Effect of Principals' Leadership Styles on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Homa-Bay County, Kenya

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Abstract: *This study sought to examine the effect of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performances in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examinations in public secondary schools in Homa-bay County, Kenya. The study was premised on a combination of modified Bossert's framework and Pitner's moderated theoretical frameworks which contend that principal's role is influenced by intertwined factors including external antecedent variables and prevailing external environmental conditions. The study had two fold objectives, namely i) assess teachers perceptions regarding their principals leadership styles ii) analyze the relationship between principals leadership styles and students' academic performance. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. From an accessible 39 secondary schools, 36 were randomly selected to provide 36 principals and 216 teachers yielding an overall sample size of 252 respondents. Questionnaires were piloted to determine their validity and reliability before being used to collect quantitative data from sampled subjects. The study established that principals in the study locale used leadership styles that were not conducive to teacher-student interactive learner-centered learning that enhanced students' academic performance. A test of hypothesis using the chi-square test of association (X^2 =15.67, df =5) at $\propto$ =.05level of statistical significance further established that there was a significant relationship between the leadership styles applied by principals as perceived by teachers and students' academic performance. The schools that embraced more democratic and participatory leadership styles that encouraged group work and team spirit performed significantly better than those that used more autocratic leadership styles that were largely dictatorial. Several recommendations were made key among them being that the Ministry of Education through the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KEMI) should intensify in-service training for school principals on use of learner-centered leadership styles geared towards enhancing students' academic performance not only in the study locale of Homa-Bay County but other counties with similar management challenges[302 words].*

Keywords: Principals, Leadership styles, teachers' perceptions, students' academic performance, public secondary schools, Homa-bay County, Kenya.

I. Introduction

Background information

The current global trends towards acquisition of quality education has created heated debate on the types of leadership styles which school principals , teachers and Boards of Management should adopt for effective implementation of curriculum to yield high quality educational output(Ibrahim & Orodho,2014). This accelerated quest for quality education has received top priority not only in most sub-Saharan African countries but also in Kenya (Oketch & Ngware, 2012; Orodho, 2014). Quality of education measures using academic and no-academic indicators in secondary education in Kenya is neither achievable nor sustainable without the continuous assessment of these indicators on how they influence the delivery of quality education by school systems in the country. Demand for educational quality is also increasing, as the Government of Kenya views the satisfactory performance of her basic education systems not only instrumentally but also strategically in relation to economic development and international competitiveness (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

The Basic Education Act 2013 (Republic of Kenya,2013) gives the school principal through the Boards of Management responsibilities to run schools under their jurisdiction. According to section 59(a-f) of the Education Act, the functions of the principal, through the Board of Management (BoM) include:

   Promotion of the best interests of the institution and ensure development;
   promote quality education for all pupils in accordance with the standards set by
   the Act or any other law; Ensure and assure the provision of proper and adequate

physical facilities for the school; determine causes of pupils indiscipline and make a report to the County Education Board; facilitate and ensure the provision of guidance and counseling to all learners ; encourage the learners, teachers and no-teaching staff and others, parents and community , and other stakeholders to render voluntary services to the institution, amongst others(Republic of Kenya,2013).

From the foregoing citation, the Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) made it clear that the Government of Kenya recognizes the critical role of principals through the Board of Management by prescribing very critical functions that are central to facilitating the academic development of the school and quality academic output. Thus, it is arguable that management and leadership styles are very important for the running of the various organizations. In line with this argument, Ball (1987) identified the following leadership and management styles that emerged in the course of his research in British secondary schools: the interpersonal, managerial style, adversarial and the political style or authoritarian style. He describes interpersonal head teachers as being typically mobile and visible with a preference for consulting with individuals rather than holding meetings. They like to "sound out ideas" and gather opinions. Such head teachers will frequently reiterate to teachers the importance of bringing complaints and grievances to them first of all. Ball (1987) pointed out that this type of leadership style is particularly effective at satisfying teacher's individual needs, and that grievances and staff turnover tends to remain low. On the other hand, he continues to argue that head teachers with managerial styles adopt a leadership style that parallels that of a manager in an industry:

