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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF HEAD TEACHER'S AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A STUDY ACROSS PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN HOMA-BAY SUB COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Teacher performance is a quality matter of great consideration in institutions of learning and in particular basic education institutions. It is for this reason that measures have been put in place to enhance teacher performance worldwide. In Kenya programmes such as strengthening of Mathematics and Science in secondary Education (SMASSE) have been undertaken. In fact SMASSE was a major joint venture between the Kenya government through Ministry of Education and government of Japan through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 1998 to 2003. Later on Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) was created in 2001 to implement SMASSE programmes aimed at capacity building of teachers for quality curriculum delivery. These programmes were extended and changed to strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education (SMASE) to accommodate both primary and secondary school activities. In all these programmes the central factor is headteacher's leadership. This is because the headteacher is the accounting officer and implementor of government policies at school level. Teacher performance is a product of headteacher's leadership, hence headteacher's leadership style is critical. In this regard, studies have provided contradicting revelations, some posit autocratic leadership style as critical in teacher performance improvement while others indicate that autocratic leadership style has negative influence on teacher performance. The objective of this study was therefore to establish the influence of head teachers' autocratic leadership style on teacher performance in public primary schools. The study established that autocratic leadership style significantly influences teacher performance with regard to schemes of work preparation, lesson planning, preparation of teaching /learning resources, content delivery, formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Since autocratic leadership style accounted for only 17.7% of the variation in teacher performance, the study recommends that autocratic leadership style should be used sparingly or cautiously so as to enhance teacher performance optimally.

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INTRODUCTION

There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits qualified personnel with positive attitude, raises them up as leaders and continually develops them (Coetzee, 2019). Fisher (2005), notes that all schools should be able to excel if the Head teacher's leadership style is a positive influence. Ordinarily, every educational institutional leaders, especially the head teachers are called upon to exercise strong instructional leadership in their schools.

They are faced with the task of increasing teacher performance which is majorly reflected through pupil academic performance and achievement in national and terminal examinations, while maintaining order through acceptable teacher and student behavior which may require changing school performance. Normally, head teachers' leadership styles are seen in their behaviors and how they interrelate with teachers, students, parents, and other school staff. If the head teacher has an effective leadership style, he or she can engender a positive climate in the school. Teachers, students, staff, and parents will come to feel more comfortable and satisfied with their children's educational experience.

However, if the head teacher is ineffective, then the opposite may equally be held true. In the United States, school leadership or educational leadership has become popular as replacement for educational administration. In recent years, leadership arguably represents only partial picture of the work of school, division or district and ministerial or state education agency personnel (Goldman, 2012). Anglo American schools are led by principals. In addition, school leadership includes level-specific principals (preprimary, primary, lower and upper secondary classes), assistant or vice-principals dealing with various school specific duties and head teachers in charge of subject departments. In South Africa, schools vary enormously, with some being extremely well resourced and in others there is a total breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning. In Uganda, Nsubuga (2008) found that the training the teachers and head teachers undergo does not prepare them adequately for leadership roles; the head teachers lacked management and leadership skills; there was no relationship between the head teachers number of years in service and school performance; there is a disjointed relationship between the training received by head teachers from the universities and teacher training colleges, and the performance requirements in the schools. Most of the schools did not have strategic plans with clearly articulated vision and mission statements. For the few schools which had visions, mission and strategic plans, the teachers and other key stakeholders were not involved in the process of developing them; the study established that there is a strong positive relationship between the leadership style and school performance.

