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**INFLUENCE OF SELECTED LEADERSHIP STYLES OF PRINCIPALS  
ON PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN NAROK  
SOUTH, KENYA**

**Ann Chebii Kosgei**

Email- [ankosgei@gmail.com](mailto:ankosgei@gmail.com)

Maasai Maara University

**Prof. Edward Tanui**

Maasai Mara University

**Dr. Richard Rono**

Maasai Mara University

**ABSTRACT**

Leadership is an important aspect in nation building. In education, the principal's leadership styles often have massive influence on the KCSE performance in schools. The main aim of the study was to do an examination on the influence of selected Principal's leadership styles on the performance of students during K.C.S.E. in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub-County in Kenya. The study sought to identify the leadership styles of Principals in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub- County, and to establish the influence of the selected Principals' leadership styles on KCSE performance. The study is of significance in improving the management and performance of public schools. The research design for this study was descriptive survey. The study covered 13 public secondary schools from Narok South Sub-County, 130 teachers and 13 principals. The choice of teachers and Principals was appropriate, as they were familiar with the concept of leadership styles. Stratified sampling procedure was used when selecting the schools whereas Smith sampling formula was used when selecting 130 teachers. Simple random sampling was then applied to select two teachers from each of the five departments in every school namely; Mathematics, Languages, Sciences, Humanities, and Technical. Two questionnaires sets were used during the process of collecting data, one for teachers and another one for Principal. Descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the data before summarizing by use of chi-square and ANOVA. The findings of this research revealed that Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire leadership styles were commonly used with preference given to democratic style of leadership. From the findings, the research further revealed that one Principal used hybrid leadership style that is a combination of autocratic and democratic styles and that the other three selected leadership styles influence performance in KCSE examinations in public secondary schools with democratic having positive influence. The study further recommends that Principals should use more of democratic leadership styles as it is associated with good performance in KCSE. In view of the study's limitations and delimitations, the researcher suggested room for further research be conducted on the influence of level of motivation of teachers on K.C.S.E. performance of students.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Leadership Styles, Principals, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations, Performance, Public Secondary Schools.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Leadership is authority, power and influence acquired by a leader to be capable of transforming an organization effectively through the human resources direction, which are the most vital organizational asset, thus leading to the achievement of desired organization goals (Armstrong 2004). Cole (2002) on the other hand states that leadership is inspiring others to perform. In case an institution has achieved all the financial resources in terms of excellence, it may fail miserably if leadership doesn't motivate others as a way of accomplishing their tasks successfully (Kruger et al., 2007). In the United States of America the concept of principals' leadership came into focused in the middle of nineteen century. It then spread to the rest of the continents a decade later. In Kenya, studies on influence of principals' leadership styles on students KCSE performance have often been scanty and inconclusive (Okoth 2007, Orodho 2013) The style of leadership therefore is the behaviour, which any given leader exhibits in times of subordinates' supervision. In addition, this term known as "style" is approximately equal to the way or manner that a given leader affects his or her subordinates (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996).

According to the review of Leithwood et al. (2004) in their research on educational leadership had concluded by showing how leadership may play a key character in the learning capability of a student, yet the role is always undervalued. Indicating the leadership prominence, they state, "The total (both indirect and direct) influences of leadership on the learning account of a student for approximately a quarter of total school impacts" (page. 5). This effect is the second only to the impact of instruction directly offered by the principals.

Principal's leadership styles have wide range of implications to the classroom management as well as great ways of dealing with students. This is so because leadership involves interpersonal influence that is exercised on others through process of communication towards the attainment of goals (Applewhite & Porter, 1968). This is because leadership entails social influence in the achievement of educational goals. Principals vary in the styles they often use when carrying out all their daily tasks. Smith and Mazzarella (1989) stated that some leaders often employ autocratic leadership styles: while some use democratic styles, while others apply laissez-faire leadership styles. Ramsey (1999) discovered that leadership styles depend on the personality type of the leader. According to his argument, some styles are closed, some are open, and some are rigid while others are flexible. It is on this account that the researcher examined the three selected leadership styles of principals which are: democratic, autocratic and free-reign in the public secondary schools.

