

Selected Head Teachers Leadership Styles and Their Influence on Pupils Academic Performance in Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract: The Kenya Government has invested resources on Free Primary Education in order to improve on the pupil's academic performance. Despite the high investment in training school heads, the performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in many schools is still low especially in Tindiret Sub-County. This may be attributed to several influences of headteachers leadership styles among other factors. Poor academic performance in some schools has resulted to public outcry, protests by parents. This study investigated the extent to which selected headteachers' leadership styles influences pupils' academic performance. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population comprised of 76 headteachers and 532 teachers in Tindiret Sub-County. Two-self administered questionnaires were used to obtain data on headteachers' and teachers' perceptions on school leadership styles in relation to academic performance. Document analysis of KCPE results gathered information about the school KCPE performance from 2011 to 2014. The results of the study's findings were that, the autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles had significant negative relationship with school performance in schools. Democratic and transformational leadership styles had significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$) with academic performance of schools. The study recommends that school head teachers to involve other stakeholders in decision making, they should involve teachers and pupils in setting school targets, they should hold regular meetings and champion the application of transformational leadership ideals.

Keywords: democratic, autocratic, head teacher and performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

School academic performance globally is dependent on the quality of leadership and leadership styles adapted by those appointed to the leadership positions (Muriel Ogoti, Jepkoech & Momanyi, 2015). Leadership is the interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process towards the attainment of specific goals of an organization (Kitavi, 2014). Bryson (1998) asserts that leadership is the ability to influence an organization towards the accomplishment of its set vision, mission, core values and objectives. The primary role of the head teacher is to facilitate teaching and learning in schools. Chika (2008) asserts that secondary school principals in Nigeria seem too busy with all the day-to-day responsibilities of running their school and they do not seem to have enough time to practice instructional leadership as expected. Academic achievement relates to effective instructional leadership (Musungu & Nasongo, 2009). Musungu and Nasongo (2009) recommended that studies should be done to determine the influence of leadership on academic achievements in the school.

Education system in Kenya is exam oriented, in that the quality of education is seen in terms of the number of students/pupils passing national examinations. Examination results at KCPE determine the type of secondary school, course to take at the university and the future career of a candidate (Nzile, 2012). Due to concerns that have been raised

by stakeholders with regard to quality of education being provided in schools in Kenya (primary and secondary), the government through collaboration of partners rolled out diploma in education management training for school heads through Kenya Education Management Institute [KEMI]. According to Ndiga, Mumiukha, Fedha, Ngugi and Mwalwa (2014), this programme has been mandatory for school heads to equip them with skills with the aim of enhancing quality of education in Kenya public schools. Researchers have discerned a number of school leadership patterns, the most commonly known having been identified by renowned social scientist Kurt Lewin and his colleagues in 1939 (Ali & Shaika, 2013). These are authoritarian or autocratic, democratic or participative, and laissez-faire or passive: the authoritarian leader makes all decisions, independent of members' input; the democratic leader welcomes team input and facilitates group discussion and decision-making; and the laissez-faire leader allows the group complete freedom for decision-making without participating himself/herself.

Studies have been done to check on the influence of leadership styles on academic performance of pupils in schools. Kitavi (2014) research found out that there was a strong relationship between leadership styles and pupils performance. In other words, academic performance in Primary schools was explained by the prevailing style of leadership. It is apparent that leadership plays a very critical role in galvanizing all the other factors in the school together. Nsubuga (2010) research in Uganda established that there was a strong relationship between leadership styles and school performance in secondary schools in Uganda. In other words, academic performance in secondary schools was explained by the prevailing style of leadership. Based on the above studies, it is clear that academic performance of public primary schools depends on the leadership styles in secondary schools.

Tindiret Sub-County borders Nyando Sub-County to the West, Nandi East to the North, Kericho Sub-County to the South and Koibatek to the East. It is one of the six Sub-Countys in Nandi County. The Sub-County has 115 primary schools; both public and private schools, in four educational divisions namely: Meteitei, Tindiret, Soba and Songhor. Out of 115, 76 schools had registered candidates for KCPE in 2014. The Sub-County was ranked position 5 out of 6 in KCPE 2013 in Nandi County with a mean of 263 registering a negative deviation of 10.37 in 2014 KCPE results with only one candidate scoring 400 marks according to available records at the Sub-County education office. Out of 1550 registered candidates for year 2013, 724 candidates had 249 marks and below registering 46.71%. This shows that below average performance is recorded in almost 50.0% of schools in Tindiret Sub County. Headteachers have a key role in determining the performance of the school (Makura, 2011). Transfers of headteachers have shown that performance of school A for example goes down upon the transfer of a headteacher to school B whose results goes up due to the impact of the leadership style.