In Kenya, the supervision of primary school teachers is the duty of the Head teacher. The Ministry of Education instructs that head teachers have a role to supervise teachers by ensuring that: lessons are planned early; lessons are structured with an interesting beginning; revision of previous knowledge and teachers' use of voice variation and summary of major points at the end; teachers use backups/teaching aids properly; teachers have a good relationship with their students and teachers follow up the curriculum strictly (Kimeu, 2010). Education stakeholders in Kenya have very high expectations of public secondary schools principals because they believe that the success of a school is measured in terms of good performance in national examinations and the person responsible for this is the principal (Kingori, 2013). Mwangi (2013) states that school leadership has become more complex as curricular demands have grown, parental, government expectations and demand for greater school effectiveness have been raised. Appointment to school leadership in Kenya has undergone several phases. Initially principals were appointed on recommendation by the stakeholders. Later their appointment was based on seniority and currently it is based on merit where they have to be interviewed before appointment. Mwangi (2013) explains that after graduation from colleges with diplomas or degrees in education, teachers are posted to various public secondary schools in the country by the Teachers Service Commission. Their promotion to leadership depends on their seniority and performance. Okumbe (2001) noted that in any organization, human resources are the most important resources and as such the success of the organization depends entirely on how effectively its workers are managed. It is therefore important that great efforts be put in place to achieve integration with a sense of actualizing the organizational goals. A school consists of the head teacher who is the manager, teachers, non-teaching staff who are the workers as well as the students who interact with one another

so as to accomplish a common goal. For a school organization to be held together, good leadership and efficient management are a must (Farrant, 1997). Head teachers are known to use various leadership styles in order to improve the performance of the school. According to Shibo (2016), most public primary schools use democratic and participatory leadership styles as opposed to private primary schools, which mainly use autocratic leadership style. This explains the varying performance between public and private schools. There are different classifications about leadership styles in literature, but this study mainly will focus on autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors and hereby these three leadership behaviors are mentioned. This is because these are the major leadership styles used in public schools with significant impact to the employees in this case, teachers. Other leadership styles could be addressed by they are merely used in primary schools, especially public ones.

Ogalo and Yambo (2017) sought to determine the influence of principals' autocratic leadership styles on students' academic achievement in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination in Awendo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. This study was anchored on the contingency theory of leadership suitable for assessing the leader according to underlying traits; situations faced by the leader and construct a proper match between the two. This model was used to determine principals' styles effectiveness in schools. The study was conducted using a descriptive survey research design. The population for this study consisted of 42 principals and 547 teachers, in public secondary schools in Awendo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to get 42 principals and 5 Zonal Quality Assurance and Standard Officers because they are the only ones who existed in the study area. The target population of teachers was 547 and 30 percent of this was 164 teachers sampled. Questionnaires were used as the tools for collecting the data from both the teachers and principals. The study found out that 69.9 percent of the principals often drive hard when there is a job to be done and easily get recognized as the leader of the group and thus the teachers are compelled to work quickly for high production. Another 83.3% of the principals often act without consultations and this makes the teachers excluded and hence a poor performance. The reviewed study was confined to the influence of the principal's autocratic leadership style on academic achievement of students in public secondary while the current study will focus on the effect of the autocratic style on teacher performance in public primary schools.

Astuti, Aunnurahman and Wahyud (2019) conducted a study on the Effect of Democratic Autocratic and Laissez-Faire (Free) Leadership Style of Headmasters towards Teacher Discipline Performance at Kindergartens in Southeast District, Indonesia. The researchers employed a descriptive survey design. The target population was the Headmaster and Kindergarten teachers in the Southeast Pontianak Sub district of Pontianak City which amounts to a total of 83 people from 7 public and private kindergartens. The study used a purposive sampling method with a total sample of 34 teachers. The results showed that: the leadership style of the headmasters in Southeast Pontianak sub-district varied, which can be seen from: the results of the percentage of democratic leadership style of 39.8%, autocratic leadership style of 26.5%, and Laizzes-Faire leadership style of 33, 7%; The study further established a significant relationship between the leadership

style of the Headmaster and the performance of teachers in the Southeast Pontianak District with $r = 0.714$; There is a significant relationship between the democratic leadership style of the Headmaster of and the performance of Kindergarten teachers in Southeast Pontianak Sub-district with $r = 0.685$; Based on the results of the t-test calculation obtained t count of 0.967 with $N = 33$ obtained t table 1.697, then t count 1.697) insinuating a non-significant influence between the headmaster autocratic leadership style on the performance of Kindergarten teachers in Southeast Pontianak Sub district. The reviewed study was able to determine the various leadership styles used by head teachers and how they influence kindergarten teachers' performance in Indonesia. What remains unclear is whether these leadership styles especially the autocratic leadership style has any significant influence on teacher performance in Kenya more so in Homa Bay Sub County which is the knowledge gap to be filled by the current study.

