IMPACT OF THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR ON STUDENTS'ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, MANGA DIVISION, NYAMIRA DISTRICT, NYANZA PROVINCE

Kenneth Benard Orina
Ministry of Water and Irrigation
P.O Box 49720-00100
Nairobi
ken2011.ko@gmail.com

Alice Omariba
Kenyatta University
Educational Communication & Technology
P.O Box 43844-00100
Nairobi, Kenya.
aliceomariba@gmail.com

Abstract

The central problem of this study was that despite the critical role played by the principal in secondary school management, students' academic performance has persistently been poor. Factors leading to this dismal performance have not been adequately investigated and well understood, hence hindering national development in the country. To this end, the purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the leadership behavior of the Principal on the Students' academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in selected secondary schools in Manga Division, Nyamira District. The study was conducted in eleven secondary schools within Manga Division, Nyamira District. Eleven Principals and 61 teachers from these sample schools were used in the study. The interest for the researcher to choose and study these schools was strongly prompted by their continued poor performance in KCSE. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The study used descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies, which were used concurrently with the ANOVA test in the analysis. The study was intended to come up with policy guidelines that will help improve the leadership behavior of principals in Kenya and other developing countries, which require similar policies. The study will further contribute to the functions of knowledge for the present and future scholars.

Key Words: Leadership, Management, Performance

1.1 Background to the Study

Kenyan's formal Education System has its roots in the activities of European missionaries at the onset of colonial rule. During this period, education was infused with British content, practice and ethos (Eshiwani, 1983). Further the administration of the education system was along racial lines catering differently for three main races: Europeans, Asians and Africans, until 1960 when Asian and African children were admitted into European secondary schools for the first time.

Despite the fact that the Africans constituted the majority of Kenya's population 97% in 1953, their representation in education, particularly in post primary schooling, was very law (Gay, 1992). For example, at independence, there were only 30,121 secondary students enrolled in 151 secondary schools with only 1,602 teachers. Currently there are about 700,000 students in the country's 3,700 secondary schools (Daily Nation, Thursday, January 20, 2005).

The situation remained much the same at independence at a time when there was great need for indigenous skilled work force in various government ministries as well as in the private sector. In

Kenya, differences are noticeable between government schools and those sponsored by individual communities as well as religious organizations.

Up to 2004, the MOEST had four categories of schools. Nineteen national schools-elite institutions take the best pupils from each district. Then there are provincial schools regarded as second best but often outshining the national schools (Haji 1985). These used to serve an entire province, but now they take 85 per cent of the students from the home district, and the balance from the rest of the province. District schools admit students from their own catchments areas and generally include former community built schools, which have nowadays been classified as public ordinary schools. Finally there are private schools that are not funded in any way by the government.

The system of education is highly selective even at the primary school level, while access to schooling limited; advancement is meritocratic since it is solely based on student's performance in examinations. Examinations are used above all to identify and define those adjudged suitable to proceed to the next stage of education. The process, which examinations serve to monitor and govern, is that of socializing individuals into progressively higher knowledge.

The academic achievement of many educational institutions is influenced by the leadership style of the administration and management team (Tetty-Enyo, 1997). Olembo (1997) also concurs with Tetty-Enyo (1997) by observing that school leadership is the act of influencing the activities of the teachers and students in an effort to adhere to educational objectives within the school.

It is on this basis that the importance of leadership has become more pronounced today. The expansion of Knowledge in the world has led to advanced technology and hence resulting in the formation of complex organizations, which require trained specialists in order to achieve the set objectives.

This explains why many researchers are interested in the field of leadership to test the various theories of leadership and build new ideas to improve on the effectiveness and success of various organizations. Campbell, (1974) indicates that the secondary school principals are charged with the responsibility of running schools by addressing themselves to six major administrative tasks, curriculum and instructional task, School community relationship task, finance and business administrative task, staff personnel task, pupil personnel task and School plant task.

