



**INFLUENCE OF PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS'  
LEADERSHIP STYLES ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT  
KENYA CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN  
MBOONI DIVISION, MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**Abstract:**

The thrust of this study is to examine the influence of head teachers' leadership styles (autocratic, democratic & laissez- faire) on pupils' academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in Mbooni Division, in Makueni County, Kenya. This study is guided by four research objectives: i. Sought to establish the extent to which head teachers' autocratic leadership style influence pupils' performance at KCPE examinations. (ii) Examine whether Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at KCPE examinations. iii. To determine whether laissez-faire, Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at KCPE examinations. iv. Identify how many head teachers use each type of leadership style (Autocratic, Democratic and laissez-faire) respectively that influences pupils' performance at KCPE examinations. 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. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, means, variance, and standard deviations were calculated, and presented in tables and graphs. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Coefficient was done testing at alpha value 0.05 and multiple regression analysis for Variance was used for research objectives one, two and three. Chi Square test was used on research question four. 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%

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with a negative influence and not significant. Therefore, influence of head teachers' leadership styles towards pupils' KCPE performance contribute 22%. The remaining 78% which influence pupils' academic performance at KCPE 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. This study recommends that, the Government of Kenya and MoE to restructure leadership courses in teacher training institutions to enhance the establishment of effective leadership practices among teacher trainees in the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools'. Further, Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) to organize capacity building programs to empower practicing primary schools' head teachers on the most effective leadership styles.

**Keywords:** primary schools' head teachers, influence of leadership styles, pupils' KCPE academic performance, Makueni County, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

Research evidence shows that, organizational leadership has been the focus of ongoing research due to its impact on individuals' and organizational performance, education sector inclusion. Further, a number of studies have been carried out to identify and analyze the numerous factors that affect learners' academic performance in various levels of institutions of learning, and Primary schools are not exempted. Therefore, the main focus of this study is to examine influence of primary head teachers' leadership styles on pupils' academic performance at Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE) in Mbooni division, Makueni County, Kenya. Waters and Marzarno (2006) define School leadership as a process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils and parents towards high level of pupils' achievement in their studies. These researchers point out that, the concept of school leadership in the United States of America (USA) is referred to as educational leadership while in the United Kingdom (UK) is called educational management. Duke (1987) advocates that, in USA, school leadership is made for providing correct direction for schools, and successful head teachers develop their schools as effective institutions for educational excellence. These researchers emphasize that, currently all school reform efforts aim at improving pupils' academic performance that support and sustain good performance of learners.

Notably, EFAGMR (2013) asserts that, treaties and laws worldwide recognizes that, education is a fundamental human rights and its indispensable role is imparting desired knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable people realize their full potentials for individuals and countries growth and development. Hence, the notion a population of well-educated citizens' increases national economic competitiveness for sustainable growth and development. Mascal (2007) advocates that, globally, there is need for a manpower that is highly committed to support the development of an efficient and

responsive education and training systems for educational excellence that lead to intellectual, social, political, and economic growth. Therefore, the current researcher believes that, many countries invest immensely in education to foster social, political and economic growth and development.

Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFAGMR) (2005) highlights that, progress towards better quality education is constantly assessed by examining trends of schools' leadership practices, and students' learning outcomes as measured by the learners' achievement in national examinations scores. Saxe (2011) emphasizes that, sustainable schools' leadership efforts are needed to move schools closer towards ideals of equity, justice and success for every learner in every level of education). This implies that, quality education in any country is realized through strong school leadership and represented by pupils' achievement in national examinations, which is the main interest and focus of this study.