Nonetheless, it is imperative to note from the Nsubuga (2008) study that the use of management techniques involves the importation into the school structures, types of relationships and processes of organizational control from the factory. The managerial head is chief executive of the school, normally surrounded by a Senior Management Team (SMT). The head teacher relates to the staff through this team and through a formal structure of meetings, Board of Management (BoM) and various school committees (Ibrahim & Orodho,2014; Nsubuga, 2008). When the BoM functions well through the leadership of the principal, the school operations are well supervised and students perform well in their examinations. The principal is an important personality in the governance and management of the school for several reasons which include, but are not limited to, the following: liaising with the head teachers in upholding the culture of the school, maintaining school ethics and discipline and management of school funds, management of the general welfare of the school's staff and learners, soliciting support for the school from the community and developing the quality and standards of education (Nsubuga, 2008). Although some aspects of management such as instructional, administrative, democratic and bureaucratic leadership and management styles are always good, coercive and authoritative management styles are always not conducive. It is against this background that this study was prompted and delved into an examination of the effects of principals management styles on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Homa-Bay County, Kenya.

State of the Art Review

Through the decades of the twentieth century, the role of school principals has greatly evolved and could generally be characterized as highly transformative (Ibrahim & Orodho, 2014). The dominant role of school principals for example in the 1930s was one of a scientific manager. In the 1940s the principal was expected to fulfill primarily the role of a democratic leader. In the 1970s the principal was viewed as a humanistic facilitator, and in the 1980s school principals were expected to serve primarily as instructional leaders (Beck & Murphy, 1993). Even though instructional leadership received great popularity and pervaded leadership literature during the 1980s, this notion was introduced a few decades prior to this period. Mackenzie and Corey (1952) were among the early writers who referred to the school principal as an instructional leader of a school (Greenfield, 1987). De Bevoise (1984) used the term to designate the actions that school principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. A number of researchers have developed theoretical frameworks of instructional leadership roles of school principals, contributing to the clearer conceptualizations of the term. The works of Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) may be considered pioneering efforts directed toward a deeper understanding of instructional leadership roles of a school principal. These researchers emphasized that a school principal, through his or her activities, roles, and behaviors in managing school structures does not affect student achievement directly, in the ways the teachers do. However, classroom teaching may be impacted by principals' actions, such as setting and clearly communicating high expectations for all students, supervising teachers' instructional performance, evaluating student progress, and promoting a positive teaching/learning environment. The works of Bossert et al. (1982) were expanded by the studies of Murphy, Hallinger, Weil, and Mitman (1983), Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Sweeney (1982), and Smith and Andrews (1989).

Much effective school research over the past two decades has concentrated on examining the relationship between the leadership behaviour of school principals and the enhancement of organisational

performance (Shum & Cheng, 1997). Of particular interest have been studies that have highlighted the mediating role principal's serve between teachers and learners (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1999). Interestingly, results from these studies have suggested that principals have the ability to indirectly effect student achievement by improving the tone or learning environment of a school (Johnson, Livingston, Schwartz & Slate, 2000).

However, while the concepts of school leadership and school learning environment seem to be intuitively linked, there have been few studies that have related these concepts together (Griffith, 1999). Further, recent paradigm shifts in conceptualizing leadership have also encouraged educational researchers to consider these relationships from the perspective of new leadership models. Prominent among them is the transformational and transactional leadership model (Burns, 1978) which suggests that follower performance can be lifted to beyond what is normally considered to be acceptable (Bass, 1985). Further, transformational leaders are able to manipulate and alter their environmental constraints in order to achieve their performance goals (Kirby, King and Paradise, 1992).

According to Waller, Smith and Warnock (1989), a dimension of leadership style that is associated with the autocratic/democratic continuum is the task- versus relationship-oriented style of leadership with the task orientation being similar to the autocratic method and the relationship oriented style being similar to the democratic method. According to the authors, current research has established that the difference between the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the four leadership styles is the appropriateness of the leader's behavior to the particular situation in which it is used. With respect to the foregoing, Waller et. al (1989) state that one of the basic factors that will elevate or debilitate each of the four leadership styles is the basic task maturity of the individual or group being led with maturity being defined in terms of the capacity to set high but realistic goals.

