of lesson delivery, and assessment of students' academic progress should be conducted to promote continuous improvement in academic performance.
2. The study further recommends that schools establish clear and systematic performance evaluation mechanisms for both teachers and students. Academic performance should be regularly compared with established targets and standards to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement. This will facilitate timely decision-making and enhance accountability within schools.
3. Government-aided secondary schools should adopt timely corrective measures whenever performance gaps are identified. Such measures may include remedial teaching programmes, academic counselling, increased supervision, teacher support initiatives, and regular academic review meetings. These interventions will help address learning challenges and improve students' academic outcomes.
4. Finally, school administrators should strengthen accountability and feedback systems by ensuring regular performance reporting, follow-up monitoring, and effective communication of results to teachers, students, and other stakeholders. Strong accountability mechanisms will enhance commitment to educational goals, improve adherence to school standards, and contribute to sustained improvement in students' academic performance.

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