According to Teachers Service Commission staffing office reports of Tindiret Sub County (2011). Every time the KCPE results are announced dissatisfied parents and other stakeholder demands the removal of head teachers, locking offices and demonstrating to the Sub-County Education Office (SCEO) over the poor performance and considering the number of pupils not securing form one vacancies due to low marks scored in KCPE examinations. The study therefore seeks to investigate selected leadership styles of head teachers and their influence on academic performance of public primary schools. School organization as the core of national education is dependent on the leadership management and members of the organization to achieve progress. Many previous studies on schools' management found that schools that achieve high success in academics are led by the headmaster who has the qualities of effective leadership. Hence, the study was conducted to determine influence of selected head teachers' leadership style on academic performance in Tindiret Sub County, Kenya.

Objectives of the study:

- i) To determine the influence of autocratic leadership style by head teachers on academic performance of public primary schools in Tindiret Sub-County.
- ii) To find out the influence of democratic leadership style by head teachers on academic performance of public primary schools in Tindiret Sub-County.

Hypotheses of the Study:

The hypotheses of the study were as follows: -

H₀₁ There is no statistical significant relationship between autocratic leadership style by head teachers on academic performance of public primary schools.

H₀₂ There is no statistical significant relationship between democratic leadership style by head teachers on academic performance of public primary schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership styles are patterns of behaviour that leaders adopt in influencing the actions of their followers. They comprises of different approaches that a headteacher use to promote effective teaching and learning (Blasé, 2000). The study investigated influence of headteachers' styles based on the following variables of leadership styles; autocratic, laissez faire, democratic and transformational leaderships. This was correlated with pupils' performance in KCPE. Therefore, the focus was whether a particular leadership styles influenced performance and if relationship existed between the leadership styles and academic performance of schools.

Autocratic Leadership Style in Schools:

It is a form of directive or coercive leadership where a leader tells the subordinate what to do and how to do it (Badford *et al.*, 2008). The leader initiates the action about the things to do and tells subordinates exactly what is expected of them with reference to standards and deadlines. They exercise firm rule and ensure that subordinates do follow (Saleemi, 2007). These kinds of leaders are usually more traditional and authoritarian type of rulers (Robbins, 2003). Kitavi (2014) explains that autocratic leader often creates a reign of terror, bullying and demeaning his subordinates, roaring with displeasure at the slightest problem. Subordinates get intimidated and stop bringing bad news or any news in fear of getting bashed or blamed for it, and the morale of the workers plummets. When a leader behaves in such a way, it restricts the potential of individual in the organization by not valuing their creativity and initiative thus employees become frustrated (Valonsky & Friedman, 2003). As a leader, one must strive not to become authoritarian on how to manage people because people do not want to be managed but leading (Watson, 2000). However, there are cases where this form of leadership is important like in military service where strictness and accuracy in performing tasks is often a virtue. However, for most other cases, this form of leadership is counter-productive (Guatama, 2005). Wanjiku, Mulewa, Ombuki and Migosi (2013) states that an autocratic leader maintains most of the authority by issuing orders and telling group members what to do without consulting them. To the autocrat, the basis of leadership is formal authority. This often results in disputes and the objectives of an organization not been achieved. Authoritarian and harsh climate leads to poor performance of students in academics. The current study sought to determine the areas and degree to which autocratic leadership style was used by head teachers in public primary schools in Tindiret Sub County.