Kemp and Nathan (1989) identified three styles of leadership namely authoritarian, democratic or delegative, and or laissez-faire. According to Campbell, Bridges and Nystrand (1993) the authoritarian or autocratic leadership style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without getting the advice of their followers. This style results in the group members reacting aggressively and apathetically in the work environment. They further suggest that authoritarian style should normally only be used on rare occasions. This often results in unending industrial disputes in an organization hence affecting the achievement of the overall goals and objectives. The participative or democratic leadership style involves the leader including one or more employees in the decision making process in determining what to do and how to do it. However, the leader maintains the final decision making authority. Using this style is not a sign of weakness; rather, it is a sign of strength that your employees will respect.

Nzuve (1999) stresses that an effective headteacher pays more attention to planning work and special tasks and permits teachers to participate in decision-making processes in an effort to achieve school goals. Using this style is of mutual benefit it allows them to become part of the team and allows you to make better decisions. According to Purkey and Smith (1985) the participatory leadership style provides a climate of sense of unity in pursuit of set goals.

Delegative or free reign is where the leader allows the employees to make the decisions. This is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it. The laissez-faire style of leadership, according to Kemp and Nathan (1989) is where a leader succumbs to Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). The theory argues that people are innately motivated, naturally like to do work and therefore there should be no rules since everybody has an inborn sense of responsibility. However, this style of leadership may result in indiscipline due to non-enforcement of rules and regulations in a school leading to poor performance in KCSE examinations. The analysis of the three leadership styles by Nzuve (1999) concluded that an effective headteacher pays more attention to planning work and special tasks, and permits teachers to participate in decision making processes in an effort to achieve school goals, as participatory leadership style provides the climate of sense of unity in pursuit of set goals.

Pervasive and sustained student learning is more likely to occur in schools with strong instructional leadership. Morphet, Johns and Reller (1974) stress that administrative efficiency will be valid only to the extent to which it will contribute to the attainment of goals of the organization, the goals of actors in the organization and the extent that it will meet the requirements of the environment for the survival of the organization. Bell (1992) notes that effective leadership will provide schools with a vision, explicit philosophies laid on consultation and team work and lead to success in attainment of good results in national examinations. Bennaars, Otiende and Boisvert (1994) further assert that incompetent headteachers are a big problem to the overall administration and management of education in any country

Over the past decades, several comprehensive reviews have been conducted of the literature on school administrators and their roles in schooling. The findings of these reviews will be presented chronologically, not by their importance. Lipham (1964) and Erickson (1967) reviewed the literature on school administration prior to 1967. Whereas Lipham focused on the findings of the research investigations, Erickson was primarily concerned with methodological issues. The latter highlighted methodological weaknesses of the studies which were published in the professional journals in educational administration during the 1964-1966 period. Both

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authors concluded that the majority of studies reviewed used questionnaires with suspect validity, which served as a predominant mode of data collection.

In classifying studies with respect to outcomes, Bridges (1982) made a distinction between those studies dealing with the impact that school administrators have on school outcomes and ratings of administrator's effectiveness. In the administrator's impact studies, researchers attempted to determine whether administrators made measurable differences in schooling. As observed by Bridges (1982), when assessing the impact of school administrators, researchers are far more likely to focus on organizational maintenance than organizational achievement. In his words: As the notion of educational leadership style evolved through the past decades, so did the research of the impact of the school leaders' style on the school. At the time when the idea of instructional leadership became dominant, a number of researchers conducted empirical studies in an attempt to determine if the instructional leadership roles, behaviors, and activities practiced by school leaders may be correlated with school outcomes. The large wave of research on instructional leadership occurred in 1980s and 1990s. Hallinger and Heck (1996) used Pitner's (1982) framework of administrator effects as criteria for classifying 40 studies on instructional leadership and school outcomes published during the period 1980-1995. All studies reviewed were cross-sectional and non-experimental in nature, meaning that researchers had little or no influence on extraneous variables. Five theoretical approaches identified by Pitner represented conceptual models which served as a means for categorizing existing studies of administrator effects on school outcomes. These five models were direct-effects, moderated-effects, antecedent-effects, mediated-effects, and reciprocal-effects (Pitner, 1982). Current shifts in the area of principals' leadership, from instructional to transformational leadership, have resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of studies focused on examining the instructional leadership style of school principals.