Holy and Miskeel (1992) concurs with Campbell and adds by saying that at the building level, the principal is usually the key figure in fostering shared governance within the school. Principals not only have increased responsibility and authority in school programmed curriculum and personnel decisions, but also increased accountability for a student and programmed success.
In reference to the advanced technological and social advancement in the country, (Olembo, 1997) observed that national and individual citizen's expectations from the education system are greater and more complicated. It requires a highly qualified principal to implement the curriculum that adheres to national objectives and individual demands. Introduction of software technology, banning of corporal punishment, changes in curriculum required a highly qualified principal in order to be able to co-ordinate all the efforts of the people concerned to work towards the attainment of the set objectives.

1.2 The Concept of Leadership

There are several definitions given by different scholars on the concept of leadership. According to Muya (1993), leadership is the lifting of a man's vision to higher sights, the raising of man's performance to higher standard, the building of man's responsibility beyond its normal limitations whereas Halpin (1969) looks at leadership as consisting of two aspects namely a group achievement and group maintenance. This involves the directing of the group towards the achievement of the organizational goals. It also implies the sustenance of the social relationship at work.

McGregor (196)) maintains that leadership over human beings is exercised when a person with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, and psychological and other resources so as to arouse engage and satisfy the motives of followers. Burns (1978) concludes, leadership, unlike naked power welding is thus inseparable from followers' needs and goals.Sergiovanni et al. (1987) authors of the bestseller in search of Excellence describe leadership as:

> Patient, usually boring coalition building. It is the purposeful seeding of cabals that one hope will result in the appropriate ferment in the bowels of the organization. It is meticulously shifting the attention of the institution through the mundane language of management systems. It is altering agendas so that new priorities get enough attention. It is building a loyal team at the top that speaks more or less with one voice. It is listening carefully much of the time frequently speaking with encouragement and reinforcing words with believable action. It is being tough when necessary.

Leadership is the ability to develop a vision that motivates others to move with a passion. Leadership is seen as a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives. The human factor builds a group together and motivates it towards goals by transforming the group's potential into realities.Cole (1997) defines leadership as a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organizational context influences the group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals. He continues to say that leadership development must be a value and a process that evolves within the institutions over a period of five to ten years.

1.3 School Administration

The desire to excel has been there since the formal education was introduced in Kenya at the time of African's quest to obtain a quality education like that of the Europeans that made them pursue it with a great interest.This called upon the need for good school management and leadership style. Good performance in school is relatively equivalent to good administration. Raju (1973) emphasizes that the administrative role of the principal involves directing, controlling the management of all matters pertaining to education enhancement in the school. This implies that all activities done in the school are performed on behalf of the principal.Eshiwani (1983) identifies that:

> Schools which consistently perform well tend to have sound and efficient leadership. He further stresses that school leadership is a crucial factor in the success of a school. The qualities that are expected of a school principal include setting a climate of high expectations for staff and students, encouraging collegial and collaborative leadership and building commitment.

According to Mworia (1993), the main tasks of the school principal are to interpret national policies, executing curriculum programme, seeing to students' welfare, equipping physical facilities

and finances, inducting and retaining school community relations. In other worlds, if the school fails in performance of examinations, the principal has failed. While poor performance is applicable, to most parts of the country other areas have a record of perennial mass failures in national examinations. This is especially so in Nyanza Province where students have continued to perform poorly not only in KCSE but also in KCPE as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 The Mean Score for KCSE Results in Nyanza Province from 1999 to 2004