Quality of leadership has a huge impact on the difference in between the success or failure of any school such as secondary (Musungu and Nasongo, 2008). According Millette (1988), he explains in his inspection through research by clarifying the extent to which the leadership quality is critical to students' achievement. In highly effective secondary schools or other low-level schools, which have overturned this poor performance trend as well as deteriorating achievement, it is the principal who often sets the given pace, motivating and leading students and staff to perform right to their maximum potential. In addition, these schools can have massive impact on the achievement of students from their leadership styles especially

when perceived to be effective. Ultimately, this will determine the level of success or failure during their studies in these schools.

Nasongo (2009) had noted that principals could have a massive impact on the performance level of students thus making them the first line of leadership in the school's management. How can this process be achieved? Through setting unblemished vision for these secondary schools while communicating this vision to all students, supporting achievement through providing instructional leadership, better resources provision as well as being observable in the whole institution. These factors cannot be adequate without good school environment as created by good leadership from the Principals and teachers as students' high performance is hardly achieved (Nasongo, 2009). Brumbach in (Armstrong, 2004) contended that performance of students by referring to both results and behaviors and by adjusting organizational actions and behaviors of work to achieve outcomes or results.

Performance in the KCSE exams in Narok South Sub- County has been low. For instance, KCSE examination for 2011 analysis shows the following trend in number of students against the mean score. A was 1, A- were 3 and B+ were 27, B were 50, B- were 68, C+ were 103 . Out of 1231 students entry only 252 had a C+ and above (DEO's Office Narok South, 2011). The district performance has also remained below the conventionally perceived average of 6.0 points (grade C) for the years 2011-2015 averaging 4.216 (grade D+). This is so regardless of the fact that the secondary schools in the Narok South Sub- County have well-trained and adequate teachers with fairly well qualified pupils graduating from primary schools, and highly trained principals. For instance, a survey done on the performance of examination had shown that many schools who were displaying good results every year have suitable facilities and sufficient human resources but the principal's leadership styles of these schools are normally ignored. Narok South Sub-County has posted consistently poor examination results when compared to other counties in the previous years. This could be attributed to the type of leadership styles embraced by the Principals of these public secondary schools in Narok South Sub- County.

In the year 2011, Bomet Sub-County managed to send 1107 (32.7%) candidates to the public university compared to 252 (20.5%) by Narok South Sub- County. The year 2012, 1113 (31.3%) compared to 201 (15.4%), the year 2013, 779 (22.1%) compared to 195 (14.2%), the year 2014, 1436 (38.2%) compared to 349 (20.9%) and the year 2015, 1410 (37.4%) compared to 455 (24.4%) respectively (M.O.E.S.T, 2011-2015). From the foregoing, the researcher sought to examine the influence of selected leadership styles of principals on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations in Public Secondary schools: a case of Narok South Sub-County, Kenya.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Quality education in Kenya is associated with getting quality grades by students in KCSE examinations. Public Secondary schools in Narok South Sub-County have continued to perform below average in KCSE for the last five years despite government support given to these schools. The performance index has steadily remained below the conventionally perceived average mean score of 6.0 points (grade C) averaging 4.216(Grade D+) for the years 2011- 2015 period.

Out of the 7442 candidates presented by the Narok South Sub-County for KCSE during this period, only a paltry 1452 (19.5%) attained the minimal University admission grade of C<sup>+</sup> and above compared to a total of 6104 (33.9%) sent by Bomet County in the same period,(Table1).The C<sup>+</sup> is the practical admission grade for competitive courses offered by tertiary institutions. Other neighboring Counties like Kajiado, Kericho and Nakuru equally performed higher than Narok. On the side of leadership, the Kenya government has tried to increase participation by all the stakeholders in decision making in the education sector. These include the students through establishment of students' council (Basic Education Act, 2013). However, the Act does not provide a clear framework on training of students and other stakeholders on school leadership thus causing conflicts with schools administration as it has been experienced in the recent past.