Research Objective: The research objective was to determine the influence of head teachers' autocratic leadership style on teacher performance in public primary schools.

SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE ON INFLUENCE OF AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLES ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Autocratic leadership style as opined by Maqsood, Bilal and Baig (2013) is known for individual control over all decisions and little input from staff. Typically autocratic leaderships make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Autocratic leadership employs absolute, authoritarian control over staff. Some features of autocratic leadership as observed by Leadership Styles (2015) include little or no input from group members; leaders make the decisions; group leaders dictate all the work methods; group members are rarely trusted with decisions or important tasks. Autocratic leadership could be beneficial in some instances, such as when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting with a large group of people. Nothing meaningful can be effectively achieved when a certain type of leadership style is used. Autocratic leadership style has been greatly criticized during the past years and some studies informed that organizations with many autocratic leaders have higher turnover and absenteeism than other organizations (Cherry, 2015). There are reported cases that autocratic leaders rely on threats and punishment to influence staff; do not trust staff or allow for their input in decision making.

Another study by Yusuf (2016) investigated influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design research was employed in the analysis. A simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty secondary schools in Osun state fifty school principals from the randomly selected schools formed the participants for the study. Three research questions were generated and tested at 0.05 significant levels. Data for the study were collected using a self-developed questionnaire on Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Students' Academic Achievement (IPLSAA) and data generated was analyzed using Pearson chi-square statistical analysis. The findings of the study revealed that autocratic leadership style had a negative influence 'on students' academic achievement, while democratic leadership styles however had a positive

influence on students' academic achievement. Laissez-faire leadership style had no significant influence on student academic achievement. The reviewed study focused on secondary schools from Nigeria and hence its findings cannot apply to Kenyan schools. Also the study was confined to effect of leadership styles on student performance in secondary schools while the current study is on influence of leadership styles on teacher performance hence the knowledge gap to be filled. Similarly, Nthoki (2017) conducted a study to examine the influence of head teachers' leadership styles (autocratic, democratic & laissez- faire) on pupils' academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, in Makueni County, Kenya. The study targeted 63 public primary schools in the Division. A sample of 30 schools was selected using Stratified random sampling technique. The study employed descriptive research design. Questionnaires and Document Analyses were used to collect data for the study. The study findings revealed that autocratic leadership style have significant influence of positive 0.16, and is practiced by 5 out of 30 head teachers representing 16.7%. Majority of the head teachers' 24 out of 30 practice democratic leadership style representing 80% with positive influence though not significant. Laissez faire is practiced by header teacher out of 30 representing 3.3% with a negative influence and not significant. Therefore, influence of head teachers' leadership styles towards pupils' Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination performance contribute 22%. The remaining 78% which influence pupils' academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education is not yet clear and are varied; this could be motivational levels of teachers and instructional materials among others which this study suggest for further research. The reviewed study employed on descriptive research design which may reflect certain level of bias due to the absence of statistical tests unlike my study which will employ both descriptive survey and correlational design. Also the study focused on academic performance of pupils while the current study will focus on the influence of the autocratic leadership style on teacher performance hence the knowledge gap to be filled.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) helped to focus on the variables of the study.

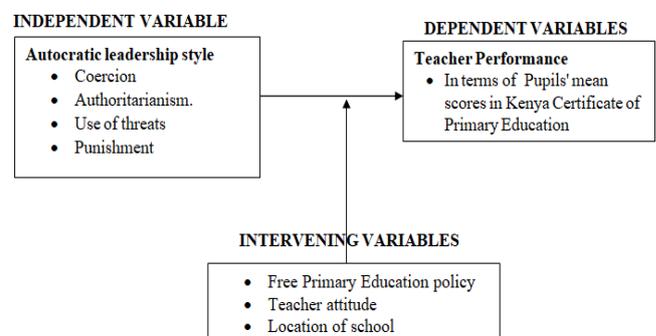


Figure 1. Influence of Head Teacher's Autocratic Leadership Style on Teacher Performance.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) depicts the relationship that exists between head teacher's autocratic leadership style which happens to be the independent variable and teacher job performance which is the dependent variable.