CODE	DISTRICT/ YEAR	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
701	Kisumu	5.2936	5.2507	5.2459	5.3003	5.4327	5.5801
702	Kisii	4.1193	4.3909	4.3618	4.2089	4.4831	4.3521
703	Homa Bay	5.3112	5.6234	5.58	5.3841	5.6842	5.6842
704	Siaya	5.3733	5.8742	5.6284	5.5232	5.7732	5.8715
705	**Nyamira**	**3.7981**	**4.1599**	**4.0872**	**3.9773**	**4.277**	**4.3914**
706	Migori	5.6211	6.1127	5.8883	5.4706	5.6203	5.826
707	Kuria	4.6143	5.2173	4.8449	4.6495	4.8239	4.9213
708	Suba	5.9194	6.0463	6.0137	5.7014	5.7273	4.7912
709	Rachuonyo	4.9732	5.4401	5.4007	5.001	5.3725	5.5616
710	Gucha	3.9671	4.3159	4.0773	4.2147	4.5001	4.5459
711	Bondo	5.923	6.1116	5.9725	5.6984	5.9357	6.005
712	Nyando	5.3674	5.8458	5.8165	5.4153	5.6259	6.0246
70	Province	4.5591	4.9144	4.811	4.683	4.9793	5.0697

Source: KNEC 2004

Compared to the national average mean score of seven, the mean score for Nyamira District has been low. For example, over the years, the district has continued to perform poorly in national examinations compared to other districts and its contribution in the educational sector is very minimal. The bulk of students in Nyamira District do not qualify for admission even to teacher training colleges since the mean entry requirement has been raised from mean grade D(plus) to C (plain), (MoEST circular of 2002). The district has failed to narrow the differences in KCSE mean scores between it and the leading district in any year and as consistently remained the last or second last in terms of overall performance, in the province.The poor performance in national examinations has persisted for a long time and most stakeholders in the district including parents, teachers and education officers are looking for answers to explain the state of affairs.

Several incidents have been reported in the media whereby principals of secondary schools have been chased from their stations of work by angry parents and students due to poor academic performance. For example in an article (Daily Nation, March 24, 2004), 'Students Bid to Burn School is Thwarted.' Students from Nyaisa Secondary School claimed that the school had been doing poorly in national examinations because its management had not addressed the problem of shortage of teachers. In another incident reported in the media (Kenya Times, May 19, 2005);

> 'Angry Parents Storm Schools' Angry parents locked out a secondary school principal in Nyamira District for allegedly running down the institution. The parents locked the administration block of Bomorito Secondary School and removed their children from classes, accusing the principal of absenteeism, favoritism in bursary allocation and posting poor performance since he was posted to the school some four years ago'.

It is evident from the above incidents that there is a great controversy as to who is responsible for the persistent poor academic performance in KCSE examinations in Nyamira district. Parents and other stakeholders solely blame the principals of the schools for being unable to deliver.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study had the following specific objectives:-

(a) To establish the impact of the initiative structure of the principal on the students' academic performance.
(b) To investigate the impact of the participatory structure of the principal on the students' academic performance.
(c) To explore the impact of the educational qualification of the principal on the students' academic performance.

1.3 Hypothesis

HO_1 There is no significant relationship between the initiative structure of the principal and the students' academic performance.

HO_3 There is no significant relationship between the participatory structure of the principal and the students' academic performance.

HO_4 There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of the principal and the students' academic performance.

Findings of the Study

1.1 Relationship between Initiative Structure of Principals and Students' Academic Performance

The principals were presented with ten issues relating to the initiative structure dimension and asked to rate themselves. An overall rating was computed for each of the principals to establish how they rated themselves on this dimension on the average. The results of this are given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Principals Overall Rating on Initiative Structure Dimension

Rating	F	%
Always	1	9.1
Often	9	81.8
Occasionally	1	9.1
Total	11	100.0

Out of 11 principals, 9 (81.8%) of the principals reported that they often expressed the initiative structure dimension, 1 (9.1%) of the principals always expressed this dimension whereas 1 (9.1 %) of the principals expressed it occasionally.

Further, the teacher respondents in the study were presented with the ten issues relating to initiative structure dimension and asked to rate the extent to which their principals expressed them. An overall score was computed for each them and the results given in
Tables 1.2.