These factors are likely to affect performance of students in KCSE examinations hence require investigation through research. Studies that have been carried out to establish the influence of principals' styles of leadership on students' KCSE performance have been done outside the County. In order to fill these gaps the researcher sought to investigate the influence of selected principals' styles of leadership on students' KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub- County, Kenya.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of selected principals' styles of leadership on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub- County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Specific Study Objectives**

The following research objectives guided the study:

- i. To identify the leadership styles of Principals in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub-County, Kenya.
- ii. To establish influence of principals' autocratic leadership style on the performance in KCSE examinations in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub-county, Kenya.
- iii. To examine the influence of principals' democratic leadership style on the KCSE examinations.
- iv. To establish the influence of principals' laissez-faire leadership style on the performance in KCSE examinations in Narok South Sub-County, Kenya.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Leadership defined**

Despite the definition of leadership varying from one scholar to another, many scholars have made several attempts to get it right. For instance, Bennis and Nanus (1985) & (Hoy & Miskel, 2001) made claims that there were over 350 different leadership definitions, with thousands of the empirical investigations of leaders that have been used to date. Some definitions were very simple, like the one written by Maxwell (1998) who stated that leadership is nothing other than just a mere influence. Martin M. Chemers (as cited in Hoy &Miskel, 2001)

argued that leadership is a social process aimed at influencing and motivating others in order to realize predetermined common goals. However, many definitions of the concept of leadership revolve around the idea that leadership is a social influence process where one person exerts deliberate influence over others within an institution. According to Hesselbein (2002) leadership is the art of getting people to do what they might not otherwise do, and like it.

In attempts to further define or describe leadership, some create lists to explain the requirements, attributes, or traits of leadership or leaders themselves. Drucker's (2001) list includes: Setting and having goals, a vision, and a mission, the realization that leadership is a responsibility, not a rank or privilege; the leader sees others' successes for what they are and works to develop strong association, earns the trust of others, understands that the ultimate task of leadership is to create human energies and human vision.

## **2.2 Leadership Styles**

Leadership style is the combination of traits, behaviors and skills that leaders apply when dealing with their subjects (Lussier & Achua, 2004). Through the ages, the topic of leadership has been extensively mooted. As early as 1940's, research has shown that generally, leaders uphold certain traits in their discourse. These traits largely depended on physical and personality characteristics as well as intelligence and interpersonal skills (Steers, Porter, and Bigley, 1996). Huston and Marquis (2000) linked the Great Man Trait Theory with the philosophies of Aristotle that suggested that leaders are born and not made and that faced with any challenging circumstance, a leader would always surface to take charge. According to (Murphy, 2005), research has shown that certain features or traits are inherent in a leader. However, the downside to trait theory is the proposition that leaders are not build through skills and education (as cited in Murphy, 2005).

In contrast with trait theories, the behavioral theory focused on the identifiable actions that make a person an effective leader (Wright, 1996). Studies on personal Behavior Theories by Ohio State University and University of Michigan identified two dimensional approaches to leadership: people-centered (employee) leadership style and task-centered (job) leadership style. The job -centered (task -initiating structure) behavior involves a leader taking charge in order to get the job done and the employee-centered (people-consideration) behavior emphasizes on a leader meeting the worker's needs and building good working relationship (Lussier and Achua, 2004).

In the Michigan University study, the results showed that supervisors of high producing sections were significantly likely to be more open, employee-centered and practice participative decision making in their supervisory roles. On the other hand, the low producing end supervisors showed distinctively opposite characteristics and techniques. That is, their primary concerned is rigid, job-centered and concentrate on meeting their target with minimal care on staff welfare. Related studies by Ohio State University came up with two structures that underpin the University of Michigan study-the consideration and initiating structures. Further studies at the University of Iowa elaborated on these findings and identified two basic leadership styles: Autocratic and Democratic. From these studies and others, four (4) main leadership styles were

identified: concern for task, concern for people, directive leadership and participative leadership (Wright, 1996).

According to (Fiedler,1967), different circumstances call for different leadership styles and that leaders would be more effective by being flexible and adopting particular suitable leadership style depending on the situation they face. Based on Fiedler's model, leadership styles can be categorized as being either task or relationship oriented and the appropriate style would be dictated by whether the circumstances involve leader-member relations, task structure or position power (as in citation of Murphy, 2005). Emphasizing on Fiedler's observations, both Rahimah 2003 & Ross 2006 reckoned that not all leadership styles can be applied in any one given situation. Therefore, any Principal need to be wise and selectively apply suitable leadership styles in his administration depending on the circumstances at hand. A wise leader is one capable of practicing suitable styles relevant to given situations without relying on one particular style (Fawcett, Dunford and Bennett, 2000).