Hanson (1996) postulated the Great Man Theory arguing that world progress could be attributed to individual achievements of great men. It is worth noting that prior to 1938 – 1945 assumptions on leadership centered on identification of psychological or physiological traits that manifested themselves in managerial abilities. Okumbe (1998) summarises in a review of 124 empirical studies, psychological traits relating to the effective leadership such as Capacity: intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality and judgment. Achievement: scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishments. Responsibility: dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel. Participation: activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humour. Status: socio-economic position, popularity. Situation: Mental level, status, skills, interest of followers and objectives to be achieved. Mbiti (1979) on trait theory notes personal traits and abilities of administrators are not significant factors in their achievement. He points out that leadership is so important that its fulfillment can scarcely be left to chance that a particular individual with unique personalities will appear at the proper time.

Studies on the effects of leadership styles on performance of students in KCSE both by Okoth (2000) and Kimacia (2007) found out that headteachers rated as being democratic had high mean performance index than autocratic headteachers. Though Huka (2003), Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) all confirmed that leadership style influenced student KCSE performance, they noted that autocratic headteachers had higher mean scores in KCSE than their democratic counterparts. In more radical findings, Njuguna (1998) noted that there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and students' KCSE performance. This study is therefore necessary to further investigate points of non-consensus on leadership styles and student performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination.

Kimacia (2007) studied the relationship between headteachers' leadership styles and girl students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Narok County. The findings showed that there is no significant difference between headteachers' age and leadership style. This contradicts Okoth (2002) in her findings that leadership styles are as a result of age, with headteachers aged 41- 45 years being rated as most democratic. There is therefore need to carry out further research on age as a variable in relationship to leadership styles of headteachers and establish whether it indeed has an influence.

Njuguna (1998) found out that there is a relationship between headteachers' leadership styles and professional experience. Headteachers with professional experience of 16 years and above are rated higher on consideration behaviour. This concurs with Okoth (2000) that headteachers with an administrative experience of 11 -15 years are rated as being democratic than those with less administrative experience. This also concurs with Wangui (2007) but contradicts Kimacia (2007) who found that there is no relationship between professional experiences of teachers in rating leadership styles of headteachers. This position is contradicted by Asunda (1983) who observes that teachers with long teaching experience rate headteachers as being democratic. There is need to investigate further on the noted points of contrast.

Njuguna (1998) notes that headteachers with a Bachelor of Education qualification or diploma holders practice combinations of high-initiating structure and low-consideration structure. Kimacia (2007) contradicts this position by observing that there is no relationship between academic and professional qualifications of headteachers and their leadership styles. The Okoth (2000) study revealed contrary findings to that of Njuguna

(1998) who documented that highly educated headteachers are more democratic than those with low academic and professional qualifications. Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992) further point out that low qualification of headteachers in academics is a source of misunderstanding in the schools.

A study by Ndegwa (2002) on teachers perceptions of leadership styles of male and female headteachers in public secondary schools in Maragwa District, Kenya, established that female headteachers in district and provincial schools practice a high-consideration structure compared to those in national schools while their male colleagues practiced a high–initiating structure. Both male and female headteachers in day and partly boarding secondary schools practice a high- consideration structure more so than their counterparts in boarding schools. The findings by Njuguna (1998) were contrary to Ndegwa (2002) noting that headteachers of day schools practice a low –consideration structure while those in boarding schools practiced a high-consideration structure. This finding similarly contradicts Okoth (2000) who had earlier documented that in day schools, headteachers are found to be democratic compared to those in boarding or mixed schools. Okoth (2000) again found out headteachers in girls' schools are slightly more democratic compared to boys' and mixed schools. There is need therefore to establish whether the category of school has an influence on leadership style.

According to Asunda (1983) being graduate (B.Ed) teachers and having high professional qualifications caused headteachers to be rated as democratic. Ndegwa (2002) contradicts Asunda (1983) that academic and professional qualifications do not affect teachers' perceptions of male and female headteachers in their management styles. Graduate teachers rate low male headteachers in initiating structure but with no significant difference for both male and female headteachers in consideration dimension. Graduate male teachers rate female headteachers higher in consideration dimension than their male counterparts in consideration dimension. This contradicts Okoth (2000) who notes that graduate female teachers rate male headteachers democratic while their female counterparts autocratic. Amidst these differing findings, there is need for further research on whether academic and professional qualifications have any relationship with leadership style of headteachers.

The study by Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) in Mandera County asked respondents in each of the focus group discussions to state whether there was any relationship between management of school and academic performance. In response to this, all fgds in all schools participating in the study agreed that progress in any learning institution depends on proper management of schools.