Table 1.2 Teachers Ratings of Principals Expression of the Initiative Structure

Teachers Rating	F	%
Always	4	8.7
Often	29	63.0
Occasionally	13	28.3
Total	46	100.0

Out of 46 respondents, 9 (63.3%) of the teachers rated their principals as often expressing the initiative structure whereas 13 (28.3%) of the teachers reported them to occasionally express the initiative structure.4 (8.7%)of the teachers rated their principals to always express this dimension. Using the responses given by teachers, the first hypothesis was tested using ANOVA at $P< 0.05$.

The hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the initiative structure of the principal and the students 'academic performance. The results of this analysis are given I table 1.3

Table 1.3 ANOVA Results: Initiative Structure Ratings across KCSE (2003) Mean Scores

Teachers' rating	N	KCSE(2003)	F	**SIG.**
Always	4	4.677		
Often	29	5.317		
Occasionally	13	4.865	0.566	0.572
Total	46	5.133		

The study established therefore that there was no significant relationship between the initiate structure of the principal and the students' academic performance and therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Meta-analysis conducted by Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004) contradicts much of the findings on the impact of school leadership on student achievement as presented by other researchers of school leadership. Findings indicate that the impact of school leadership on student achievement is weak. One reason for this contradiction could be that the Waters, Marzano and McNulty meta-analysis encompassed over 25 years of research, and included a very large sample size and only included studies that were performed in the United States; whereas, other researchers included international data reporting.

1.2 Relationship between Participatory Structure of the Principal and the Students' Academic Performance

Moreover, the study sought to determine the role of the participatory structure of the principal on the students' academic performance. The principal were presented with nine issues that related to the participatory management structure and asked to rate the extent to which they expressed those issues. Using their responses, an overall rating on the dimension was calculated for each Principal and the results shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1. 4 Principals' Overall Rating on the Participatory Management Structure

Rating	F	%
Always	6	54.5
Often	4	36.4
Occasionally	1	9.1
Total	11	100.0

Out of 11 principals, 6 (54.5%) of the principals rated themselves as always expressed the participatory management structure whereas 4 (36.4%) of the principals rated as often on it and 1 occasionally (9.1 %) of the principal rated being on it. Additionally on the same structure, the teachers rated their Principals as shown in table 1.5

Table 1.5 Teachers Rating of Principals' Expression of Participatory Management Structure

Teachers' Rating	F	%
Always	14	30.4
Often	24	52.2
Occasionally	5	10.9
Rarely	3	6.5
Total	46	100.0

From table 1.5, out of 46 teachers respondents, 24 (52.2%) rated their Principals to have often expressed the participatory management structure, 14(30.4%) rated them always, 5 (10.9%) rated them occasionally whereas 3(6.5%) rated them as rarely. Using the ratings of the teachers about their Principals' expression of the participatory management structure, the researcher tested the third hypothesis of the study, which stated.

HO_3 There is no significant relationship between the participatory structure of the principal and the students' academic performance.

This hypothesis was tested using the ANOVA test at the 0.05 level of significance by comparing the teachers' ratings of their principals' expression of the participatory structure with their schools KCSE (2003) mean grades. The results are given in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 ANOVA Result Participatory Management Structure Across Academic Performance

Teachers' ratings	N	K.C.S.E(2003) Mean score	F	Sig.
Always	14	5.476		
Often	24	5.212		
Occasionally	5	4.521	1.140	0.344
Rarely	3	3.922		
Total	46	5.133		

The mean scores of the schools as can be seen in table 4.15, rose with a rise in the extent to which principals' expressed the participatory management structure. However these mean differences were not significant at the 0.05 levels, meaning that the third null hypothesis was retained.

The findings of this study are in tandem with those documented earlier by Nzuve (1999) who stressed that an effective head teacher 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 as it allows them to become part of the team and allows them to make better decisions.

Ina 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.