In addition, Bolman et al (1999), concluded that selectively using a variety of leadership practices results in a more effective leadership as opposed to relying one particular style. House (1971) had opined that the path-goal theory influences and motivates worker's views and opportunities. Therefore, employee satisfaction, attainment of goals and improved performance is as a result of the leader's direction, training, guidance and support. Despite the findings of this research, Marquis and Huston (2000) disagreed and noted that situational theory focused on the situation rather than intrapersonal and interpersonal factors. From the leadership theories discussed above, the researcher examined Autocratic, Laissez-Faire, and Participative (democratic) as seen to be commonly used in secondary schools in Kenya and their influence on performance of students in KCSE examinations.

### **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the study was based on theory X and Y as explained by McGregor (1960). Theory X explained that managers regard of their subordinates as being lazy, always resisting change, and require their close and constant supervision. This behaviors prompted managers to be authoritarian and commanding. In this scenario, the manager appoints a small group to assist him/her in decision-making and judgment. Secondary school Principals associated to this theory believed that performance was to be achieved through authoritative means. Both teachers and students were to be forced to work hard to experience high performance. They believed that there was a great compliance to set standards in organization, time and resources utilization. Theory Y on the other hand see workers as being mature, willing to work freely without supervision and wanting to identify themselves with their jobs. This theory needs the manager to remove any hindrance that might prevent higher performance and create a more conducive environment for the subordinates. Secondary school Principals who believed in theory Y applied both democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles for higher performance.

### **2.7 Conceptual Frame work**

The following is a model identifying the variables under this study and outlining their relationships as in Figure 1.

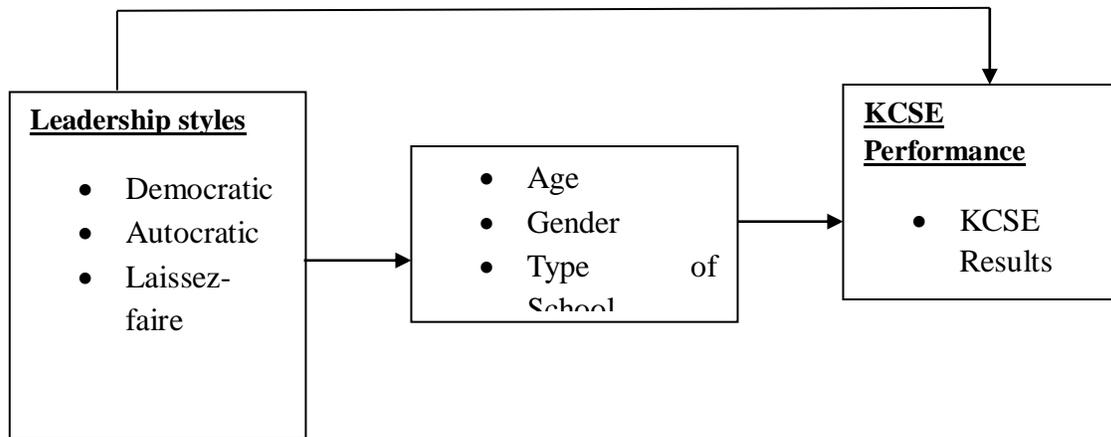


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of principals’ styles of leadership on KCSE performance in public secondary schools within Narok County.

From this it is clear, then, for instance the Principals’ leadership style is influence by the level of delegation, participative approach used, decision making, communication, relations and concern for staff among other factors. Principals’ leadership style directly affects both teachers and students. The most influential style will result into better KCSE performance depending on the extent of interaction. In this study, three leadership styles will be investigated; Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-faire. This three leadership styles will bring out different results in terms of performance. Laissez-faire will bring poor performance, as the Principals’ do not give any direction. Democratic leadership style will result into better performance as players will make decisions and be committed to improve performance. Autocratic leadership styles will also results to immediate response to decisions made from the above. As it is to this concept, a Principals’ leadership styles can be affected by administrative tasks, culture, education level and even environment where that school is found.

The moderating variables like gender, age, and type of school also affect performance. In this study, these variables will be controlled. Leadership styles of Principals’ influence KCSE performance.

**3.0 Research methodology**

**3.1 Research Design of the Study**

Research design for this study was a descriptive survey. According to Borg and Gall (1989), a research design is a process of ascertaining the truth or refuting knowledge claims using an empirical test. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defined descriptive research design as a method that determines and reports the way things are. Best and Khan (2002) described descriptive survey as a research design where variables that exist have already occurred with non-intervention of the researcher. Inferences about variables were made without manipulation of dependent and independent variables by the researcher.