Kendra (2011) defines leadership styles as the characteristics that critically define the leaders in organizations. He further stresses that, leadership styles are mix-and-match of various traits and will in some way influence the culture of the whole organization and primary schools are not exempted. Kouzes and Posner (2002) stipulate that, specific patterns of leadership styles vary over time and across cultures. Kendra notes that, Lewin and his associates of the University of Iowa conducted a study on three major leadership styles, the authoritative, democratic and the laissez-faire. The study was done on groups of school going children who were assigned to one of the three groups with an authoritarian, democratic, or laissez-fair leader. The children were then led in an arts and crafts project. This early study was very influential and established three major leadership styles outcome. Researchers then observed the behavior of children in response to different styles of leadership. Authoritarian leaders provided clear expectation for what needs to be done, when it should be done and how it should be done. These researchers found that, this can best be applied to situations where there is little time for group decision making. Democratic leaders offered guidance to group members, but they also participate and allow input from other group members. Lewin's study found that, Democratic leadership is most popular and effective leadership style. Laissez-Faire leaders offered little or no guidance to group members and leave decision making up to group members. Finally, these researchers found that, children under the Laissez-Faire leaders were the least productive of all the three groups.

According to Lewin's, democratic leadership style should be encouraged in our educational institutions to improve quality teaching and learning that lead to good pupils' academic performance in their national examinations. Lewin and his associates' research findings show that, children responses were different to different styles of leadership. Again different leaders (autocratic, democratic and laissez faire) acted

differently to the children hence different results occurred. Further, these study findings also reveals that, different managerial practices has direct impact on subordinates' attitudes and behaviors, and too has significant effect on pupils' and schools' performances. He concluded that, different situations call for different leadership styles and the style adopted should be the one that most effectively achieves the objectives of the organization.

Leithwood and Rievil (2003) note that, school leadership has significant effects on students learning out comes ,therefore should ensure learners access high quality instructions which lead to good academic performance in national examinations. Moreover, effective leadership enables the school to function as a professional learning community that support and sustain the performance of all workers, including teachers as well as support staff. These scholars ended up saying *"Scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent head teacher, peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership"*. Studies by Moore (2009a) assert that, the success or failure of a school and its students often hinges on the effectiveness of leadership. This implies that, the principals are the most influential persons in schools who affect the degree of efficiency in school functionality, the quality of teachers' educational services, and the heights of students' academic performance.

Doherty (1994) noted that, there is nothing unusual about educationalists having concern for good students' academic performance in education. He adds that, the concern over students' achievement has been going on for a long time, certainly since Plato's time. Importantly, assessment has over the years become an important key factor to the improvement of the quality of education. More importantly, national examinations are the most reliable ways of identifying problems whether they are at the system level, the school level, or concern the individual student. Kellaghan and Grisay (2001) state that, assessment, and particularly that of students' learning achievement has become the object of a good deal of attention, and activities all over the world in both industrialized countries and developing countries alike, Kenya in inclusion.

According to Hallinger (2005), the school principal is always expected to perform a variety of roles ranging from managerial to instructional roles. This research evidence suggest that, all schools' reform efforts should aim at improving management, teaching and learning processes that lead pupils' access high quality instruction resulting to good pupils' academic performance. Griffin (1994) notes that, attributes to good examination performance to among others are happy atmosphere which are created by the leadership behavior of the head teacher. Bowring and Burnhalm (1999) noted that, good leadership is the key to success on pupils' academic performance in their national examinations. Williams (1999) emphasizes that, students are priceless assets and most essential elements in any educational system; therefore, there is need to have effective school leaders to raise the standards of pupils' performance in the schools and Kenya is

not exempted. MacBeath and Myers (1999) stress that, head teacher's leadership style has for some time been seen as a major determining factor in a school's high/low academic performance in national examinations

Studies by Ross and Gray (2006) in USA highlights that, successful schools are often associated with the kind of strong leadership exercised in such schools. Hence, the notion great schools do not exist apart from great leaders. Kearney (2010) study finding in Californian schools advocate that, to prepare students well for success in higher quality education, all available resources must be brought to bear in smart and well-coordinated ways through strong school leadership. Robison, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) study findings show that, a community of committed effective schools' leaders has the potential for overall good students' academic performance in national examinations in any country. This implies that, people working in organizations need leaders who are instrumental in guiding the efforts of group members to achieve the goals and objectives of both the individual and the organization and primary schools are no exception. Soder and Andrew (1987) assert that, successful school leadership plays a highly significant role in improving students' academic performance. These scholars emphasize that, head teachers should demonstrate effective and most appropriate leadership styles that lead schools in improving students' performance.