1.3 Role of Educational Qualifications of the Principal on the Students' Academic Performance

The study further explored the impact of the educational qualification of the principal on students' academic performance. The researcher sought to find out whether there were any significant differences in students' academic performance across their Principals' educational qualifications. To do this, the researcher tested the fourth hypothesis of the study, which stated:

HO there is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of the principal and the students' academic performance. An item in the questionnaire presented to the principals is as shown by Table 1.7

Table 1.7 Principals' Academic Qualifications across Students KCSE (2003) Academic Performance

Academic qualifications	N	K.C.S.E. 920030 Mean scores
PGDE	2	5.872
B Ed	9	4.302
Total	11	4.587

From table 1.7, the results show that PGDE Principals' were associated with higher academic performance as shown by their schools' mean scores. However; it should be noted that the sample had only two PGDE principals' that was 18.2% of the sample as compared to 81.8%

B Ed principals. These findings contrasts with the findings of Adeniji (1999), Osokoya (1999) and Oladele (1999) who found out that, teachers' qualification contributed to the students' academic achievement in Mathematics, this was equally corroborated by Adesina (1982) and Fafunwa (1985). However, at variance with the finding of Igwe (1990), the variation in the mean performance of students taught by non-professional and professional teachers was in line with the assertions of Lassa (1985), Adieze (1986), Furrugia (1987) and Izumi and Evers (2002).

According to Brewer (1993) & Hecket et al. (1990), leadership is associated with student achievement). However, there are ongoing discussions as to whether this has an effect on student achievement is direct or indirect (Hallinger et al. 1996a; Witziers et al. 2003).

Although some studies support that educational leadership directly affects student achievement, there are also some studies that conclude that it has an indirect effect on student achievement (Hallinger et al. 1996a, b; Mark and Printy 2003).
Moreover, studies by Huka (2003) confirmed that leadership style influenced student KCSE performance. Further, his study noted that autocratic head-teachers had higher mean scores in KCSE than their democratic counterparts. However, the finding contradicts with Njuguna (1998) study which 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 whereas a study by Witziers et al. (2003) concurs with the finding that the effect of leadership on student achievement in primary school was higher than for secondary and high schools.

2.1 Conclusion
The findings pertaining to the impact of leadership behavior of principals in students' academic performance in KCSE examinations among secondary schools in Manga Division, Nyamira district, give clue as to what needs to be done. However, the success cannot become reality if the policymakers do not implement the research findings.

3.1 Policy Recommendations for Improvements of KCSE Examination Performance
In the right of the findings of this study, there is need to point out some policy recommendations which may work towards improving the students performance in the KCSE examination. These policy recommendations are:-

- A policy of emphasizing the concept of consideration structure in secondary school administration in Kenya. This can be achieved through dissemination of ideas through teacher training institutions for teacher trainees. Serving teachers can be reached through in-service courses, seminars, meetings and Kenya Secondary School Heads Association conferences.

- A policy of greater involvement of teachers in decision-making. As it is now, teacher involvement seems to center around curriculum matters and classroom management. More involvement of teachers would definitely contribute to better quality decisions and improvement in the entire school administration and performance.

- A policy of involving teachers in the process of deciding what roles they wish to take on, and must then feel supported by the school administration in doing so.

- A policy of replacing the traditional top down leadership style with an emphasis on more devolved and more shared decision-making processes.

- A policy of giving scholarship to principals seeking to further their studies. Principals on part time basis are not given loans by HELB. The ministry of education science and technology in liaison with HELB should give loans and scholarships to principals seeking postgraduate's studies on part time basis. Post graduate courses will fill the urgent need for

capable principals who knows how to lead changes in school and class room practices especially in low performing schools.

- The policy makers should develop guidelines that require school principals to have a broad range of experience in leading school improvement. This experience should include working with teachers on what it means to teach to a standard in a core academic area, what represents good teaching practice and what evidence indicates a student has met or exceeded a standard.

The finding that students in boarding schools performed better than those from day schools was rather disturbing. The study therefore recommended that where possible the number of day institutions should be discouraged. Instead, more quality boarding schools should be established since they tend to relate more positively with students academic performance

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