It is conceptualized that leadership styles such as autocratic style influence teacher job performance in terms of commitment to his/ her work hence affecting productivity. A good leader takes into account the best leadership style to be used on the subjects (teachers). Leadership style may be right but if not well communicated and the teachers involved, it may create a room for malice and insubordination. This leads to a feeling of unfair leadership. It is important to note that when a teacher experiences a state of dissatisfaction in the way they are being led, he/she may respond to the imbalance by opting for a number of actions that may lead to low performance and hence failure to achieve the required goals and perform poorly. The intervening variables are government policies such the Teachers Service Commission guidelines on how schools are to be run and the constitution of Kenya which promotes democracy. If the government policies are positive, they will entrust the head teacher to run the school as they seem fit and hence the leadership styles employed will have an effect on the performance of teachers. If they are negative on the other hand, they will tie the hands of the head teachers and therefore they cannot be innovative in their leadership styles and this may give them a difficult job in enhancing teacher performance. These variables will be controlled by making assumptions that through random sampling, some factors are favorable and some are unfavorable to the dependent variables and will be held constant.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population consisted of 110 teachers, 45 head teachers and 1 Teachers Service Commission Sub County Director. Questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis were used in data collection. Don Clark's (1998) leadership survey questionnaire was adapted and used for this study. The questionnaire is a self-reporting questionnaire for determining leadership style. This was necessary in confirmation of the use of autocratic leadership style. The questionnaire contains statements about leadership style beliefs and the respondents were expected to circle the score that represented how strongly they felt about the statement by using the following scoring system:

- Almost always true = 5
- Frequently true = 4
- Occasionally true = 3
- Seldom true = 2
- Almost never true = 1

The respondents were advised to be honest about their choices as there were no right or wrong answers and further advised that it was only for their own assessment. The data collected was regressed against teacher performance whose score was based on pupil's performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination and the scoring was within a range of 1 to 12 with the highest performance being 12 or grade "A" and the lowest being 1 or grade E. To ensure validity, the instruments were presented to experts in Educational Administration and their input were incorporated in the final drafts. Reliability of the instruments was determined by use of test re-test method through a pilot study in four schools that were not used in the main study. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means and regression analysis. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed for content in emergent themes and sub themes.

RESULTS

The biodata of respondents was as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Headteachers

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	19	46.3
Male	22	53.7
Total	41	100
Age in Years		
25-30	4	9.8
31-35	4	9.8
36-40	1	2.4
41-45	4	9.8
46-50	22	53.7
51-55	6	19.6
Total	41	100
Highest Academic Qualification		
DIPED	17	41.5
B.Ed/Sc	24	58.6
Total	41	100
Teaching Experience in years		
1-10	15	36.6
11-20	25	56.1
21-30	2	4.9
Over 31	1	2.4
Total	41	100
Teaching Experience in the Current school in years		
1-15	15	36.6
6-10	23	56.1
11-15	1	2.4
Over 16	41	100
Total	41	100

From Table 1, it can be observed that more teachers were males 22(53.7%) and female 19(46.3%). This means that the data collected was free from biases that are chauvinistic based. This is in view of the fact that males are generally autocratic and females less autocratic and vice versa for Laissez-Faire leadership style hence data obtained was valid. The age distribution was good, such that biases based on age brackets were somewhat neutralized and the data came from a diverse age whose experience over the years made data valid and realistic. The highest academic qualifications implied that the respondents were persons who understood well the theory and practice of the headteachers leadership styles normally during pre-service and in-service training, these leadership styles are studied, in detail pointing out the merits and demerits besides their application. The respondents were therefore believed to have provided valid data for this study. Teaching experience is an important factor in a study of this nature. This is because leadership styles are facets of teaching service. Thus persons with more experience as depicted by this data means that data obtained is valid and reliable and not were perception or imagination. Teaching experience in the current school for the respondents was quite as implied that data collected was robust in the sense that it was measuring as responses were a reflection of what was in practice which was a necessary and a sufficient condition for data valid data on a subject of such a matter.

Research Objective: The objective of the study was to determine influence of headteachers' autocratic leadership style on teacher performance in public primary schools in Homa Bay Sub County.