Democratic Leadership Style in Schools:

Democratic leadership is also known as participative leadership (Makura, 2011). This is a type of leadership style where members of the group are allowed to share and contribute ideas. The members of a group take more participative role in decision making while the leader puts himself as a member of the team and discusses possible decision with the team (DuFour, 2002). The leader also seeks consensus before coming to a decision and everyone is supposed to take ownership in the final decision. In a school set up, teachers are given opportunity to come up with their own solutions for improving classroom experiences. The head teacher's role is to listen, be non-judgmental; provide self-awareness and clarification to teachers (Ghosh, 2006). Rawley and Sherman (2001) expressed that it takes the combined effort of both the head teacher and the staff to identify factors that create and inhibit the development of a positive climate in the school. The democratic leader seeks the counsel of the whole team before making a decision on what the team should do (Blasé, 2000). Kitavi (2014) informed that the leader in the school uses the democratic leadership style to build trust, respect and commitment because the style allows people to have a say in decisions that affect their goals and how they do their work. Students in schools need to be involved in the school's administration and in the implementation of decisions because these affect them directly. This study determined the ways in which head teachers in primary schools practiced democratic leadership styles to improve performance of their schools.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted a traitist theory of leadership that asserts that successful leaders have distinguished innate or traits characteristics that make them different from other people. The theory focuses on a transactional process in which a leader gives something to followers in exchange of satisfactory efforts and performance in the task. Cheng and Mullins (2002) advanced the traitist theory of leadership. Cheng and Mullins (2002) further noted that leadership styles are related with leaders' personal characteristics or traits and appropriate combination of personal characteristics leads to effective leadership that in turn influences the performance of an institution. The impact of traits differs according to situation/environment and therefore the leaders effectively evaluate their leadership styles in order to improve performance of institutions by managing institutions differently depending with the situation (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). Successful school leaders are described in terms of the personal attributes, interpersonal abilities and technical management skills. Personal attributes include humour, courage, judgment, integrity, intelligence, persistence, work ethic, vision and being opportunity conscious, interpersonal abilities include being outgoing, team builder and compassionate. Technical management skills include producing results, resolving conflicts, analyzing and evaluating problems, the ability to enhance the work environment, and goal oriented. According to Rowley (1997), the following characteristics are generally viewed as been important: intelligence, initiative and self-assurance. The traits and leadership styles possessed and exhibited by a leader are gender rooted (Collard, 2001) and that a link between leadership and culture and gender exist (Littrell, 2003). Men for example are said to display direct task oriented, analytical and autocratic styles (Park, 1994) while females display facilitative styles. Women and old persons are perceived as more communal and less agentic in personality compared to young adults and males (Turner, 1995). In formal organizations, female managers are expected to lead in a more interpersonal and less task-based and more democratic and less authoritarian ways by being consultative (Martin, 2004). The theory hypothesizes that performance of an organization is a result of the leadership styles impact and the situation of the environment, hence, informing the basis of this study.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the status of that population with respect to one or more variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The study was conducted in public primary schools found in Tindiret Sub-County, Nandi County. The Sub-County has four divisions, Meteitei, Tindiret, Soba and Songhor. The study targeted 76 headteachers in 76 schools and 532 teachers making a total of 608 respondents. However, the accessible population involved 40 head teachers and 280 teachers making 320 respondents from schools that have been doing KCPE for the past five years (2011-2014). Considering the population of the respondents in the study is large, a sample was selected. The study selected 30% of the teachers target population number to act as the sample size for the study. This was done for head teachers and teachers as shown in Table 3. In selecting the respondent who participated in the study, stratified random sampling technique was used. In this case, the schools were first classified as; day and boarding. Thereafter, the researcher classified the respondents into two further stratas; head teachers and teachers and later, the researcher used simple random sampling method. Papers containing names of 280 teachers of primary schools in Tindiret Sub County were put in a container and shaken and 84 teachers were randomly selected and picked by the researcher. For headteachers, all (40) of them participated in the study. This method ensured each person had an opportunity of being selected. The study used two sets of research tools to collect data, two self-administered questionnaires for teachers and headteachers. The data was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequencies of respondents that utilize the central relations of tendencies. Pearson, product moment coefficient of determination correlation (r) was used to determine the influence of paired independent and dependent variables on academic performance.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teachers Perception on Academic Performance of Schools:

The dependent measurement for the dependent variable in the study involved determining the teachers and head teachers' perceptions on the performance of their schools in KCPE examinations. Therefore, the teachers were asked to give estimates of their school performance based on the following categories; below 180 (poor), 181-230 (below average), 231-280 (Average) and 280 and above (high). The teachers' estimates for academic performance are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Teachers Perception on Academic Performance Estimates of their Schools

	Frequency	Percent
<230 (below average)	8	9.5
230-279 (average)	46	54.8
>280 (above average)	30	35.7
Total	84	100.0

The results shows that more than half 46 (54.8%) of teachers indicated their schools KCPE performance was on average, 30 (35.7%) said that it was above average and only 8 (9.5%) indicated that their performance was below average. This shows that performance of most public primary schools in Tindiret Sub County has been on average. The study investigates if leadership styles used by head teachers could be explaining the performance trend in the sub-sections following.

