

# Principals Leadership Style on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Eldoret Municipality

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*Abstract- Effective leadership is essential for creating a conducive learning environment and maximizing teacher satisfaction and performance. By understanding and responding to teachers' perceptions of head teachers' leadership styles, educational institutions can foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. It was on this premise that the study sought to evaluate the effect of the types of leadership styles used by principals on academic performance. The study was anchored on participative leadership theory. Survey research design was used in operationalizing the tools of data collection. The unit of observation was the secondary schools' heads teachers, deputy heads and the teachers. The unit of analysis being 1566 respondents. Data was coded and analysed both through descriptive statistics and regression. Means and standard deviations and percentages and inferential statistics were then used in interpreting the results. The findings revealed that Respondents generally agree that democratic leadership fosters a sense of ownership among team members, as indicated. The leadership styles adopted by principals play a crucial role in shaping the academic outcomes of students in public secondary schools. The study recommends that principals should be encouraged to undergo training in transformational leadership techniques. Research consistently shows that this style, which focuses on inspiration, motivation, and individualized support, has a positive impact on student achievement.*

*Indexed Terms- Types of Leadership Styles, Secondary school Principals & Academic Performance*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Somech (2010) notes that participative decision-making is a formal strategy that involves direct group participation and influences group decisions, particularly on significant matters. The literature indicates that involvement in decision-making enhances the social capacity for an ideal school, improves decision quality, increases teacher motivation, fosters professional development, and creates a more democratic classroom environment (Smylie, 1992).

Golarz and Golarz (1995) assert that collaborative and collegial instructional planning are key characteristics of effective schools, supporting the implementation of participatory governance. Currently, participatory leadership is gaining attention as a contemporary issue in educational management science. In this approach, leaders become more cooperative, interactive, and influential within the educational institution, benefiting subordinates by allowing them to set high-value goals while simultaneously increasing the leader's influence.

Effective school management necessitates the active participation of organizational stakeholders in decision-making (Berry, 2001). This can be facilitated by promoting participatory leadership through the establishment of School Management Teams (SMTs). The primary role of SMTs is to collaborate with other stakeholders, including community members, parents, and students, in implementing school decisions and programs. SMTs empower all stakeholders to exercise greater control over development projects. They should work together with stakeholders to create a School Development Plan (SDP). Stakeholders should be fully engaged in all aspects of the plan, such as needs identification, prioritization, preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the

plan's execution. The responsibility for carrying out the school development plan lies with the head teacher, staff, and the executives of the school management committee (Government of Kenya, 2004).

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to evaluate the effect of principals' leadership style and students on academic performance in public secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality.

### 1.3 Literature Review

Effective management of an educational institution necessitates that head teachers possess a deep understanding of key areas in educational leadership. Leadership, as described by Sanford (1973), is the method through which a leader directs the behavior of others towards the achievement of goals. Armstrong (2002) further defines leadership as the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically towards achieving objectives. Leadership acts as the catalyst that turns potential into reality, identifying, developing, channelling, and enriching the potential within an organization and its people.

The head teacher is responsible for implementing the school's plans. To achieve this effectively, they may choose to issue job directives to the staff, adopt a participatory decision-making approach, or allow the staff the freedom to fulfill their responsibilities (Brandt, 1987). A head teacher who issues job directives and determines the management style independently discourages staff members from taking personal initiative. This leadership style is known as autocratic (Kappa, 1980).

According to Okumbe (1998), democratic leadership decentralizes power and authority, enabling decisions to be made through consultations. In this approach, the head teacher collaborates with the staff to set goals and encourages personal initiative, with solutions to problems being found collectively among the staff members. Conversely, a head teacher who adheres to an autocratic management style makes school policies alone, issuing directives that must be followed without question.

### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Participative leadership theory has been discussed and developed by various scholars over the years. One key author who has significantly contributed to this field is Victor H. Vroom. Vroom, along with Philip W. Yetton, developed the Vroom-Yetton contingency model in 1973, which is a normative model that determines the extent to which leaders should involve their subordinates in decision-making. Participative leadership theory, often synonymous with participatory management, centers on the idea that involving employees in decision-making processes leads to better outcomes. This theory advocates for a leadership style where leaders share decision-making authority with their subordinates, thereby fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.

A participative approach fosters a democratic and inclusive school culture, encouraging student engagement and responsibility, which can positively influence academic performance. Therefore, participative leadership theory offers a robust framework for enhancing the effectiveness of public secondary schools through inclusive decision-making processes. Its application can lead to improved academic performance by fostering a collaborative, motivated, and professionally developed teaching staff, thereby creating a more democratic and effective educational environment.

### 1.4 Materials and Methods

This study employed a survey method to explore the correlation between leadership styles of principals' and academic performance in schools. According to Orodho (2002), survey designs are utilized in preliminary and exploratory studies to collect, summarize, present, and interpret information for clarification purposes. According to Borg and Gall (1989) a study population as a larger collection of all subjects from where a sample is drawn. the unit of observation therefore will be the 33 principals in secondary schools, 33 deputy principals and the 1500 teachers. Purposive sampling was used to target the all the principals and their deputies while the proportionate sampling will be used to distribute the teacher sample into their respective schools. Simple random sampling was then be used to sample the teacher in their schools to give each an equal chance to participate in the study. To determine the sample

from the population, Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula to select 318 respondents from the study population. quantitative data collected was coded, entered into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) then analysed using both descriptively, through frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, and through regression analysis.

1.5 Results and Discussions

Descriptive Statistics

Before delving into inferential statistics, the initial step involved descriptive analysis of the data. It was crucial to elucidate the interpretation of mean values throughout the study. Respondents utilized a 5-point Likert scale, with ranges for interpretation as follows: 4.3-5=Strongly Disagree; 3.5-4.2=Disagree; 2.6-3.4=Undecided; 1.9-2.6=Agree; and 1-1.8=Strongly Agree (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014; Joshi et al., 2015). Additionally, alongside mean values, the standard deviation for each item was reported to assess the level of variation, indicating the extent of agreement or disagreement among respondents regarding each variable.

Principals’ Leadership Style and academic performance

The study sought to establish the effect of leadership style by principals’ and their effect of academic performance and Table 1 Records the finding.

Table 1: Leadership style by principals’ and academic performance

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	S/Dev
The principal informs staff members about their expectations.	318	1	5	3.98	1.343
The principal delegates specific tasks to staff members.	318	1	5	3.76	1.349
The principal ensures that all members comprehend him or her.	318	1	5	3.74	1.478
The principal seeks staff approval on significant matters prior to their implementation.	318	1	5	3.56	1.203

The principal implements the staff's suggestions into action.	318	1	5	3.56	1.587
Principal facilitates members in diagnosing group issues	318	1	5	3.53	1.343

Table 1 observed that the principal informs staff members about their expectations with a mean of 3.98 (Standard Deviation =1.343). On average, respondents perceive that the principal effectively communicates expectations to staff members (mean score close to 4 out of 5), indicating a generally high level of perceived clarity in communication. The study also revealed that the principal delegates specific tasks to staff members with a mean of mean 3.76(Standard Deviation=1.349). The principal ensures that all members comprehend him or her with a mean of mean 3.74(Standard Deviation=1.478). The principal seeks staff approval on significant matters prior to their implementation with a mean of mean 3.56(Standard Deviation=1.203). The principal implements the staff's suggestions into action with a mean of Mean 3.56(Standard Deviation=1.587).

Principal facilitates members in diagnosing group issues with a mean of Mean 3.53(Standard Deviation=1.343). In conclusion, the principal generally demonstrates positive behaviors according to respondent perceptions, with effective communication of expectations being the most positively perceived aspect. However, there is some variability in perceptions across different leadership behaviors, particularly in how the principal involves staff in decision-making and implements their suggestions.