Engelbrecht, Oswald and Forin (2006) found in South Africa that, working and social patterns in every school are influenced by the style of leadership provided by the head teacher. Studies by Akomolafe (2014) in Nigeria indicate that, schools' leadership requires competitive leadership practices that can best use the maximization of resources to create the long-term capacity of teachers for continuous improvement on students' academic performance. Besides, Wango (2010) emphasizes that educational achievement has to be accounted for and assessment of learners' performance is inevitable in any educational system, and in any level. Okumbe (1998) notes that, head teachers are school supervisors and their main functions are planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Thus, planning helps head teachers to do things in an orderly and efficient manner. In organizing, head teachers are expected to establish harmonious authority-responsibility relationships also known as organization structure. In directing, head teachers should be telling teachers what to do, and seeing that they do it to the best of their knowledge and ability that lead to good students' academic performance. Finally, in controlling, the head teachers should be involved in checking performance against predetermined standards.

In Kenya, study findings by Mwanik and Orodho (2016) in Narok Sub-County reveal that, home-based variables negatively influence enrollment, participation, and performance of pupils in public primary schools. Whereas studies by Parale (2002) in Baringo Sub-county, indicate that, one of the key factors determining school effectiveness and the success of students in academics is the nature and quality of

management provided by the school heads. Huka (2003) study findings in Mandera Sub-county found that, head teachers who are rated to be high in consideration their pupils get low scores in their examinations. Also, Muli (2005) study findings in Mutomo Division shows that, head teachers who are rated to be democratic had lower mean scores while those rated to be autocratic head teachers had higher mean scores. Studies by Kabuchi and Gitau (2010) on influence of head teachers' leadership styles on pupils' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) found out that, there is significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles' and pupils' academic performance in Primary schools. These researchers emphasize that, the head teacher is exclusively held responsible for good or bad management results in national examinations.

The following Mbooni Division KCPE results analysis (2008-2011) in Table 1 was obtained from the Sub-county Education Director (SCED) and the Sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (SCQASO) (2012) in Mbooni West Sub-county in Makueni County, Kenya. These results created a lot of concern to SCDE and SCQASO, and the public at large. The questions raised are based on what causes low pupils' academic performance in their KCPE examinations, and this study sought to examine.

**Table 1:** Mbooni Division KCPE Results Analysis (2008 – 2011)

Schools Year	National		350- 399		County 300- 349		Sub- 250- 299		County Below 250		Total No of candidates
	400- 500	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
2008	4	0.3	101	7	104	7	622	41	651	44	1482
2009	2	0.3	87	6	94	6	640	41	736	47	1559
2010	4	0.3	95	6	111	7	812	52	543	35	1565
2011	0	0	47	3	344	20	602	36	692	41	1585

Source: SCQASO Mbooni West Sub-County (2012)

Table 1 show that, many pupils have not been attaining high scores in their KCPE examinations. The majority of the pupils falls in the last two categories throughout the four years, and could only secure secondary vacancies in the Sub-County or miss form one admission. Statistics in Table 1 show that, in 2008, 1273 out of 1482 (85%) pupils; in 2009, 1376 out of 1559 (88%) pupils; in 2010, 1355 out of 1565 (87%) pupils, and in 2011, 1194 out of 1585 (77%) pupils. Notably, a few of the pupils fall in the first three categories were able to get vacancies in county and national schools, thus in 2008, 209 out of 1482 (15%), in 2009, 183 out of 1559 (12%), in 2010, 210 out of 1565 (13%), and in 2011, 391 out of 1585 (23%). This translate that, leadership support has not been effective to make Majority of the Kenyan youth globally competitive and to transform Kenya into a middle income country by the year 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Charlesworth (2004) advocates that, children who get quality basic educations develop