Influence of Autocratic Leadership Style on Academic Performance of Public Primary Schools:

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of autocratic leadership style and academic performance of primary schools in Tindiret Sub County. The teachers were presented with a number of items to measure the extent to which their headteachers exhibited the leadership traits of autocratic, Laissez-faire, democratic and transformational leadership. They were asked to indicate the extent to which headteachers exhibited autocratic leadership behaviour in school by rating their response on a Likert scale of five; Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5). Teachers' responses are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Perception of Teachers on Headteachers Autocratic Leadership Practices

Autocratic Leadership	SD		D		NS		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Headteacher directs teachers to teach	38	45.2	25	29.8	0	0	16	19.0	5	6.0
Headteacher takes precaution when dealing with teachers	25	29.8	34	40.5	15	17.9	10	11.9	0	0
Headteacher checks record of work covered by teachers	40	47.6	20	23.8	0	0	16	19.0	8	9.5
Headteacher insist that teachers follow stipulated policies	50	59.5	15	17.9	5	6.0	10	11.9	4	4.8
Headteacher reprimands teachers who fail to teach	45	53.6	30	35.7	0	0	4	4.8	5	6.0
Decisions regarding school progress are solely made by the head of the school	2	2.4	18	21.4	12	14.3	24	28.6	28	33.3
Autocratic leadership perception mean	33	39.7	24	28.2	5	6.4	13	15.9	8	9.9

Table 2 findings shows that 38 (45.2%) of respondents strongly disagreed that head teachers in their school direct teachers on what to teach, 25 (29.8%) disagreed, 16 (19.0%) agreed while only 5 (6.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This shows that three quarters (75.0%) of head teachers do not direct their teachers on what to teach and only 25% appeared to be doing so. From the findings, this implies that majority of heads in Tindiret Sub County do not practice this aspect of autocratic leadership behaviour. The results of the study revealed that 25 (29.8%) of teachers strongly disagreed that head teachers take precaution when dealing with teachers, 34 (40.5%) disagreed, 15 (17.5%) were not sure while only 10 (11.9%) tended to agree with the statements. This show that head teachers have a good relationship with their fellow teachers which does not requires them to take precaution measures against.

When asked as to whether head teachers in their schools check records of work covered, 40 (47.6%) strongly disagreed, 20 (23.8%) disagreed, 16 (19.0%) agreed while 8 (9.5%) strongly agreed. This shows that majority of headteachers tend to practice laissez faire leadership styles as opposed to constantly supervising and ensuring that teachers prepare and

utilise professional document while teaching. Lack of head teachers' adequate supervision could be the reason for decline in academic performance in the area. The findings are consistent with Buregeya (2009) who established that 64.3% of head teachers routinely checked their teachers' pedagogic documents and as a practice of teacher supervision, while 57.1% of head teachers informally visited their teachers during classroom instruction. The findings of this study indicate that limited general and instructional supervision is commonplace in schools. It is likewise revealed through the study findings that head teachers are unaware of their job description. Results also showed that more than half 50 (59.5%) strongly disagreed and 15 (17.9%) disagreed that head teachers insist teachers to follow stipulated policies. However, 5 (6.0%) disagreed while 4 (4.8%) strongly agreed that head teachers insisted on teachers following the school policies. From the findings, it is clear that teachers work at their own without being followed by their teachers on what to do or what to observe. At least, 45 (53.6%) strongly disagreed that head teachers in their schools usually reprimands teachers who fail to teacher, 30 (35.7%) disagreed, 4 (4.8%) disagreed while 5 (6.0%) strongly agreed with the statement. This implies that majority (89.3%) of teachers perceive that they are not criticised, castigated, scolded, or admonished by their head teachers in school. this show that this aspect of autocratic leaders only exist in 10.7% of head teachers in the whole sub-county. Findings of the study further showed that 28 (33.3%) of teachers strongly agreed and 24 (28.6%) that decision regarding school progress are solely made by the head of the school. but, 18 (21.4%) disagreed and 2 (2.4%) disagreed with the statement while 12 (14.3%) were undecided. The results show that majority of head teachers do not involve teachers in decision-making process despite them being important stakeholders in school. Teachers views and opinions seem not be taken into consideration in school management in Tindiret Sub-County. This shows that aspects of autocratic leadership are evident. The findings concur with Aiko (2015) research that revealed that 44.67% of teachers perceived their head teacher leadership to be autocratic.