Linear Regression Analysis for Principal’s leadership style and Performance

The following statistics were produced as shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: ANOVA for principles leadership style

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	349.302	1	349.302	16674.237	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	4.483	214	.021		

Total	353.785	215			
a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals leadership styles					

Table 2 indicates that the ANOVA (the F-Statistics) measures the overall significance of the model. It provides information levels of variability within the regression model and hence forms a basis for tests of significance. The results confirm that the regression model is significant for the data as captured by the ANOVA (F-statistic) value of 16674.237 and is associated probability value of 0.000(F= 16674.237, p<0.05) that was found to be significant at 5% significant level.

Table 3: Model summary for principles leadership style

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.994 <sup>a</sup>	.987	.987	.14474	1.91
a. Predictors: (Constant),					
b. Dependent Variable: Academic performance					

Table 3 shows that R (Correlation Coefficient) value was found to be 0.994, indicating a very strong positive correlation between Principles leadership style and Academic performance. This suggests that as Principles leadership style improves, Academic performance tends to improve as well. R Square (Coefficient of Determination) value was found to be 0.987, meaning that 98.7% of the variance in Academic performance can be explained by Stakeholder Planning. This indicates a very high level of explanatory power of the model.

Table 4: Coefficients of regression for principles leadership style

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.240	.029		8.394	.000		
SP	.970	.008	.994	129.129	.000	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance							

Table 4 represents the coefficient of regression where interpretation is made at the unassimilated coefficients that depict the estimated coefficients which show the size or the magnitude of the change and the t-statistics which tests the statistical significance of the individual regression coefficient as compared to the p-value. The t-statistic for principles leadership style is 129.129. This measures how many standard deviations the coefficient is away from 0. A high t-value indicates that the coefficient is significantly different from 0. Since the p-value <0.05 at 5% level of significance, the study concludes that principles leadership style practices have a significant positive effect on academic performance in Eldoret Municipality. Hence, the null hypothesis, there is no significant effect between the principles leadership style practices and of academic performance in Eldoret Municipality, was rejected since p<0.05 and adopted the alternative hypothesis, principles leadership style practices have a significant effect on academic performance in Eldoret Municipality adopted. The regression equation for predicting academic performance in Eldoret Municipality from principles leadership style practices was  $Y=0.240+0.970X$  implying that principles leadership style practices have significant positive effect on academic performance in Eldoret Municipality (B=0.970, p<0.05). The Collinearity Statistics indicate that the tolerance value is 1.000. Tolerance values range from 0 to 1, where a value close to 1 suggests that there is little multicollinearity between the predictor variables while VIF values above 10 may indicate high multicollinearity. Therefore, the collinearity statistics (Tolerance = 1.000, VIF = 1.000) suggest there are no multicollinearity issues in this model.

### 5.3 Conclusions

Based on the study objectives, the study concludes that the principal’s leadership styles have a significant positive effect on academic performance, hence, significant positive predictor of academic performance in public secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality.

### 5.3 Principals Leadership Style and Students Academic Performance

The study recommends that principals should be encouraged to undergo training in transformational leadership techniques. Research consistently shows that this style, which focuses on inspiration,

motivation, and individualized support, has a positive impact on student achievement. Principals should prioritize creating a supportive and inclusive school climate. This involves promoting open communication, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging among students and staff. A positive school climate has been linked to higher academic performance.

Promote a culture of shared leadership within the school community. Principals should empower teachers and staff to take on leadership roles and contribute to decision-making processes. This not only distributes leadership responsibilities but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among all stakeholders. Offer continuous professional development opportunities for principals to stay updated on the latest research and best practices in educational leadership. This ensures that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively lead their schools towards improved academic outcomes.

Encourage principals to use data to inform their decision-making processes. By analyzing academic performance data, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing targeted interventions, principals can effectively address the specific needs of their students and enhance overall academic achievement.

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