head start in their life-long education. Doherty (1994) advocate that, the main role of the head teacher is to be actively engaged in clinical supervision to improve pupils' performance in their national examinations. Moreover, Bell (1988) stresses that, the kinds of leadership style provided by the head teachers in schools have strong impact on pupils' academic achievement. Therefore, Mbooni Division schools require sustainable schools' improvement efforts on existing leadership styles to move schools closer toward the ideals of equity and success for every pupil at KCPE examinations.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

Organizational leadership has been the focus of ongoing research due to its impact on individual and organizational performance, Primary schools inclusion. Republic of Kenya (MOEST) (2005) emphasizes that, school head teachers are the focal points and compasses of the schools, and shoulders the greatest burden to lead schools achieve educational goals. According to Table 1, the reasons for low pupils' academic performance at KCPE examination in Mbooni Division are varied and not yet clear (Mbooni West Sub-county Education Director, 2012). These could be leadership practices, motivation levels of teachers, pupil teacher ratio, and instructional materials among others. However, Muricho and Changa'ach (2013) study findings indicate that, revolutionary schools' leadership is central in education and training for the production of quality and competitive social capital for all fields of work in Kenya for the realization of the Kenya Visio 2030. Therefore, low pupils' academic performance at KCPE examinations in Mbooni Division, in Makueni County, Kenya could have been attributed by the influence of the head teachers' leadership styles (autocratic, democratic & laissez- faire) which was the main focus of this study.

## **3. Objectives of the study**

This study is guided by the following objectives:

- i. Establish the influence of head teachers' Autocratic leadership style on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, Kenya.
- ii. Examine whether Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, Kenya.
- iii. Determine whether laissez-faire, Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, Kenya.

- iv. Identify how many head teachers use each type of leadership style (Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire) respectively that influences pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, Kenya.

## 4. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design in carrying out the investigation. The purpose of descriptive research design was to collect data, and describe primary schools head teachers' leadership styles (Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire) as they naturally occur (Pollit & Hungler, 1995). In this study, the head teachers of public primary schools in Mbooni Division were still in office and practice different leadership styles, therefore descriptive research design was appropriate for use.

### 4.1 Population and sample size

The target population was 63 public primary schools in Mbooni Division with a total of 593 teachers. Out of this, a sample of 30 schools, 10 from each of the three zones in Mbooni division were randomly selected using stratified sampling procedure. The head teachers whose school were selected automatically qualified to participate in this study; and out of 530 classroom teachers in the Division, 210 teachers were selected, 70 teachers from each of the three zones, plus 30 head teachers giving a total sample size of 240 participants.

### 4.2 Instrumentation

The research adopted and modified a standardized Leader Behavior Descriptive Questionnaire (LBDQ) by the researcher Hemphill (1957). The LBDQ had two sections. Section A had 5 statements and focused on teachers' characteristics data like gender, age, professional qualification, years of service and school mean scores. Section B had 27 statements in which the participants were asked to rate principals' leadership styles. The principals rated themselves as well. These statements were randomly placed catering for the three leadership styles. Autocratic style took numbers 7, 12,14,18,25 and 30. Democratic style numbers 9, 13,15,16,26 and 32. Laissez-faire style took numbers 21, 22,23,27,28 and 31 respectively. The following numbers 6, 8, 10, 11, 17, 19, 20, 24, and 29 were shared by more than one leadership style and were not included in rating specific leadership style. The 23 items were rated on a 5- point Likert -scale ranged as follows: 5 = Always – occurs all times without fail 4= Often –occurs many times 3 = occasionally – occurs from time to time. 2 = Seldom –occurs in few occasions. 1 = Never –occurred at no time. Higher scores of 4 and 5 indicate strong leadership style practice by the head teacher, whereas a low score of 1 and 2 reflects a weak leadership style practice by the head teacher. This scale takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.