In order to achieve the intent of this objective, data on pupil's performance from 2016 to 2019 was computed per school. That is, pupils performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination for the period 2016 to 2019. The scores ranged from grade "E" which signified one (1) point being the lowest to grade "A" which signifies 12 points being the highest. The headteachers autocratic leadership style was determined using Don Clark's (1998) leadership style questionnaire that was adapted. The results were as shown in Tables 2 and 3. From Table 2, it can be observed that most schools' mean scores lay between 5 and 8. This means that schools in Homa Bay sub county performed averagely for the period 2016 to 2019.

Table 2. Pupil Performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination 2016 – 2019 (n=41) Public Primary School

Mean Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-4	5	12.2
5-8	31	75.6
9-12	5	12.2
Total	41	100

This performance is mainly attributed to teachers' input directly and indirectly. Overallly the performance was not impressive and therefore a major concern. This is because the government and parents heavily invest in education. The expectation is that great results should suffice. From Table 3, it can be observed that Headteachers in Homa Bay Sub county actually use autocratic leadership style and to some extent free-reign and less of democratic leadership style as the scores were 45, 43 and 33 respectively. Since the scores of autocratic are close to free- reign, it means the head teachers are going through a transition phase probably from free reign to autocratic. Since there is only a small difference between the three scores of 45, 33 and 43, then it can be deduced that headteachers had clear view of the style of leadership they use. The circumstances could be dictating on the leadership practices.

It is also clear that headteachers practice all the three leadership styles as a mode of managing teachers and the whole school at large. To estimate the influence of autocratic leadership style on teacher performance, regression analysis was computed using data on pupil performance and autocratic leadership style were as shown in Table 4. From Table 4, it can be observed that autocratic leadership accounted for 17.7% of the variation in teacher performance in Homa Bay Sub County as signified by the Adjusted R square coefficient 0.177. The other 82.3% was due to other factors that were not subject of this study. The influence of autocratic leadership employed by the headteachers was significant as the p-value was less than 0.05. This means autocratic leadership style explained 17.7% of the teacher performance. In essence headteachers make choices and act on their own ideas and judgements that they feel will make teachers perform to the learners' satisfaction. Therefore there is no doubt that autocratic headteachers' employ absolute, authoritarian control over teachers aimed at high academic performance. This kind of leaders are described as benevolent autocrats. However, not all autocratic headteachers are benevolent autocrats as some may just be sadists. It is perhaps for this reason that autocratic leadership style was found to contribute only 17.7% to teachers' academic performance as measured by learners' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.

Other factors may also impact negatively on this type of leadership style whereby resistance becomes the order of the day coupled with insubordination. Indeed autocratic leadership is not popular. Human beings by nature do not cherish dictatorship, they prefer to be appreciated, empathized with, motivated and treated humanly. This explains the reason as to why autocratic leadership was found to contribute only 17.7% to teacher performance as measured by learner performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. Nevertheless, since the influence is significant autocratic leadership should be considered as critical in enhancing teacher performance. Notwithstanding this assertion, it is important to note that not all teachers need to be supervised closely and coerced to provide the desired learning outcomes, and that is why autocratic leadership accounted for only 17.7% of the variation in teacher performance as measured by learner performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. The study further sought to establish whether autocratic leadership was a significant predictor of teacher performance. ANOVA was computed and the results were as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 indicates that autocratic leadership by the headteacher is a significant predictor of teacher performance ($F(1, 39) = 9.574, p < 0.05$). This means that the head teachers' autocratic leadership style can be relied upon to explain the teacher performance. This further means that appropriate use of autocratic leadership style enhances teacher performance. Having confirmed that autocratic leadership practices are predictors of teacher performance, the study sought to generate a regression equation. To achieve this linear regression Analysis was computed. The results were as shown in Table 6. From Table 6, it can be observed that for every one unit increase in autocratic leadership practice teacher performance improved by 0.823 units as signified by the coefficient 0.823. This is because the coefficient of autocratic leadership style was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The Regression equation is $Y = 3.223 + 0.823X$.