Headteachers Perceptions on their Use of Autocratic Leadership Styles:

The study also sought head teachers opinion on the degree to which they utilised autocratic leadership styles in schools on the following scale: Always (5), Often (4), Occasionally (3), Seldom (2) and Never (1). Their responses are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Headteachers Perceptions on their Use of Autocratic Leadership Styles

Perceptions	Always		Often		Occasionally		Seldom		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I keep the staff working up to capacity	36	90.0	4	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
I make accurate decisions	32	80.0	5	12.5	3	7.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
I ask that staff members to follow standard rules and regulations	28	70.0	12	30.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
I overcome attempts made to challenge my leadership	26	65.0	10	25.0	4	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
I take full charge when emergencies arise	23	57.5	14	35.0	3	7.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
I act as the spokesman of the school	15	37.5	10	25.0	13	32.5	2	5.0	0	0.0
I become anxious when I cannot find out what is coming next	9	22.5	16	40.0	10	25.0	5	12.5	0	0.0
I encourage the use of uniform procedures	9	22.5	18	45.0	7	17.5	4	10.0	2	5.0
I publicize the activities of the staff	8	20.0	10	25.0	18	45.0	4	10.0	0	0.0
I push for increased production	5	12.5	18	45.0	14	35.0	3	7.5	0	0.0
Things usually turn out as I predict	5	12.5	9	22.5	25	62.5	1	2.5	0	0.0
I encourage overtime work	4	10.0	18	45.0	15	37.5	3	7.5	0	0.0
My arguments are convincing	2	5.0	14	35.0	17	42.5	6	15.0	1	2.5
I persuade others that my ideas are to their advantage	0	0.0	6	15.0	15	37.5	19	47.5	0	0.0
I worry about the outcome of any new procedure	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	42.5	10	25.0	13	32.5
Head teachers perception mean	13	33.7	11	27.3	11	26.8	4	9.5	1	2.7

Finding in Table 11 shows that the head teachers indicate that they utilise various approaches of autocratic leadership styles in their schools. For instance, 36 (90.0%) said that they keep their staff members working up to the capacity. This shows that majority of teachers work for long due to many responsibilities that their heads have given them. Secondly, 32 (80.0%) of heads admitted that they make accurate decisions. This shows that most of them believe that the decisions they make cannot be changed or be challenged by anyone in the school. moreover, 28 (70.0%) said that they always ask that staff members to follow rules and regulations in schools. this show that head teachers tend to create an environment whereby all workers in the school conform to the stipulated regulations. In addition, 26 (65.0%) of respondents said that they always overcome attempts made to them to challenge their leadership, 10 (25.0%) said that they often overcome while 4 (10.0%) said that they occasionally overcome attempts on their leadership. This shows that majority of workers are not comfortable with the way they are being led by head teachers and therefore a significant number of them take initiative of challenging their leadership behaviour to higher authorities. However, study findings revealed that there were some aspects of autocratic leadership found to be rarely or not practiced by heads in public primary schools in Tindiret Sub County. They were; persuading other members of staff that head teachers ideas are to their advantage and worrying about the outcome of any new procedure.

Hypothesis One Testing:

The first hypothesis stated that:

H_{01} There is no statistical significant relationship between autocratic leadership styles by head teachers on academic performance of public primary schools.

To test the hypothesis, a Karl Pearson correlation was computed at 0.05 significant levels to check on the relationship between teacher perceptions scores on the degree to which their head teachers practiced autocratic leadership styles (Table 4.10) and their perceptions on schools academic performance in KCPE examinations (Table 4.9). The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Effect of Autocratic Leadership on Schools Academic Performance

		Autocratic leadership	Academic performance
Autocratic leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	-.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.402
	N	84	83
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	-.093	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.402	
	N	83	83