**3.3 Population of the Study**

According to the DEO office Narok South Sub-County (2011), the Sub-County had a population of 23 public secondary schools with 23 head teachers and 193 teachers out of which 15 secondary schools had presented candidates for KCSE examinations from 2011 to 2015. An accessible population was thirteen principals from thirteen public secondary schools, and 10 teachers from each of the thirteen schools. The choice of the teachers and Principals was because they were familiar with the concept of leadership styles.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), 10% of the accessible population is enough for a descriptive study but Best and Khan (1993) stated that the best sample is that which covers at least 30% of the total population. In Narok South Sub-County, there were 15 public secondary schools who had presented candidates for KCSE examinations for the last five years from 2011 to 2015, out of which 2 schools were used during piloting of the study and therefore excluded from the main study. A sample of thirteen public secondary schools was used and was way above the 30%. The choice of the teachers and Principals was because they were familiar with the concept of leadership styles.

Thirteen principals from thirteen public secondary schools who had presented candidates for KCSE examinations participated in the study. This was arrived at after two principals and their teachers who had participated in the pilot study were excluded from the main study. In order to get a representative sample for the teachers from the thirteen public secondary schools, Smith (1983) sampling formula was used, where. Therefore, a total of 130 teachers were selected.

Further, simple random sampling was adopted in selecting two teachers from each of the five academic departments in every school namely; Mathematics, Sciences, Languages, Technical and Humanities. The teachers were assigned numbers, which they picked from a carton. This gave each member of the department an equal opportunity of being selected. For this study 143 cases were sampled and it comprised of 130 teachers and 13 Principals. However, those who returned the questionnaires were 117 teachers and 10 Principals. This was because thirteen questionnaires from teachers were incomplete hence excluded from the main study. In addition, three Principals were not available for interview schedule. Therefore, the sample for this study was 117 teachers and 10 Principals making 127 participants.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The study used two research instruments namely: Questionnaires for teachers (TQs) and interview schedules for principals (PTS). Questionnaires comprised of both closed-ended questions as well as open-ended questions. Open-ended questions had an advantage, as they were not based on predetermined answers, thereby eliciting a variety of opinion from the respondents, while the closed ended questions provided easier clustering and coding (Bless & Achola, 1987). The following questionnaires were administered to the respondents of the study:

### **3.6 Piloting of Research Instruments**

Piloting of the research instruments was done using two schools not included in the main study. This represented 10% of the total schools, and it involved ten teachers, five from each school selected at random in addition to two principals from the two schools. The results assisted

the researcher to make the necessary adjustments to the instruments to ensure its reliability before the main study.

### **3.7 Reliability of Research Instruments**

Reliability is that ability of the instruments to give consistent results. Precision of measurement is one of the major issues, which is often quantified by the reliability coefficients (Raykov 1997) in all the fields of research such as psychology, education, statistics, sociology, medicine, counseling, nursing, political science, and economics (Cortina 1993). At the lower extreme, the inter-item correlations are zero; and at the upper extreme, there is a perfect correlation among the items. In this study, reliability was assessed using piloting technique. Correlation co-efficient for this study was given as 0.830 and 0.700 respectively, indicates that these instruments were reliable.

### **3.8 Validity of Research Instruments**

Validity of the study means extend or degree of the study to accurately measures or reveals the precise concept, which any scholar is trying to get using some given tools(Annabel, 1992). The researcher arrived at content validity using the results obtained from a pilot study that was conducted in two secondary schools in the Narok South Sub- County. The researcher made changes on items, which failed to measure the variables supposed to be measured. These included items, which were ambiguous, hence were modified or removed altogether. Expert suggestions, that is from the university supervisors were undertaken during a decision to make necessary changes.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

A permit letter to carry out the study was sought from the National Council for Science & Technology through the Maasai Mara University Graduate School. The researcher sought clearance from the D.E.O for the intended exercise of data collection in the District. Armed with the research permit, the researcher visited all the participating secondary schools, explain to the Principals the purpose and hence sought permission and appointment to visit the school on the agreed day and time to administer the questionnaires as well as carry out interviews.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Immediately after the fieldwork, prior to analysis, all the questionnaires were checked adequately for the completeness. In the same process, information was entered and coded into an Excel spreadsheet before being analyzed using Statistical package for social Package (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to examine measureable data where frequency and percentages were determined. Qualitative analysis involved categorizing of data from interviews and field notes into common themes and presented using frequency distribution tables and charts. The data obtained was then analyzed thematically.