DISCUSSION

Headteacher's autocratic leadership style involves use of force or coercion, threats, punishment, intimidation and close supervision of teachers who on a large scale need to be controlled and threatened to teach as expected. This then result in good performance as evidenced in pupils' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination. The teachers' work starts with preparation of schemes of work, lesson planning, preparation of teaching learning resources and timely presentation that must be efficient and effective. It is only in this manner that the syllabus can be covered on time. Coverage of the syllabus requires periodic feedback from learners' which means that the teachers must frequently test their learners and provide meaningful feedback and revise the academic work. This indeed is challenging and most teachers find it unpalatable. This implies that headteachers must have firm control over all decisions and entertain little input from teachers. Autocratic leadership is degrading, dehumanizing and exploitative. It is common-place to hear teachers use the old adage which states "You can take a horse to the river but you cannot force it to drink water." These revelations concur with those of Maqsood, Bilal and Baig (2013) who in their research found that autocratic leadership style was absolute power and authority in controlling staff and does not give necessarily the desired outcome.

Table 3. Leadership Styles practiced by Headteachers in Primary Schools in Homa Bay Sub County

Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score
1	5	2	3	3	4
4	4	5	4	6	5
7	4	8	3	9	4
10	5	11	3	12	5
13	4	14	3	15	5
16	4	17	3	18	4
19	5	20	4	23	4
22	5	23	4	24	4
25	4	26	3	27	5
28	5	29	3	30	3
Total	45	Total	33	Total	43
Autocratic leadership style		Democratic leadership style		Laissez-Faire leadership style	

Table 4. Regression Analysis of Influence of Headteacher’s Autocratic Leadership Style on Teacher Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.444 ^a	.197	.177	1.28139	.197	9.574	1	39	.004

a. Predictors: (Constant), Headteacher’s Autocratic Style

Table 5. ANOVA on Influence of Headteacher’s Autocratic Leadership style on Teacher performance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.720	1	15.720	9.574	.004 ^b
Residual	64.036	39	1.642		
Total	79.756	40			

a. Dependent Variable: Pupil’s Mean Score (teacher performance)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Headteachers Autocratic Style

Table 6. Linear Regression Analysis of Influence of Headteachers Autocratic Leadership Style on Teacher Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.223	.728		4.426	.000
	Headteachers Autocratic Style	.823	.266	.444	3.094	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Pupils Mean Score (Teacher performance) Regression Equation: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1$

According to Cherry (2015) autocratic leaders make the decisions, dictate all work methods, members are rarely trusted with decisions or important tasks. He adds that autocratic leadership is beneficial in some instances, such as when decisions need to be made quickly. He also adds that autocratic leadership leads to high turnover and absenteeism. It also leads to high attrition rates. During interviews with teachers, most interviewees had insightful ideas. For instance one of the teachers asserted; “In this Sub county most of us are either too lazy or lack professional ethics. This is because we are unwilling to perform our duties as required. We arrive late to school and leave early, we give pupils class work and homework, but we do not mark. We spent most of our time daydreaming about the day’s politics. We keep on complaining on how Teachers Service Comision is paying us peanuts, and in the evening, how to dodge police on patrols. Surely for a school to perform, the head teacher must be autocratic, where necessary serve us with warning letters. If I became a headteacher one day I will adopt autocratic leadership style for success (T 9). This excerpt really gives insight into understanding why autocratic leadership influences teacher performance. Teachers see it to be in a way of frustrated head teachers and sometimes, it is mere lifestyle and attitude. Therefore to make them perform their duties well, micromanaging is the way forward. Going forward autocratic leadership and in particular benevolent autocratic leadership must be put in place.

“This is much so given the fact that schools are understaffed and teachers more or less impoverished by galloping inflation.” Another teacher remarked and another teacher said: “Due to inflation teachers, inclusive of me must have business ventures to supplement my income so as to meet household demands. Some of us have boats that we lease for fishing while others have kiosks for selling groceries like kales, oranges and others. In such circumstances it is only autocratic headteachers who can succeed in enlisting teacher performance of their tasks in schools, otherwise no teaching can go on. In fact some teachers have been interdicted for being sloppy due to private businesses. In any case the Teachers Service Commission does not encourage engagement into businesses as businesses distracts them from their teaching” (T2). This means for teachers to perform they must be threatened with punishment. This fact was stated by many teachers who were interviewed. The Teachers Service Commission Sub county Director concurred with the teachers assertions by stating: “The functionality of autocratic leadership in primary schools is not new nor is it unique. For the period of time I have been in this sub county and even the other sub counties where I have been in Homa Bay county, autocratic and in particular benevolent autocratic is what yields desired results in schools. Teachers are accustomed to being constantly reminded of their duties. If this is not done with an iron fist no teacher can teach as expected.