The LBDQ was subjected to two research experts of outstanding experience in research from the Department of Administration and Planning University of Nairobi to scrutinize and ensure both face and content validity, and their corrections and suggestions were incorporated before use. Pilot study was done mainly to check reliability of the research tools, (Thomas & Nelson, 1996). Orodho (2005) notes that Cronbach's alpha technique is used to estimate the internal consistency of the items, and a correlation coefficient between 0.70 and 1.0 is sufficient to show particular test items to be reliable. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.91 was obtained from the Pilot study, therefore the research Instrument was considered to be excellent and highly reliable, therefore found suitable and used in the main study.

### 4.3 Data analysis

Once the questionnaires were filled by the participants, they were checked for completeness before being forwarded to the data analysts for statistical analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data by use of frequencies and percentages, and presented in form of tables, mean, and standard deviation. Again inferential statistics was done purposely for making inferences from data collected. The objectives were accomplished using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). The interpretation of the correlation coefficients was based on the following set of descriptors: 0.70 or higher (very strong relationship); 0.50–0.69 (substantial relationship); 0.30–0.49 (moderate relationship); 0.10–0.29 (low relationship); and  $<0.09$  (negligible relationship) (Davis, 1971). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Coefficient (PPMC) referred to as Pearson's  $r$  was done testing at alpha value 0.05 and multiple regression analysis for Variance was used for research objectives one, two and three. Chi Square test was used on research question four.

## 5. Study findings and discussion

### 5.1 Objectives

i. Establish the influence of head teachers' Autocratic leadership style on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher wanted to seek for analysis of the influence of head teachers'

Autocratic leadership style on pupils' performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher used pupils' KCPE mean scores of four consecutive years (2008-2011) to respond to the research objectives. The researcher used multiple regression analysis and the results findings are tabulated in table 2. According to the result findings, it is evident that Autocratic leadership Style had a significant influence on pupils' achievement with positive 0.16\*, with (very strong relationship) thus over 0.70.

It was found that, 5 primary schools lead by these head teachers their pupils got high scores at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations.

**ii.** Examine whether Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher wanted to seek for analysis whether Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher used pupils' KCPE mean scores of four years (2008-2011) to respond to the research objectives. The researcher used multiple regression analysis and the results findings are tabulated in table 2. Research evidence show that, Democratic Leadership style has positive influence but not significant with 0.06 with (substantial relationship) thus 0.50–0.69 while Autocratic leadership Style had a significant influence with positive 0.16\*, with (very strong relationship) thus over 0.70. These findings concurred with Muli (2005) and Huka (2003) who found that head teachers who are rated to be democratic had lower mean scores while autocratic had teachers had higher mean scores. This translate that there is substantial different influences between Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles on pupils' performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya.

**iii.** Determine whether laissez-faire, Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher wanted to seek for analysis whether laissez-faire and Democratic leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher used pupils' KCPE mean scores of four years (2008-2011) to respond to the research objectives. The researcher used multiple regression analysis and the results findings are tabulated in Table 2. Research evidence shows that, Laissez -faire has negative influence on pupils' performance although not significant (negligible relationship) thus <0.09 whereas Democratic Leadership style has positive influence but not significant with 0.06 with (substantial relationship) thus 0.50–0.69 (Davis, 1971). Therefore, the two leadership styles have different influences on pupils' performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya. These findings concur to Lewin and his associates' research findings which indicated that, children responses were different to different styles of leadership, and children under the Laissez-Faire leaders were the least productive of all the three groups.