The message that predominantly came out from two leading schools in the District was that:

> ....by directly interacting with the students and involving them on issues that affect them directly, a slow but positive change in academic performance was noticed in affected schools. The performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams changed because the entire school management which includes the principal and all board members showed concern toward the plight of the students and the entire staff.

The study by Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) further established that excellent management strategies invariably utilized the school resources towards realization of school objectives and goals. This was emphatically put by one fgd session that averred:

> If board members constantly meet the students and their teachers to share ideas and advice them, it builds a harmonious relationship between teachers, students and the entire support staff and this is healthy for the students and as it helps them even work harder to pass examinations.

The dominant tone of the study by Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) was that school management by principals through the BoM affects students' academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. Their study through two fgd sessions concurred that:

> Management strategies that attempt to keep constant track performance and rewarding teachers for good results achieved by students was observed to improve their future performances. How do we expect the teachers to perform well unless their efforts are recognized and adequately rewarded?

Thus, the findings by Ibrahim and Orodho(2014) confirm what Dean (1995) found that in an attempt to define school effectiveness the basic criteria for defining the terminology is what happens to the children in the school and how they perform. She went on to say that as a head teacher, one has to work through people, so effectiveness in this sense is concerned with the ability to manage and motivate people and to organize the work of schools so that children, as much as possible can benefit. Therefore, for good academic performance to be realized, head teachers must apply the

required competencies on the relevant task which is in line with the path goal leadership theory (Ibrahim & Orodho, 2014).

Statement of the problem

Despite the fact that public secondary schools in Homa Bay County have qualified school principals using various management styles in their respective schools, the students' academic performance in these schools have persistently been below average over the last five years. Releasing the year 2010 County KCSE examinations results, the District Education Officer (DEO) said that though there had been an upward trend in the mean score over the last two years, the improvement index had continued to decline resulting into a drop in the mean score in the year 2010 (DEO Homa Bay, 2010). The performance index had steadily remained below the conventionally perceived average mean of 6.000 points (grade C) over the last 5 years, averaging 5.340 (grade C-) for the years 2007 – 2011 period. Of the 9,888 students presented by the County for KCSE over this period, only a paltry 3,696 constituting approximately one third of the total candidature attained the minimal university admission grade of C+ and above, which is also the practical admission grade for competitive diploma courses offered by tertiary institutions. The DEO said that though the county was ranked 6th in the nation in 2010, the number of quality grades leading to admission into the competitive courses in the public universities remained disturbingly low (DEO Homa Bay, 2010). The County would have been expected to perform better given that nearly all its secondary school teachers were either Bachelor of Education graduates or holders of Diploma in Education and that the schools were reported to have adequate educational and educational support resources (DEO Homa Bay, 2010).

Though performance is determined by many factors, leadership style plays a very significant role in its quality. The studies by scholars and researchers such as Litner (1994), Dean (1995) and Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) have established that principals' leadership styles have a significant input on student achievement in national examinations .Nonetheless, some of these studies done on the effect of leadership styles on students' Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) performance give differing results and very few are in agreement on their findings. This study was concerned about the possible effects of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in Homa -Bay County, Kenya, against the backdrop of the perennial dismal performance over the years.

Purpose and Objectives of the study

This purpose of this study was to examine the effect of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performances in public secondary schools in Homa-bay County, Kenya. The study had two fold objectives, namely:
1. Assess teachers' perception regarding principals' leadership styles commonly used in their respective secondary schools.
2. Analyze the relationship between principals' leadership styles and students' academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examinations in public secondary schools in Homa-Bay County, Kenya.

The hypothesis

This research sought to test one null hypothesis, namely:

H_O: There is no significant relationship between the leadership styles of headteachers as perceived by teachers and student academic performance in national examinations in public secondary schools Homa Bay County (

using chi-square test statistics at $\propto$ = .05 level of statistical significance.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on a mediated-effects model of effective schools as discussed by Hallinger and Heck (1998). This mediated-effects model provides a more complex representation of administrator effects within schools than does a simple direct effects or moderated effects approach. It is acknowledged that antecedent variables can have an important causal influence that effect desired outcomes such as student achievement. However, the focus of this study is to examine the relationship between the leadership practices of the principal and school and classroom variables, namely school learning environment and teacher satisfaction.