Correlation statistics (Table 4) shows that there exist a negative relationship ($r = -0.093$) between autocratic leadership and academic performance of public primary schools in Tindiret sub County. The computed p -value= 0.402 is higher than the critical value $p = 0.05$ leading to the acceptance of null hypothesis that there exist no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. This implies that continuous application and use of autocratic leadership styles by head teachers will result to low academic performance of schools. This shows that autocratic leadership exhibition by teachers' leads to poor performance, as teachers have no room to work on their own or even contribute in decision-making processes in their schools. The findings are similar to Kitavi (2014) who found out the relationship between the autocratic leadership style and pupils' performance was negative Aiko (2015) research in Kericho County secondary schools found out that that poor academic performance was attributed to head-teachers who were rated as autocratic leaders. Njoki and Aluko (2014) noted that most of the primary schools where democratic leadership styles were used tended to perform better than those that used authoritarian and/or laissez fair leadership approaches. The findings are also in consonance with Adeyemi and Adu (2013) who found non significant relationship found in this study between headteachers' autocratic leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction implies that when headteachers are autocratic in their leadership style, teachers' job satisfaction tends to be reduced hence poor performance in schools. This means that the more autocratic one becomes, the poorer the performance of the pupils and the contrary is also true. School leaders who use the authoritarian leadership style lead to poor academic performance, because they adopt harsh leadership styles, which are highly resented by their subordinates.

Democratic Leadership Style and Academic Performance of Schools:

The second research objective sought to determine teachers perception on how democratic leadership style influenced performance of their schools academically. Through a series of questions on approaches related to democratic leadership styles, teachers were asked to state their responses on a Likert scale of five; SD-Strongly Disagree (1), D-Disagree (2), NS-Not Sure (3), A-Agree (4) and SA-Strongly Agree (5). The results of the analysis are illustrated in Table 16.

Table 5 Teachers Perceptions on the Use of Democratic Leadership by Heads in School

Democratic Leadership	SD		D		NS		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I have enough time to teach and do other responsibilities assigned	10	11.9	15	17.9	6	7.1	25	29.8	28	33.3
Performance is as a result of the school teamwork	0	0.0	7	8.3	0	0.0	10	11.9	67	79.8
We discuss before implementing school academic plans	0	0.0	2	2.4	0	0.0	12	14.3	70	83.3
Headteacher is a good listener	4	4.8	26	31.0	0	0.0	34	40.5	20	23.7
We discuss with staff who attend a workshop	0	0.0	16	19.0	0	0.0	26	31.0	42	50.0
Teachers perception mean	3	3.3	13	15.7	1	1.4	21	25.5	45	54.0

Results of the study revealed that 28 (33.3%) of respondents strongly agreed that they have enough time to teach and do other responsibilities assigned in their schools, 25 (29.8%) agreed, 6 (7.1%) were undecided, 15 (17.9%) disagreed while 10 (11.9%) strongly disagreed. The result shows that 63.1% of teachers have enough time to do their activities and other responsibilities in schools. The respondent also strongly agreed 67 (79.8%) that performance is because of the school teamwork, 10 (11.9%) agreed and 7 (8.3%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that teamwork exist in primary school leadership in Tinderet Sub-County. The finding concur with Musungu and Nasongo (2009) research in Vihiga that found out that head teachers regular staff meetings where planning and decisions were made jointly and policies well communicated. Furthermore, majority 70 (83.3%) strongly agreed that they discuss before implementing school academic plans with their head teachers, 12 (14.3%) agreed and only 2 (2.4%) disagreed with the statement. This implies that discussions are held in the school by head teachers in the implementation of academic plans. The findings is inconsistent with Wanjiku *et al.*, (2013) who established that head teachers rarely meet teachers to discuss school performance. The study concludes that although the head teachers and teachers discussed school matters which included performance and discipline, the number of times that they meet may not have been very adequate since there is need for continued meetings for planning and monitoring academic progress of the pupils. The findings of the study further showed that 34 (40.5%) of teachers agreed, 20 (23.8%) strongly agreed, 26 (31.0%) disagreed, and 4 (4.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. the results concurs with Ampaire and Namusonge (2015) research in Tanzania that showed that democratic leadership allowed sharing of ideas experience in handling of students which lead to good academic performance.