**Table 2:** Influence of head teachers' leadership styles on pupil's academic performance at KCPE in Mbooni Division, Kenya

Model 1	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig. 95% Confidence interval for B
	Beta		
(Constant)		23.209	.000
Autocratic leadership	.157*	1.992	.048
Democratic leadership	.063	.817	.415
Laissez-faire leadership	-.089	-1.111	.268

**Dependent Variable: Mean score**

According to Table 2 findings, equation  $\hat{y} = 252.12 + 0.16*AL + 0.06DL - 0.09LF$  ( $R^2 = 0.03$ ) Was obtained. The \* means Significant influence. AL- Autocratic Leadership; DL- Democratic Leadership; LF- Laissez Faire.

iv. Identify how many head teachers use each type of leadership style (Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire) that influences pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Mbooni Division, Kenya. The researcher sought to find out how many head teachers in each type of leadership style (Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire) in primary schools out of every 30 head teachers. The result findings were shown in table 3.

**Table 3:** Head teacher's leadership styles

Leadership style	Frequency	Per cent
Autocratic	5 out of 30	16.7 out of 100
Democratic	24 out of 30	80.0 out of 100
Laissez Faire	1 out of 30	3.3 out of 100

According to the findings on Table 3 on head teachers' leadership styles, out of 30 head teachers, 24 practice democratic leadership style. The data as indicated by frequencies clearly shows that most head teachers 80% in Mbooni Division practice democratic leadership style in their schools. The findings concurred with Kendra (2011) who noted that, democratic leadership style is the most practiced and popular leadership style in the 21<sup>st</sup> century management arena. These leaders provide environments where individual differences are recognized and respected. Therefore, in today's world where great changes occur, new values rise and the future cannot be predicted, need the most suitable leadership style that can adapt to these paces of changes.

## 6. Conclusions

Study findings on research objectives i, ii, iii and iv show that autocratic leadership style was found to have significant influence on pupils' academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations with positive 0.16\* although

only a few head teacher 16.7% (5) practiced it and their pupils got high scores in their KCPE examinations. This implies that 83.3% (25) head teachers their pupils get low scores in their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations and that is why Mbooni Division has not being performing very well in KCPE examinations as per Table 1.1 Mbooni Division KCPE analysis (2008-2011).

Democratic leadership style was practiced by majority of head teachers 80% (24) and had positive influence 0.06 and had influenced pupils' performance though not significant. Laissez faire was the least practiced leadership style by head teachers 3.3% (1) and had a negative influence on pupil's performance in KCPE but no so significant. These research findings shown that head teachers' leadership styles contribute only 22 percent towards pupils' academic performance towards KCPE examinations, meaning there are other factors which need to be investigated.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. The Government of Kenya and MoE to restructure leadership courses in teacher training institutions to enhance the establishment of effective leadership practices among teacher trainees in the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools'.
2. There is need for Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) to plan and organize capacity building programs to empower practicing head teachers on the most appropriate leadership styles, which are likely to yield high pupils' performance at KCPE examinations as the findings indicate that, just 5 out of every 30 head teachers lead their schools achieve good results at KCPE examinations.
3. There is need for Sub-county Education Director (SCED) and Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (SCQASO) to pay regular visits to public primary schools for continuous monitoring, supervision, guidance, counseling, and support head teachers on total quality management for quality output in KCPE examinations. The research findings shown that only a few head teachers 5 out of 30 representing 16.7% out of 100% lead pupils to get high scores in their KCPE examinations.
4. There is need for the head teachers to use the most appropriate and effective leadership styles that will develop primary schools to be centers of educational excellence. This translate that, head teachers are exclusively held responsible for good or bad management results in national examinations in Kenya.

## 8. Suggestions for further research

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, this study may be duplicated elsewhere in Kenya by utilizing multiple sources of data collection. Further, future research on motivation levels of teachers, pupil teacher ratio, and instructional materials may be carried out to examine their influences on pupils' performance at KCPE examinations as the study findings shown that, head teachers' leadership styles influence only 22 percent.

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AT KENYA CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MBOONI DIVISION, MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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