## **4.0 Results from the Findings**

The principals were asked to indicate the performance of their schools by indicting their performance mean score for the last five years from 2011 to 2015. Data collected from the interview with the principals on the performance of their individual schools and also from the education office from the schools in the sub county. The results revealed that the highest mean score for the last five years was in the year 2015 with a mean score of 4.43and the lowest was in

2012 with a mean of 4.08. the result further indicates that there was a high drop in the mean score from 2011 ( M=4.26) to a mean of ( M=4.08) in 2012. There was then a steady increase in the mean score from 2012 to 2015. It was the purpose of this study to find out whether this performance is influenced by the leadership style adopted by the schools. Yulk (2010), indicated that a leadership behavior patterns affect situational variables which in turn affects the quality and quantity of followers' performance.

From the interview with one of the principals had this to say, 'there is generally low performance among the students in the county at large, however as the principal I have tried to do my best improve the performance but it is still below the expectation. Some of the strategies I have put in place that I believe have lead to the steady rise in performance since 2012 include, motivating the teachers who have shown good performance in their respective subjects, involving the parents and the students in consultative meeting to enhance their performance and also ensuring that we link up with other principals from our neighboring schools in Bomet and Nakuru county that have always posed better mean scores than us. (Principal –school code 005- interview held on Monday at 10.00 am) .

In another interview the principal of school code 007 indicated that, "we as principals of the various schools are so disappointed for posing these low results especially when we compare with our neighboring schools. I personally have started to benchmark with some of our neighbors and creating partnerships and linkages through which we are able to learn from one another hold academic meeting together and share information on how best to improve our performance . Though leadership is very critical but I feel most of the principals including myself have not considered it effectively in understanding how it influences performance of the learner".

The response on whether the schools were generally showing an improvement in their performance. The results show that majority of the Principals 6(60.0%) said they were improving, 2 (20.0%) said they were reducing the drops and 2(20.0%) said they were dropping. This implies that performance in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub- County was generally improving as it can also be seen from figure 4.6(page 43) where performance from 2012 to 2015 has been improving.

#### **4.4.1 Influence of democratic leadership used by the Principals on performance of students in KCSE.**

In order to establish the whether democratic leadership used by principals in Narok South Sub-County, influences students performance in public secondary schools, the teachers who participated in the study were required to respond to the eight items in the questionnaire. The descriptive analysis was done to examine the summary of the responses followed by the correlation analysis and then the regression analysis to determine how democratic leadership affects student's performance in KCSE. The percentage responses were presented together with the means on each objective item. The results on table 4.2 show that most of the respondents 40.4% agreed followed by 37.7% who strongly agreed, 13.1% disagreed and 8.8% strongly

disagreed with the statement that democratic leadership takes into consideration my suggestions from other people including teachers when planning the school's annual academic and co-curriculum activities. The mean response was 3.89 which indicates that most of the respondents did agree that democratic leadership influences students performance in public secondary schools in Narok county.

The study also established that most of the respondents 32.8% disagreed, 31% agreed and 27.6% strongly agreed that the principal consults teachers widely when reviewing school policies, rules and regulations this enhance performance of the learners in KCSE. The mean response was of 3.48 also indicates that the leadership style used by the principal plays a role in enhancing academic performance of learners in public secondary schools. On whether the principal involves the teachers in preparation of the school budget, the results show that majority of the respondents 39.5% agreed, 20.2% strongly agreed, 28.9% disagreed while 11.4% strongly disagreed with the statement. This implies that most of the principals involve teachers in the preparation of the school budget. The mean value of the responses ( $M=3.39$ ) also indicates that teachers are involved in the preparation of the school budget.

The results also show that most of the respondents 35.7% strongly agreed, 34.8% agreed that the principal allows teachers to freely express their views during meetings while 24.3% disagreed and only 5.2% strongly disagreed with the statements. The mean response was ( $M=3.83$ ) which indicates that majority of the respondents felt that teachers are allowed to participate in school meetings. The study also sought to establish whether the principals always consult teachers before purchasing teaching learning materials. The results show that majority of the respondents 39.5% agreed with the statement, 17.5% strongly agreed while 33.3% disagreed. This shows that most of the teachers indicated that the principals consult them before buying teaching materials for learning. This is supported by the mean value ( $M=3.32$ ) which indicates that most respondents agreed with the statement.