In this model, the variable of the principal's role is assumed to be both a dependent and an independent factor (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). As a dependent factor, the principal is subject to the influence of external antecedent factors such as socioeconomic status, or prevailing external environment conditions such as technological change. As an independent variable, the principal is considered to be the agent of change, influencing directly the actions of teachers, the learning conditions within the school, and the attainment of outcomes such as teacher job satisfaction and indirectly, student learning outcomes. A combination of a

modified Bossert's (1982) framework and Pitners moderated effects model (1982) were utilized. According to Bossert's model, a principals managerial behavior is shaped by school context (external and district) and the principals personal characteristics. At the same time, a principal's managerial behavior directly influences school climate and instructional organization, and indirectly school outcomes.

II. Research Methodology

The researcher adopted ex-post facto research design. The ex-post-facto research design is the type of design in which the investigators do not manipulated any variables because they are either inherently not capable of any manipulation but also because they have already occurred (Brooks, 2013; Orodho, 2009a, 2012). The design was appropriate in this study in that variables for the study namely leadership styles of the headteachers and students' performance in the KCSE examinations had already occurred. The investigators merely analyzed their nature of relationships. Inferences about variables were made without manipulation of independent and dependent variables by the researcher. The researcher employed stratified random sampling for the study. There were a total of 39 schools available for the study out of which 36 were selected. Two hundred and sixteen teachers were included, six from each school, and all headteachers, yielding a total sample size of 252 respondents. The questionnaires, whose validity and reliability were established through piloting, were used to collect quantitative data from the respondents sampled. It important to determine the validity since it reflects the extent to which the instrument measures what it was supposed to measure (Orodho, 2009a). On the other hand, reliability is a measure of the consistency of the instrument in eliciting similar responses every time the instrument is utilized (Orodho, 2012). The quantitative data yielded were analyzed using the statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer programme to generate correlation and inferential statistics (Brooks, 2013; Orodho, 2009b). These statistics were necessary to test the null hypotheses meant to determine if there was a relationship between the headteachers leadership styles and students performance, and if the teachers' perception of headteachers leadership styles influenced student performance.

III. Findings And Discussions

Teachers' perception regarding Principals Leadership styles

The first objective of the study aimed at establishing the perception of teachers on the leadership styles of their headteachers. The teachers were requested to respond to some items that sought to establish the category of leadership styles in relationship to their head teachers. The responses were given on a likert scale of 1-5 and requested to rate and later results were ranked. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations and rankings of the items. The results displayed in table 1 indicate most of the teachers, in general, had a high and positive ranking regarding the leadership behaviour of the principals in their respective schools.

Table 1. Teachers' rating and ranking of headteachers leadership styles

Leadership behaviour of your school headteacher	Mean	SD	Rank
Is a risk taker (new adventurous ideas in dealing with situations)	3.03	1.42	9
Disapproves to be appraised by staff	3.13	1.12	8
Less concerned about group performance towards attainment of school goals	3.82	1.27	4
Unconcerned with the staff's welfare	3.63	1.31	5
Does not supervise teachers in their teaching / learning assignments	3.58	1.24	6
Avoids at all costs interfering with group's work	3.00	1.34	10
Encourages indiscipline owing to non provision of structure to staff in doing work	3.92	1.12	3
Suppresses new ideas from members of the group	3.97	1.14	2
Passes the buck to the others for failure or mistake for low performance in the school	3.52	1.30	7
Has no belief in the group even in himself/ herself attaining quality performance in terms of school goals	4.07	1.18	1

A close scrutiny of the figures displayed in Table 1 indicate that the most highly rated behaviuor of school principals, with a mean of 4.07, was that they had no belief in group work or on self attaining quality performance in terms of school goals. This was rather surprising because one of the roles of school principals is to set school goals and ensure all, either at individual or group level attain these set goals. The second highly ranked behaviuor of principals, with a mean of 3.97, was that they suppressed new ideas from members of a group. This finding tend to suggest that most teachers perceived their principals leadership styles as largely autocratic, leaving little room for individual or group consultation during decision making. The third highly ranked attribute of principals, with a mean of 3.92, was that they largely encouraged indiscipline owing to poor management structure of dealing with indiscipline by other members of staff.