The findings show that 64.3% of teachers agreed that their head teachers always listen to them. Moreover, half 42 (50.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that head teacher discuss with staff who attend a workshop, 26 (31.0%) agreed and 16 (19.0%) disagreed with the statement. From the results, it is clear that head teachers and teachers discuss when and who to go for workshops and seminars for capacity building and skills building purposes. In summary to teachers' perception, 79.5% of teachers perceive (agreed) that democratic leadership style is practiced by their school heads. The findings are in tandem with Lukingi (2014) research findings that indicated that all the respondents (teachers, students and head teachers) with 76.7%, 72.6% and 60% respectively unanimously agreeing that democratic style of leadership should be embraced in schools as opposed to other leadership styles. This was because all stakeholders in school would wish to be part of the decision-making process. It gives them a sense of belonging; feeling appreciated and thus motivated to perform to their best, ameliorating academic performance in the school. This, in effect, accounts for the unanimous choice of the democratic leadership style by the majority of the respondents.

Head teachers Perception on their Use of Democratic Leadership Styles:

The head teachers were also asked to give their perceptions on the extent through which they practiced democratic leadership styles in their schools. the following scale was used; Always (5), Often (4), Occasionally (3), Rarely (2) and Never(1). Their responses are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Head teachers Perception on their Use of Democratic Leadership Styles

	Always		Often		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I wait patiently for the results of a decision	20	50.0	12	30.0	8	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
I let staff members know what is expected of them	21	52.5	16	40.0	3	7.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
I am friendly and approachable	18	45.0	19	47.5	3	7.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
I keep the staff working together as a team	34	85.0	6	15.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
I accept defeat in stride	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	32.5	20	50.0	7	17.5
I try out my ideas in the staff	5	12.5	14	35.0	18	45.0	3	7.5	0	0.0
I give advance notice of changes	29	72.5	10	25.0	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
I am able to tolerate postponement and uncertainty	2	5.0	7	17.5	10	25.0	18	45.0	3	7.5
I get my superiors to act for the welfare of the staff members	6	15.0	8	20.0	10	25.0	16	40.0	0	0.0
I maintain cordial relationship with superiors	34	85.0	6	15.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Head teachers perception on the use of democratic styles	17	42.3	10	24.5	7	16.5	6	14.3	1	2.5

When asked as to whether they waited patiently for the results of a decision, half 20 (50.0%) reported that they always waited, 12 (30.0%) often waited and 8 (20.0%) occasionally waited. This shows that majority of head teachers are patient and thus wait other people to give their opinion before making any decision. The results are in line with Nyagaka and Ajowi (2013) who established that head teachers occasionally let staff members know what is expected of them even though most respondents observed that the head teachers assign staff member's particular tasks. In addition, Kitavi (2014) who found out that head teachers in Kitui County had to motivate the teachers to participate in decision making because academic progress depended on the quality of teaching exhibited. Results also showed that more than half 21 (52.5%) of teachers said that they always let staff members know what is expected of them, 16 (40.0%) often told them and 3 (7.5%) occasionally told their members of staff on what is expected of them. This shows that every staff member in schools is usually communicated on what they are supposed to achieve and do in school. Findings further showed that 18 (45.0%) of respondents said that they are friendly and approachable, 19 (47.5%) said that they are often approachable and 3 (7.5%) said that they are occasionally approachable. The friendliness and approachability of head teachers helps in building of trust with their teachers. Study findings further revealed that majority 34 (85.0%) of head teachers admitted that they keep member of staff as a team and only 6 (15.0%) said that they do so. From these, most heads are seen to embrace team working to improve academic performance of schools. Similar findings were found by Musungu and Nasongo (2009) who found out that headteachers' use of teamwork was another organizational skill used to influence performance in their schools in Vihiga. In addition, findings coincide with Nyagaka and Ajowi (2013) research results that showed that head teachers occasionally give encouragement, support and appreciation to group members and as well as make every member enjoy working with the others in the group. However, 20 (50.0%) of heads said that they rarely accept defeat in stride, 13 (32.5%) said that they occasionally accept and 7 (17.5%) said that do not accept defeat. Therefore, this aspect of democratic leadership style has not been fully embraced and accepted by heads in primary schools in Tindiret Sub County. The heads also showed mixed opinion when asked as to whether they try out ideas in the staff, 15 (12.5%) always did them, 14 (35.0%) often tried, 18 (45.0%) occasionally tried while 3 (7.5%) rarely tried.