The study also sought to establish whether the principals take into consideration the teachers views on how to conduct lessons. The results show that majority of the teachers 41.6% agreed while 24.8% strongly agreed with the statement. it is also noted that 23.9% of the respondents disagreed and 9.7% strongly disagreed with the statement. The average mean value of ( $M=3.56$ ) indicates that most of the respondents felt that principals take into consideration the views of the teachers on how to conduct the lessons. It was also noted that most teachers 39.5% strongly agreed that the principal consults the staff on ways of improving performance in examinations, 34.2% agreed while 18.4% disagreed with the statement. This means that majority of the respondents with a mean of 3.82 agreed with the statement.

It was also noted that most of the respondents 30.2% strongly agreed that principals involves students, teaching and support staff when dealing with discipline matters. The average mean of 3.55 shows that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement. This implies that most of the teachers agreed that they are involved by their principals in the leadership of the school. This

shows that most school principals use democratic leadership in managing the activities of their schools.

The results from the interview with the principals of various schools were also presented. For the purpose of this study two cases were cited from principals in school center code 005 and 008 . The principals from school code 005 indicated that leadership is not an easy task and one cannot plan to use only one style in his or her daily management of issues in the school. The principal indicated that 'I cannot confidently recommend one style of leadership though personally I prefer using the democratic leadership. However, at some point I have to apply other leadership styles such as autocratic so that people don't take advantage of the situation and end up not performing. He further noted I use a purely pen door policy but I never allow the teachers and other stakeholders to relent on their work. This has helped me not create enemies but develop friends who can stand by me when I need them'.

This clearly show that most principals prefer the use of democratic leadership style to carry out their administrative work . They felt that by involving the teachers they gain more knowledge on what is happening in the school and use this knowledge in enhancing the performance of the schools.

#### **4.4.1 Influence of Autocratic leadership style used by the Principals on performance of students in KCSE.**

The second objective of the study sought to examine the influence of autocratic leadership style on the used by the principal on the performance of the students in KCSE. The respondents were required to give their views on the eight statements provided. The results in the table show that most respondents 31.0% strongly disagreed that the principal has the final decision making authority in the school compared to 18.1% who strongly . The mean of 2.75 justifies the response because it shows that there was almost equal response among the teachers regarding the statement.

The results also show that most respondents 27.6 % of the respondents disagreed while 25.9% agreed with the statement that principals Prefers to give directions during meetings. This shows that there is mixed views on the use of autocratic leadership in public primary schools. The mean of 3.00 indicates that there is mixed reactions on the use of autocratic leadership style by principals in public secondary schools. It was also important to establish whether the principal does not entertain other peoples views when preparing the school budget. The results show that 39.7% of the respondents agreed while only 14.7% disagreed with the statement. This clearly shows that most teachers were of the opinion that they are never involved in the budgeting process. This is confirmed by the mean value of 3.57 which indicates that most respondents agreed with the statement . This implies that when it comes to budgeting the principals never involve other teachers. This might be working against their performance.

The study also noted that most respondents 27.2% agreed that principals in their schools direct teachers to implement academic and co-curriculum activities that he/she has planned, with a mean response of 3.2 this shows that some principals use autocratic leadership where they prefer to command the teachers, the results also show that 34.8% of the respondents indicated that principals in most schools are involved in the Purchasing of all the teaching and learning materials without consulting anybody in the school ( mean =1.34), it is also noted that 41.1% of the teachers felt that the principals instructs teachers on how to conduct lessons ( mean =3.49 ) and that principals gives directions on the best ways to improve students' performance in examinations as indicted by 45.2% with a mean of 3.80 . it was further noted that most of the teachers 38.8 % did not agreed that the principals is the final authority on discipline issues ( M=3.50) this shows that schools where the principals apply autocratic leadership style are characterized by a situation where the principals is everywhere and does not give the others a chance to participate in the leadership process. This implies that autocratic leadership does not encourage participation and this could have an influence on the academic performance of the learners.