The fourth and fifth teachers' perceptions regarding the leadership styles of their principals were that they were less concerned about group performance of other staff members towards attainment of school goals, and unconcerned with the staff's welfare, with a mean of 3.82 and 3.63, respectively. At positions six and seven, with means scores of 3.58 and 3.52, were does not supervise teachers in their teaching / learning assignments

and passes the buck to other members for failure or mistake especially those leading to low academic performance in their schools, respectively. At position eight, nine and ten were: disapproves to be appraised by staff; is a risk taker (new adventurous ideas in dealing with situations); and avoids at all costs interfering with group's work. These attributes indicate that the principals in the study locale had inappropriate leadership styles that do not promote enhanced academic performance.

Principals Leadership Styles and Students Academic Performance

The second objective sought to establish the relationship between principals leadership styles and students academic performance. This was achieved through the test of the null hypothesis which stated that: there is no significant relationship between the leadership styles of principals and students academic performance. For each leadership style, a cross tabulation of the academic performance of students was developed to facilitate a chi-square (X^2) test of association to be conducted at $\propto$ = .05 level of statistical significance. The chi-square test result (X^2 = 15.67, df = 5) indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected at critical value of 11.07 at $\propto$ = .05 level of statistical significance. The rejection of the null hypothesis led to the conclusion that there was a significant correlation between the type of management styles employed by school principals and students academic performance in secondary schools in the study locale of Homa-Bay County. This finding largely explains why schools in the study locale of Homa-Bay County persistently perform poorly given the type of management perceptions revealed by the teachers. To reiterate, the rankings revealed that the management styles commonly practiced by school principals in secondary schools in Homa-Bay County were not conducive to effective in producing improved school outcomes measured partly by students' academic performance in national examinations at secondary school level.

The findings of this study are in tandem with those documented earlier by Nzuve (1999) who stressed that an effective headteacher pays more attention to planning work and special tasks and permits teachers to participate in decision-making processes in an effort to achieve school goals. Using this style is of mutual benefit it allows them to become part of the team and allows you to make better decisions. In a similar vein, Purkey and Smith (1985) also reiterated that the participatory leadership style provides a climate of sense of unity in pursuit of set goals. In essence what these scholars mean is that schools that are managed by principals who apply more democratic and all inclusive leadership styles are more likely to achieve better academic results than their colleagues who largely rely on autocratic and dictatorial leadership styles.

The results of this study are also consistent with studies on the effects of leadership styles on performance of students in KCSE by both by Okoth (2000), Kimacia (2007), Orodho (2014) as well as Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) who found out in separate studies and settings that school principals who are rated as being democratic posted high mean performance index than their autocratic colleagues. On a slightly different settings , studies by Huka (2003), Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) all confirmed that leadership style influenced student KCSE performance, they noted that autocratic headteachers had higher mean scores in KCSE than their democratic counterparts. In more contradictory findings, Njuguna (1998) noted that there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and students' KCSE performance. These inconsistencies notwithstanding, it is quite evident that this more recent study has set the records right by stating that schools that use more learner-centered learning modes achieve higher in terms of students academic performance than those led using autocratic and dictatorial leadership styles.

IV. Conclusion And Recommendations

Based on the findings it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the leadership styles of headteachers as perceived by teachers and student performance. A chi-square test between the leadership styles of the secondary school principals and students' academic performance in national examinations led to the conclusion that there was a significant relationship between principals leadership styles and students academic performance. The schools that embraced more democratic and participatory leadership styles that encouraged group work and team spirit performed significantly better than those that used more autocratic leadership styles that were largely dictatorial and highly centered on the principal.

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministry of Education, through the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KEMI) should intensify the in-service training school headteachers especially on the modern learner- centered leadership styles. The in-service training should be extended beyond the study locale of Homa-Bay County to enable them benefit from this new innovations.
2. That school principals should do all what is possible to support curriculum implementation by encouraging team spirit among students and staff so as to improve school performance. This should include setting targets for each year, having the syllabus completed in time so as to give time for students to revise for examinations. The head teachers should also ensure that there is remedial teaching for weak students.

3. Those principals should set attainable school targets and ensure that schools have adequate required instructional materials and equipment so as to improve performance. This should include teaching aids for specific subjects, text books and other reference material.
4. That the principals should ensure that the school environment is conducive for learning. There should be continuous motivational schemes for both students and teachers. .

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