The teachers will always have all forms of excuses to avoid teaching, such excuses often include sickness, taking their children to school, attending to emergencies, domestic chores and so on. As a matter of fact these findings concur with McGregor's Theory X which states that man is naturally lazy, would like to avoid work as much as possible, does not wish to take responsibility, has no ambition and prefer to be supervised (Mulder, 2015). Therefore autocratic leadership is appropriate as it yields good results. Indeed it is evident that teachers though not all were found to have tendencies of avoiding to teach and even some attempted to teach by proxy, whereby they would attempt to hire form four leavers to teach for them while they attend to their private business like motor-bike transport services, Taxi services, fishing and sand harvesting. This was found to have forced some headteachers to coerce them to teach. In fact schools that posted good Kenya Certificate of Primary Education results were those whose head teachers were acknowledged autocrats. Conversely, the teachers' performance can be explained by the headteachers' autocratic leadership style. Therefore this means that headteachers in Homa-Bay Sub County should be encouraged to use autocratic leadership practices cautiously to improve the teacher performance. Much as the teachers indicated that autocratic leadership yields good teacher performance, they had reservations. One teacher categorically stated:

"Extreme use of autocratic leadership is counterproductive. This is because teachers remain fearful and engage in cat-mouse games. Moreover, they will attend to all classes, and all will be merely, technical appearance. Teachers will strive to develop strategies to defeat the headteachers' efforts. The teachers develop groupthink and this is not good for learner performance which is the performance index for teacher performance." (T 5) In essence this implies that autocratic leadership style should be of benevolence in nature. That is, use of autocratic practices can only be helpful if they are it is applied in right measures. The leadership should be practised with moderation. This can also be applied selectively where work ethics are not upheld. Since the units are generally not high, it means that headteachers have to improve on their autocratic leadership style to enhance further teacher performance. This finding concurred with the TSC Sub county Director's assertion who stated: "There are glaring differences in teacher performance from different schools in the sub county where headteachers equally practice autocratic leadership. This means the autocratic leadership practices are not in the same measures and the influence varies from school to school." Nevertheless, the Teacher Service Commission Sub county Director and teachers concurred on the fact that autocratic leadership style leads to better teacher performance. These findings concur with those of Wangui (2007) and Muli (2005) who in different geographical areas of study at different times in Kenya found that autocratic leadership style resulted in better performance of students academically, which is the measure of teacher performance. Nsubuga (2009), however, in a study in Uganda maintains that autocratic leadership style is least effective in most situations in the schools and has a negative impact on school climate. In fact the finding was that the relationship between autocratic leadership style and school performance was negative (-0.65). This implies that the relationship was strong and negative. It also categorically reveals that increased use of autocratic leadership style by headteachers reduced school performance drastically. Nevertheless this study revealed that autocratic leadership by the headteacher improved teacher performance by 17.7%.

This finding is a new knowledge generated because other studies only focused on the relationship and the results were somewhat different.

CONCLUSION

Autocratic leadership style practices by primary headteachers contribute significantly to teacher performance. This results in better performance by pupils in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education which is a measure of teacher performance. In practice, headteachers' use the three types of leadership styles namely autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. The study revealed that autocratic is the main factor while the other two leadership styles supplement it in teacher performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Teachers Service Commission, Kenya National Union of Teachers and Ministry of Education should encourage headteachers to use autocratic leadership style sparingly with optimum caution.
- Benevolent autocratic leadership style should be encouraged otherwise abuse of autocratic leadership style will lead to protracted litigation and therefore become counterproductive.
- Teachers should be sensitized fully on use of autocratic leadership style as currently used in schools and the need to guard against its abuse.
- The teachers having been well trained and qualified and being professionals need not be subjected to autocratic leadership style practices wholesale, but rather create conducive work environment for better performance.

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