The findings of interview from two principals who had hinted that they use autocratic leadership style were captured from school code 010 and school code 003. The responses were captured as presented;

The principals from one of the schools indicated that.. sometimes as a head teachers you need to exercise your powers by ensuring that the rest of the people follow what is passed so long as it is of benefit to the core business of the institution. He further note that though the autocratic leadership is not appreciated by many followers but as a leader one has to ensure that everything is being influenced by the leadership style.

It is noted that though these principals defined their leadership style as autocratic, they still felt that one cannot just rely on one style to get good results. However they felt that autocratic leadership style works well where the other people are not very supportive.

### **Use of Laissez faire leadership style and performance of learners in KCSE**

The last objective of the study sought to establish the influence of laissez faire leadership style used by the principals on the performance of students in KCSE. The respondents were also required to respond to eight statements by giving their views on the use of Laissez faire leadership style by the principals. The results show that most teachers 35.1% agreed that the principal Shares his/her administrative responsibilities with the teachers ( M=3.32) , 49.6% agreed that principals always incorporates in the school's academic and co- curriculum plans suggestions from the teachers ( M=4.22), another 47.8% agreed that principals have given teachers the go ahead to define their duties and responsibilities(M=2.24), while 38.3% Includes in the school budget all the items forwarded to him/her by the teachers (M=3.82). It was also noted that majority of the respondents 38% disagreed that principals allows teachers to conduct their lessons in a way that fits them best (M=2.62) , it was also noted that most principals allows

us to test and evaluate students whenever we feel like (40.2%) disagreed that (  $M=2.63$ ) while 34.2% disagree with the statement that principals that the teachers are left to decide when to be in school (  $M=2.56$ ).

This shows that most teachers held that principals sometimes used Laissez faire leadership style in their respective schools. Further analysis was done using the Pearson's correlation analysis to establish the relationship between the variables. Based on the results it is noted that there is a positive correlation between the three selected leadership styles that is democratic, autocratic and laissez- faire; ( $R= 0.341^{**}$ ;  $R= 0.118$ ; and  $R= 0.101$ ) respectively. The results further show that apart from democratic leadership style which show a very significant correlation ( $P$  value = 0.000) the other two leadership styles have no significant influence on performance of students in KCSE.

#### **4.6 Regression analysis**

Further analysis was done to establish the combined influence of the three independent variables and the performance of the learners in KCSE. The results show that the combined effect of the relationship is positive and very significance which shows that the results can be very effective is the principals can use a combination of these leadership styles. On the contribution of each leadership style on the overall model. The results show that among the three leadership styles under test , democratic leadership style had a positive influence and contributed 37% to performance of the learners in KCSE examination in Narok county. This was followed by Laissez faire with a contribution of 9.6% and then autocratic leadership with a contribution of 7.8%. This implies that principals who need the best results and who require to have better grades should at least adopt the three leadership styles because they can improve Performance by a total of 54.4% that is ( 37% +7.8% +9.6%) .

### **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

Based on the study findings it is noted that among the three selected leadership styles used by the principals , democratic leadership style wa the most preferred as it showed a positive and significant influence on the students KCSE performance in public secondary schools. the study also concludes that autocratic leadership and Laissez faire leadership style were used in some schools however, their influence on the students performance in KCSE performance was insignificant. This shows that schools that aim at improving the performance of their students should adopt the use of democratic leadership style compared to either autocratic or Laissez faire leadership style. The results also support the theory used for the study which indicates that effective leaders should be able to involve their followers in the process of leadership at all stages of the process. Therefore, the study results support both theory X and theory Y by McGregor.

#### **5.2 Recommendations of the study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of selected leadership styles of principals on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub County. Based on the results of the study, the practical recommendations were ;

- i) School principals should seek to involve the teachers in all decision making issues to ensure that the school performance improves. This calls for the use of democratic leadership style by the principals which is more participatory than other leadership styles.
- ii) The study also recommends that principals that hope to improve the performance of their schools should also seek to use a combination of the leadership styles as they show better results than relying on only one style.
- iii) It is also recommended that principals should avoid the use of autocratic leadership style as it discourages teachers from participating in the school's activities which affects their level of performance.

### 5.3 Suggestion for further study

It is suggested that; a study be conducted that will include all the school in the Sub County and also involve other schools outside the sub county in order to establish whether other principals share the same view on leadership style and performance of the schools.

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