Results further showed that most 29 (72.5%) of respondents agreed that they always give advance notice to other staff members in schools of changes to be effected, 10 (25.0%) often did and 1 (2.5%) occasionally gave advance information. The findings implies that majority of school staff are given early briefings on impending changes to be done by school management therefore making them to be aware and fully prepared. Study findings further showed that 18 (45.0%) of heads said that they rarely tolerate postponement and uncertainty, 10 (25.0%) occasionally tolerated, 3 (7.5%) do not tolerate, 7 (17.5%) often tolerate and 2 (5.0%) always tolerated. This shows that majority of heads cannot tolerate postponement of certain programmes and uncertainty and have therefore not embraced this practice of democratic leadership style. On the welfare of staff members in schools, 16 (40.0%) rarely acted for the welfare of staff members to be considered by senior education officials, 8 (20.0%) often acted, 10 (25.0%) occasionally acted and only 6 (15.0%) always informed their superiors to act on the welfare of their teachers in schools. This shows that not all head teachers are prepared to fight and voice the betterment of the welfare of their teachers in schools. Despite that, the result of the study showed that majority 34 (85.0%) of heads said that they always maintain cordial relationships with their superiors and only 6 (15.0%) said that they often maintained. From the above response, it is clear that head teachers practice democratic leadership ideals to a moderate degree in public primary schools in Tindiret Sub County and this could have significant effect on learning and ultimately academic performance.

The second null hypothesis stated that:

H₀₃ There is no statistical significant relationship between democratic leadership and academic performance

Hypothesis sought to find out whether there was a statistically significant relationship between head teachers' democratic leadership and academic performance of public primary schools. A Pearson Correlation was computed with ordinal scores for teachers perceptions on the head teachers use of democratic leadership style and scores for the academic performance at 99% significant level. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Relationship between Democratic Leadership and Academic Performance

Correlations		Democratic	Academic performance
Democratic	Pearson Correlation	1	.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	84	83
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.362**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	83	83

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

The findings shows that there exist a significant positive relationship ($r=0.362$ and $p=0.001$) between democratic leadership and academic performance of primary schools in Tindiret Sub County. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected ($p<0.01$) leading to the conclusion that the relationship between democratic leadership style and academic performance is significant. The result concurs with Kitavi (2014) who established that there was a positive moderate relationship between the democratic leadership style and student academic performance of primary schools in Matinyani Sub County, Kitui County. In Marakwet East Sub County Muriel *et al.*, (2015) established that there is a positive influence of democratic leadership style on students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Marakwet East Sub County. From the above results, it is clear that continuous practice of democratic leadership ideals by head teachers will result to improved academic outcomes. Also, Nyagaka and Ajowi (2013) established that there was a strong relationship between participatory traits of the head teachers and the management structures of the schools which has impact on the students' academic performance. From the above research findings, it is therefore evident that the use of democratic leadership in schools improves academic performance.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results showed that school headteachers have an important role as an agent of change as they have expertise as leaders through leadership practices practiced. The study found out that the headteachers in the Sub-County applied various leadership styles. The study also discovered that leadership is critical to the performance of the school as a whole. Majority of heads were found to prefer using democratic leadership style more compared to autocratic. The study results showed that the greater the use of autocratic principles, the poorer the learners' academic performance. School leaders

who used the authoritarian leadership style lead to poor academic performance, because they adopt harsh leadership styles, which are highly resented by their staff. The study revealed that most school headteachers used the democratic style of leadership. Democratic leadership supports and encourages team work, good cooperation, good remuneration of all staff, motivation of staff and pupils. This meant that when teachers are involved in decision making and general management of the school, they become motivated and put more effort in their work, ultimately making a positive influence on the pupils' academic achievement.

One of the null hypotheses was accepted while the other one were rejected. It was established that there existed no significant ($p>0.05$) relationship between head teachers use of autocratic leadership style on academic performance of public primary schools in Tinderet Sub County. However, study findings revealed that there existed significant positive relationship ($p<0.05$) between democratic leadership style on academic performance of primary schools in Tinderet Sub County. The study recommends the following;

1. Head teachers should allow input of other stakeholders during the decision making process. The promotion of participatory approaches will improve relations between staff in schools and therefore propel schools to better their performance.
2. To improve on democratic leadership practices, regular meetings need to be scheduled for all stakeholders in the school. Democratic style of leadership should be upheld and used by all headteachers' of primary schools by delegating authority to staff in order to facilitate better job satisfaction among teachers in the schools.

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